An intricate engraving depicting a celestial scene. A large angel with expansive, feathered wings is seated upon a thick, billowing cloud. The angel's head is bald, and a brilliant, sunburst-like halo radiates from behind it. The angel's right hand is raised in a gesture of blessing or peace, while the left hand holds an open book. Below, on a rocky, uneven ground, a small figure of a person in a long, flowing robe stands looking up at the angel. The figure holds an open book, and a beam of light from the angel's book appears to illuminate the figure's book. The background is filled with dark, dramatic clouds and jagged, lightning-like patterns. The overall style is that of a 19th-century religious engraving.

The Little Book Opened

F. T. Wright

Source:

The Messenger and News Review
November 1993 to December 2000

Cover:

Revelation 10 — The Angel and the Little Book
Biblia 1751

Fonts:

Liberation Sans Narrow
Linux Biolinum
Linux Libertine
Miama Nueva



November 2022
practicaprophetica.com
srac.info

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Foreword

GATHERED in this volume, are the last writings of F. T. Wright, which he was working on up to the date of his death, in June 29, 1997.

Most of these articles appeared in the monthly *Messenger and News Review* church paper, beginning with the November 1993 issue. Fred had written many articles in advance, so that they continued to be published after his death, the last one appearing in the December 2000 edition of the paper.

As Fred's mind was at times a bit weak during his last years, the studies were carefully edited, I believe by Andreas Dura, although some others might have been involved in correcting grammar, or inserting quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy writings.

Included in this collection of published articles, are some unpublished draft articles that were part of this series; or in some cases paragraphs were taken from the drafts and added into the published articles. These might be a bit rougher than the published articles, but the inspiration and thought of a man who dedicated his life to God's work, shines through.

The series was intended to cover the books of *Daniel* and the *Revelation*, and so it was originally titled, but it actually dwelt mainly on the book of *Daniel*, with some cross-references to *Revelation*. The book of *Daniel* is the "little book open" in the hand of the Angel of *Revelation* 10, and so I have re-titled this work to more accurately express its contents.

Just as a way of comparison, to show that the little book held by the angel of *Revelation* 10 is the book of *Daniel*:

Daniel 12

⁷ And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by Him that lives for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

⁸ And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?

⁹ And He said, Go your way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Revelation 10

² And he had in his hand a little book open:

⁵ And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

⁶ And swore by Him that lives for ever and ever...that there should be time no longer.

Now notice: the man in linen from *Daniel* 12, and the angel in *Revelation* 10...

1. Hold up hands to heaven;
2. Swear by Him who lives for ever;
3. One seals the words of *Daniel*, the other has a book that is open;
4. In *Daniel*, the words are closed until the “time of the end,” and in *Revelation*, there is “time no longer,” that is, the “time of the end” has come, and the book is now open.

It is this “open book” that is unfolded in the pages of this work.

Frank Zimmerman

October 2022

Preface

WE WILL now commence a new series of studies entitled, *Daniel and the Revelation*.¹

The objective will be to produce a comprehensive series of studies covering the great messages given through Daniel and John especially for us who live in these last days. This is essential knowledge for all those who will be alive during, and therefore participant in, the coming, final conflict between light and darkness.

We are warned that the decisions arrived at will be so absolute that there will be no further opportunity to redeem our mistakes, no room for failure. Either we win all and so become recipients of eternal life, or we lose all and thus become eternally subject to death.

Thoroughly understanding the light contained in these forthcoming studies from *Daniel* and the *Revelation* will be a big factor in our becoming so established in the truth that we will emerge as mighty overcomers from the din and dust of Armageddon, the battle which will end all battles.

Therefore, every believer is urged to study these chapters so thoroughly that, when the crisis bursts upon the shelterless heads of the unprepared, he will be fit to meet it.

¹ This was the original title of the series. It has been renamed for this publication as Fred never finished these lessons beyond the book of *Daniel* before his death in 1997. Although references are made to the book of *Revelation* in these studies, the chapters themselves follow the sequence of prophecies in the book of *Daniel*.

1. A Great Revival Promised

Messenger and News Review, November 1993

Importance of Daniel and the Revelation

DANIEL and the *Revelation* are two books of special interest in the Bible which contain messages of the most crucial importance to the people of God who are living in the light of Christ's rapidly approaching advent. In these books is clearly revealed the exact nature of the two antagonistic forces which have been locked in decisive combat from the beginning of the great controversy.

Along with this is a masterful and penetrating delineation of the actual issues which will be fought out to their ultimate limits. There we find too that the challenge against the justice and righteousness of God mounted so long ago by the arch apostate, must and will be answered. And we see that it will be so exhaustively and conclusively answered that every objection will be utterly and eternally swept away never to germinate again.

It is also made very clear in these books that those who shall successfully endure the awesome pressures which shall be brought to bear upon them, must make the most diligent preparation for that struggle.

The people of the Lord will not be mere interested spectators in the final conflict. In that battle, He who is King of kings and Lord of lords will lead forth the armies of heaven against the mighty beast and his image. This great enemy is also known as...

Matthew 24

¹⁵ ...the abomination of desolation.

There will be no standing on the sides then, no fence-sitting, and no uncertainties about where each shall have taken his or her stand. The nature of the conflict which must be forever settled, demands that every follower of Jesus shall proceed with Him into the very heart of the final contest called,

Revelation 16

¹⁴ ...the battle of...

¹⁶ ...Armageddon.

From the heat and fury of this titanic struggle every soul shall emerge utterly, eternally, and irrevocably committed to one or the other of the two sides of the great controversy.

Need for Preparation

Those of us who have been involved for decades in the work of warning the world, wherein there is little, if any, understanding of the three angels' messages, tend to think that we have no need to be warned. We remember that we became members of the Advent body by hearing and heeding the warning and feel that our knowledge of the threefold messages is so far ahead of that to be found among other religious bodies, that we are to relate to them as teachers to students. They are the ones to be warned; we are those who are to continue sounding the alarm.

This reasoning is not entirely faulty, for it is God's plan that those who respond to the powerful warning should certainly undertake the work of extending this ministry until every soul on earth has been given the opportunity to hear the truth for himself. But, once again,

Matthew 24

³⁷ As the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of man be.

Upon the ears of the vast majority in Noah's day, the warning fell unheeded. Worse than that, it was rejected with ridicule and violence. So widespread was this reaction that a mere eight of estimated billions chose to enter the ark of divinely provided refuge. No doubt there were many who intended to go into the place of safety but failed to do so in the end because they had spent too much time filling the role of teachers and too little time in being learners of the deeper, spiritual truths as taught in the school of Christ.

There is the very real danger of spending so much time and energy in preaching to others, that our own spiritual resources become too depleted to enable us to heed the warning which we ourselves have been giving. This is the plight into which the foolish virgins work themselves. There is very real danger of such a situation developing with the end result being that the one giving the warning will perish with those to whom the message was given.

A striking example of this is provided by the man who warned the inhabitants of Jerusalem of its coming destruction, yet himself perished when that which he had warned against took place. The story is told as follows:

The Great Controversy, p. 30:

For seven years a man continued to go up and down the streets of Jerusalem, declaring the woes that were to come upon the city. By day and by night he chanted the wild dirge: "A voice from the east! a voice from the west! a voice from the four winds! a voice against Jerusalem and against the temple! a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides! a voice against the whole people!"² This strange being was imprisoned and scourged, but no complaint escaped his lips. To insult and abuse he answered only: "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" "woe, woe to the inhabitants thereof!" His warning cry ceased not until he was slain in the siege he had foretold.

Not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem.

He perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. Therefore, he was not a Christian, even though the spirit he manifested when persecuted made him appear to be one. He faithfully warned the citizens of that doomed city of their impending ruin, but his way of doing this work was not according to Sabbath rest principles.

Evidently, he was a self-sent messenger who understood the prophecies as mere declarations of coming events. But he failed to experience the living power resident in those messages as the way of escape from the overshadowing peril which threatened his very existence. That power is the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is

² Milman, *The History of the Jews*, book 13.

the power to save from sin, sickness, and all the power of the evil one.

A Revelation of the Gospel

As will be shown later in greater depth and detail, both of the books of *Daniel* and the *Revelation* are just as much the gospel of Jesus Christ as is any other book in the Scriptures.

These books necessarily contain the gospel, for the Lord has no other means of saving anybody apart from this power. As surely as the warning against the powers of darkness is found in these books, just so surely is the living, saving gospel of Jesus Christ present to attend its proclamation.

It is the truth that the greater and more urgent the need for the warning to be given, the more powerful will be the manifestation of the gospel in order to meet that need. In turn, this means that the spiritual experience of the believers in Jesus will be that much more glorious, and the transforming effect of the gospel upon those who receive its saving power, that much more pronounced.

It follows then, that those who today make a truly Spirit-illuminated study of these two books, can expect to receive a special endowment of divine life and power. Be not surprised therefore, to find that spiritually elevated levels of the greatest value are promised to those who walk in the light streaming from *Daniel* and the *Revelation*. Here are some of these promises:

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 113: [Italics supplied]

Let us give more time to the study of the Bible. We do not understand the word as we should. The book of *Revelation* opens with an injunction to us to understand the instruction that it contains.

Revelation 1

³ Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, [God declares,] and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

When we as a people understand what this book means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival. We do not understand

fully the lessons that it teaches, notwithstanding the injunction given us to search and study it.

This paragraph appears to be limited to statements about the book of *Revelation*, but we must understand that anything which is true of *Revelation*, is equally true of *Daniel*. These two books are complementary to each other, and should be studied together.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 585:

In the *Revelation* all the books of the Bible meet and end. Here is the complement of the book of *Daniel*. One is a prophecy; the other a revelation. The book that was sealed is not the *Revelation*, but that portion of the prophecy of *Daniel* relating to the last days. The angel commanded,

Daniel 12

⁴ But you, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end.

These words of warning, instruction, and promise were delivered, not to the unbelieving world, but to God's special people. When they understand what this book means to them, there will be seen among them a great revival. The implications are that the Advent people, at the time when these words were addressed to them, did not understand what this book meant to them, and therefore were not experiencing the great revival promised here.

When we understand what this book means to us we shall see that the thrilling purpose of the book of *Daniel* is to...

Daniel 9

²⁴ ...finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

To achieve this high level of sanctification requires that our shortcomings must be rectified. This can be accomplished by our understanding what these books mean to us, and, as a result, a great revival will be generated. This must be achieved before the Church of God shall be fit to go forth as the final, all-conquering body of Christ. Wonderful will the fruitage be, for:

The Great Controversy, p. 425:

When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing.

Malachi 3

⁴ Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

Then the church which our Lord at His coming is to receive to himself will be a...

Ephesians 5

²⁷ ...glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Then she will look...

Song of Solomon 6

¹⁰ ...forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.

It is evident that this great, predicted revival resulting from our understanding of what *Daniel* and the *Revelation* mean to us, has not yet fully taken place, though there have been ample opportunities for it to do so. Undoubtedly, the sacred ministry of the *Revelation* 18 angel whose mighty voice was heard for several years after its commencement in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1888, was one such opportunity.

Today, in the revival of that powerful message, we are afforded another which, it certainly appears, will be the last. I am confident that the light contained in this series of studies on these great books, will enable us as a people to understand just what they mean to us, and thus generate the last great revival of primitive godliness.

This will be speedily followed by the final witness to God's true character of perfect love and absolute righteousness, the demise of the man of sin, victory over the last enemy, death, and the ushering in of the kingdom of glory.

Not only are the saints now living promised a great revival, but theirs is to be an entirely different experience from that possessed at the time when these words were written as a testimony to the Church.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 114:

When the books of *Daniel* and *Revelation* are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such glimpses of the open gates of heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realize the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart.

What is to be the wonderful reward of the pure in heart? Jesus himself answered that question during the early part of His presentation of the sermon on the mount:

Matthew 5

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Although we have not fully experienced it as yet, we know that to enter into His presence and see God face to face, is the ultimate satisfaction and joy that can be known by any created being. There was a time before the creation of this earth when such intimate communion was limited to Jesus Christ, but the time is coming when every one of the redeemed will have this privilege and will know the sheer joy of such communion:

The Ministry of Healing, p. 421:

Christ took with Him to the heavenly courts His glorified humanity. To those who receive Him He gives power to become the sons of God, that at last God may receive them as His, to dwell with Him throughout eternity. If during this life they are loyal to God, they will at last...

Revelation 22

⁴ ...see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads.

And what is the happiness of heaven but to see God? What greater joy could come to the sinner saved by the grace of Christ than to look upon the face of God and know Him as Father?

We will now return to consider the statement which reads as follows:

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 114:

When the books of *Daniel* and *Revelation* are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such glimpses of the open gates of

heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realize the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart.

Deliverance from Laodicean Lukewarmness

Two spiritual experiences are referred to in this statement—the one they had, and the entirely different one they ought to have had. The first question to be considered in this connection is,

“Just what was the experience which they had, but ought not to have had?”

It certainly could not be the experience the Advent people had in the lead up to the great disappointment, when of them it is written:

Early Writings, p. 239:

A spirit of solemn and earnest prayer was everywhere felt by the saints. A holy solemnity was resting upon them. Angels were watching with the deepest interest the effect of the message, and were elevating those who received it, and drawing them from earthly things to obtain large supplies from salvation's fountain. God's people were then accepted of Him. Jesus looked upon them with pleasure, for His image was reflected in them. They had made a full sacrifice, an entire consecration, and expected to be changed to immortality.

But they were destined again to be sadly disappointed. The time to which they looked, expecting deliverance, passed; they were still upon the earth, and the effects of the curse never seemed more visible. They had placed their affections on heaven, and in sweet anticipation had tasted immortal deliverance; but their hopes were not realized.

Sadly, but a few years swiftly passed before they entered into an entirely different religious experience—Laodiceanism. This was a tragic departure from the Christian experience they ought to have had and might have had. This sad condition was established by 1858 when it was written that:

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 186:

I was shown that the testimony to the Laodiceans applies to God's people at the present time, and the reason it has not ac-

complished a greater work is because of the hardness of their hearts.

Decade after decade passed by during the eighteen hundreds when testimony after testimony was delivered to the Church, warning of the sad condition of its members while calling for an entirely different religious experience among them. But a careful study of those testimonies reveals that the Advent people never escaped from this condition, and, except for the remnant who have heeded the warning contained in the message to the Laodiceans, the professed people of God remain destitute of the gold, the white raiment, and the eyesalve.

The entirely different religious experience which they might have had, requires total deliverance from Laodicean lukewarmness. This in turn can only be achieved by obtaining those treasures of soul-saving truth which have the power to transform the life. For those who obey the call to be zealous and repent, a glorious future is promised.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 16:

Satan is a diligent Bible student. He knows that his time is short, and he seeks at every point to counterwork the work of the Lord upon this earth. It is impossible to give any idea of the experience of the people of God who shall be alive upon the earth when celestial glory and a repetition of the persecutions of the past are blended. They will walk in the light proceeding from the throne of God. By means of the angels there will be constant communication between heaven and earth.

And Satan, surrounded by evil angels, and claiming to be God, will work miracles of all kinds, to deceive, if possible, the very elect. God's people will not find their safety in working miracles, for Satan will counterfeit the miracles that will be wrought. God's tried and tested people will find their power in the sign spoken of in *Exodus* 31:12-18. They are to take their stand on the living word: "It is written." This is the only foundation upon which they can stand securely. Those who have broken their covenant with God will in that day be without God and without hope.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 116:

Those who eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God will bring from the books of *Daniel* and *Revelation* truth that is inspired by the Holy Spirit. They will start into action forces that cannot be repressed. The lips of children will be opened to proclaim the mysteries that have been hidden from the minds of men.

We find ourselves continually looking to God as the One whom we expect will initiate the release of the winds of strife, and thus set in motion the closing events of human history. There is both truth and merit in this understanding, for this is what He will do by sending directives to the angels holding back the winds of strife.

But, at the same time, we forget that in heaven all things have already been made ready. We, the people of God, are the ones who are delaying the great second advent. God cannot finish the work without the total consecration of His people, and He will not come in power upon His people until they can be fully trusted to fill their responsibilities.

Carefully consider the appeals and promises contained in the following quotation:

The Review and Herald, February 9, 1897:

Brethren, the Lord calls for co-partnership in his work. He desires us to enlist our interests in His cause, as Daniel did. We should receive great benefits from a study of the book of *Daniel* in connection with the *Revelation*. Daniel studied the prophecies. He earnestly sought to know their meaning. He prayed and fasted for heavenly light. And the glory of God was revealed to him in even greater measure than he could endure.

We are in equal need of divine illumination. God has called us to give the last message of warning to the world. There will be voices heard on every side to divert the attention of God's people with new theories. We need to give the trumpet a certain sound. We do not half realize what is before us.

If the books of *Daniel* and the *Revelation* were studied with earnest prayer, we should have a better knowledge of the perils of the last days, and would be better prepared for the work be-

fore us—we should be prepared to unite with Christ and to work in His lines.

Summary

Deep, solemn, and far-reaching are the responsibilities which are to be borne by God's people in these final days of human history. To meet the coming crisis with the warnings which the Lord has sent by His angel messengers requires that firstly we keep the messages fresh, clear, and ever developing in our own minds. To achieve this:

- We will continue to study *Daniel* and the *Revelation* in greater and still greater depths.
- We will guard against such study becoming a mere form.
- We will be determined that we shall experience the great revival promised to us as a people on condition of our understanding what these books mean.
- We will rest neither day nor night until we are certain that we have acquired that altogether different religious experience which will be the result of these books being better understood.

Then with the warning to our own souls ever before us, fresh and alive in our hearts, we will extend the living messages to the unwarned. Then shall the message swell to the loud cry and the final warning be given in the awesome power of the fourth angel.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 118:

The perils of the last days are upon us, and in our work we are to warn the people of the danger they are in. Let not the solemn scenes which prophecy has revealed be left untouched. If our people were half awake, if they realized the nearness of the events portrayed in the *Revelation*, a reformation would be wrought in our churches, and many more would believe the message.

We have no time to lose; God calls upon us to watch for souls as they that must give an account. Advance new principles, and crowd in the clear-cut truth. It will be as a sword cutting both ways. But be not too ready to take a controversial attitude. There will be times when we must stand still and see the salvation of

God. Let *Daniel* speak, let the *Revelation* speak, and tell what is truth. But whatever phase of the subject is presented, uplift Jesus as the center of all hope, “the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star.”

A prayerful, earnest study of *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 112-119, is highly recommended.³

³ See Appendix.

2. The Status of Daniel as a Sealed Book

Messenger and News Review, December 1993

Daniel 12:4, 9

DURING the final instruction of Daniel by his angel teacher, he was twice told that the book bearing his name was sealed until the time of the end. The first directive reads as follows:

Daniel 12

⁴ But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.

The second reads thus:

⁹ And he said, Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Selected Messages, vol. 2, p. 105:

The book that was sealed was not the book of *Revelation*, but that portion of the prophecy of *Daniel* which related to the last days. The Scripture says,

Daniel 12

⁴ But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

When the book was opened, the proclamation was made,

Revelation 10

⁶ Time shall be no longer.

The book of *Daniel* is now unsealed, and the revelation made by Christ to John is to come to all the inhabitants of the earth. By the increase of knowledge a people is to be prepared to stand in the latter days.

But why was a portion of *Daniel* sealed until the last days? Was it because God had arbitrarily decreed that it should be so? No! For, in harmony with God's character of love, there has to be a better reason than that, for God does not withhold truth from His beloved children, but urges them to dig deep in order to gain the hidden treasure.

The Signs of the Times, November 7, 1892:

The lessons that Christ presented in his words of truth are like precious pearls; for in them He bestowed upon men an inestimable possession. Much that He taught is still but dimly understood, and the rubbish of error covers many a glorious gem of truth. These jewels of truth should be searched for with as great diligence as men search for hidden treasure.

Those who know the love of Christ should regard it as did the man who found the hidden treasure, and for joy thereof went and sold all that he had, that he might buy the field, and dig over every inch of it to discover the rich veins of gold and silver.

The teaching of Christ is more precious than any mine of earth can be, and it demands more zeal on our part to seek for the gems of truth than does any possession we can secure in the world. We should put forth most strenuous efforts to understand the full meaning of the truth He would convey to the mind in parables or maxims. Let him who would comprehend spiritual things, dig deep in the mines of truth.

The limitations retarding the progressive revelations of truth are firstly on the human side. It is because of many unnecessary factors emanating from humanity that darkness clouds the mind and dims the understanding. Never were the effects of these problems more visible than in the Dark Ages, but God in His great love and mercy has made complete recovery possible. Success in availing ourselves of these more than adequate resources, demands the intense application to the task of our physical, mental, and spiritual powers under the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

The failure to study as deeply and as thoroughly as we ought to have done, together with the benumbing of our senses due to the damaging, longstanding presence of sin in us, are not the only reasons for retardation of our knowledge of the prophecies.

Why Was Daniel Sealed?

There are two other significant reasons of which every child of God should be very much aware.

1. The unfolding of truth is progressively advanced as it is needed, and

2. Before the crucifixion, Christ, the slain lamb, did not yet have the qualifications necessary to unseal the book of *Daniel*.

We will now examine these two reasons for the delay in the unsealing of *Daniel*. We will take them in the order listed above, that is, firstly that truth is progressively revealed according to the need for it; and secondly, before it could be unsealed in its truest sense, Christ had to perform a special work, by His sacrificial, all-conquering death and resurrection.

Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, p. 50:

Christ was the greatest Teacher the world ever saw.

As such, He laid down the important principle that prophecy was not to be understood until the time for its fulfillment was approaching, or, as in some cases, had actually arrived. Then came the time when it, being most needed, became *present truth*. Thus He said:

John 13

¹⁹ Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He.

He repeated this truth among the final instructions given to His disciples before He entered the Garden of Gethsemane.

John 14

²⁹ And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.

This was particularly true in the experience of Christ's disciples who looked ahead to the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies which were destined never to happen in the way they expected them to come to pass. They misunderstood the words of the prophets until after they had been fulfilled, when at last some of them were able to match the fulfillment with the prediction.

A clear example of this is found in the experience of the two disciples with whom Christ walked on His resurrection day from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Until Christ carefully and accurately matched the events with the predictions, those two dedicated

men were not able to see in the events of that most remarkable of all weekends, that that which had taken place in the life and death of Christ had all been as predicted. There had been neither omissions nor additions to the program. God had been in absolute command, and all things had happened within the framework of His will.

The Signs of the Times, January 20, 1888:

Had not the disciples heard this very exposition of these scriptures from their Master's lips while He was with them? But how little had they comprehended them! How forcible is their meaning now! How startling their fulfillment! The truths they had but dimly discerned now stand revealed in a blaze of light. The very things He had told them have been accomplished.

Faith begins to revive. Their hearts beat with a strong and renewed hope as they listen eagerly to the plain, simple words of their unknown fellow-traveler. They are surprised to find their burdened hearts becoming light; and as they think of Jesus, of all He was to them, of all He suffered, their tears flow freely. Their confidence had not been misplaced. He was all and even more than they had believed.

They could have understood much better than they did what Christ had so diligently tried to teach them had not their minds been clouded by the preconceived ideas and theories against which Jesus had constantly been forced to contend during His efforts to open the prophecies to their understanding.

At the same time, however, there were fresh depths of comprehension when the events predicted came to pass. This was in harmony with the explanation of Jesus who informed the twelve that He had told them of future events so that when they came to pass, they might believe.

The study of the progressive unfolding of information regarding future events is an extremely useful one. It has the power to strengthen faith as it reveals the harmonious inter-relationship between the various works of God on earth and in heaven above. Furthermore, we are comforted and strengthened by the knowledge that nothing can catch God by surprise. We see that from

eternity in the past, and into the eternity of the future, God is fully aware of what is happening, and that He has made provision to meet every crisis which may arise.

But it requires faith and spiritual discernment to perceive this. For instance, I did not see prophecy being progressively understood when I was first introduced to Uriah Smith's book, *Daniel and the Revelation*. I marveled that one man could interpret those two books so accurately and so comprehensively as he did, or rather, as I thought he did. I saw no one upon whom he could draw for help. To me, it appeared as if it had been a sudden and complete emergence into great, new light for God's people. The time followed when I became aware of two things:

1. His interpretation of the messages of these two books was not so accurate and so comprehensive as I had believed.

I learned that his positions on the kings of the north and south, and his views of the battle of Armageddon, were based on incorrect principles of prophetic exposition, which in turn led to the assumption of wrong conclusions.

2. Such correct positions as were occupied by Uriah Smith had been progressively held by a long succession of writers and teachers stretching back to Christ and Paul at least.

Except when surveying the contributions made by Christ and the inspired writers of the Bible, due allowance for errors must be made as lost truths were recovered one after another.

This means that Uriah Smith's book was not a building of the entire structure of the interpretation of *Daniel* and the *Revelation*, but was but a continued unfolding of light which had been blessing the people of God for centuries. Especially once the great Protestant Reformation had taken place, every century since has been marked by ever increasing knowledge of these great prophecies right up until the present time.

When it is remembered that the light contained in this volume was, at the time of its publication, the latest known by the people of God, it is quite proper to believe that here we have the clearest,

brightest, most comprehensive and far-reaching light ever understood by God's people up till that time.

It is also proper to believe that all the brilliant light which can shine from these two books, *Daniel* and the *Revelation*, has by no means been revealed as yet. As we move closer to the final scenes, the most glorious revelations of truth will yet shine from these two books as they illuminate the way of the saints to the City of God. But this information will not be revealed by the Fountain of truth until it is needed.

The Time is Fulfilled

The first situation in which Christ referred to information contained in *Daniel*, was at the outset of His public ministry, the record of which reads as follows:

Mark 1

¹⁴ Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

¹⁵ And saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe the gospel.

To the fulfillment of what time was Jesus referring when He made this soul-stirring announcement, "the time is fulfilled"? Was it a general statement aimed at meeting the general need to make one's calling and election sure, or was it a specific reference to a prophesied point of time? It was the latter, the specific point of time being toward the end of the 490 year prophecy which began in 457 BC. That this is so is confirmed by the following statement:

The Desire of Ages, p. 233:

The burden of Christ's preaching was,

Mark 1

¹⁵ The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe the gospel.

Thus the gospel message, as given by the Saviour himself, was based on the prophecies. The "time" which He declared to be fulfilled was the period made known by the angel Gabriel to Daniel.

Daniel 9

²⁴ Seventy weeks, [said the angel,] are determined upon your people and upon your holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.

Thus it was that *Daniel* at the time when Christ preached from this book, was well known and accepted as part of the inspired Scriptures. Therefore as Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, pointed to the fact that they had arrived at the very point of time when the Messiah was scheduled to appear, His audiences were deeply impressed, and the foundations were laid for their acceptance of the message of righteousness.

But, while they understood the time portion of *Daniel* 9, and no doubt, certain other messages contained therein, there was much about this book of which they remained in ignorance. Gradually, as the need to understand more and still more of the book arose, the Lord progressively unfolded the light. In consequence, the light shining from *Daniel* is at this time very bright, but, even so, not so bright as to exhaust the supply, for eternity itself cannot even do that.

Matthew 24

The next reference to the book of *Daniel* in holy Scripture was again made by Christ when, on the Mount of Olives, He delineated coming events as they would succeed one another clear down to the second advent.

In this presentation, Christ covers the ground in full or in part three times. The first of these three are found in *Matthew* 24:4-14. There is foretold the appearance of false Christs and prophets, wars and rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, persecution, more false prophets, the love of many waxing cold, those enduring to the end being saved, the gospel of the kingdom being preached in all the world, and the coming of the end.

In the second step-by-step progression through the future, Jesus begins with His foretelling of the fall of Jerusalem, and solemnly

warned the Christians that the moment they saw a certain sign, they were not to hesitate, but immediately flee. That sign was the setting up in the holy place of the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet.

Matthew 24

¹⁵ Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand),

¹⁶ Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

¹⁷ Let him who is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house.

¹⁸ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

From this point, Jesus directed His disciples to the great tribulation, a prediction which came to pass during the awful persecutions of the Dark or Middle Ages. False prophets, Christs, and comings of Christ were to follow, leading up to the second advent once again. The events covered by the third prophetic survey were to begin...

²⁹ Immediately after the tribulation of those days,

—and were to extend to the second advent once again. At this stage in our study, we will not spend time considering these successions of events, but will concentrate on understanding the reference made by Christ to Daniel, the Old Testament prophet.

As Christ on the Mount of Olives described the coming destruction of Jerusalem to His disciples, He foresaw that His true followers would need a sign telling them when they must flee without a moment's delay. Failure to do so would mean they would be trapped and destroyed.

For their successful guidance, they would need an indicator understood by all the Christians throughout the danger area, but not understood by their enemies. When the event took place on the appearance of which they were to take instant action, there would be no time to discuss whether or not this was the promised event. Each would have to be so conversant with Bible prophecy that the sign to leave would be immediately recognized.

Nor would there be time to gather up any material possessions. Everything not already in their hands had to be left behind. The need then was for Christ to nominate a sign which would be understood and recognized by all Christians concerned. He therefore designated the setting up in the holy place of the abomination that makes desolate as spoken of by Daniel the prophet.

It must be immediately apparent that in order for a Christian to understand what the actual sign was and to instantly identify it when it appeared, he had to be a good student of the book of *Daniel*. Likewise, for all the members of the Christian Church in the city of Jerusalem and Judea to be saved by heeding Christ's instructions, they would all have to be excellent students of the book of *Daniel*. That they were is evident from the fact that:

The Great Controversy, p. 30:

Not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ had given His disciples warning, and all who believed His words watched for the promised sign.

Luke 21

²⁰ When you shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, [said Jesus,] then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

²¹ Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out.

After the Romans under Cestius had surrounded the city, they unexpectedly abandoned the siege when everything seemed favorable for an immediate attack. The besieged, despairing of successful resistance, were on the point of surrender, when the Roman general withdrew his forces without the least apparent reason.

But God's merciful providence was directing events for the good of His own people. The promised sign had been given to the waiting Christians, and now an opportunity was offered for all who would, to obey the Saviour's warning. Events were so overruled that neither Jews nor Romans should hinder the flight of the Christians. Upon the retreat of Cestius, the Jews, sallying from Jerusalem, pursued after his retiring army; and while both forces were thus fully engaged, the Christians had an opportunity to leave the city.

At this time the country also had been cleared of enemies who might have endeavored to intercept them. At the time of the siege, the Jews were assembled at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and thus the Christians throughout the land were able to make their escape unmolested. Without delay they fled to a place of safety—the city of Pella, in the land of Perea, beyond Jordan.

Once the time had come for Jerusalem to be encompassed with armies, they were to watch for the sign when they must take immediate flight. They were to remain on the alert for the next step, the setting up in the holy place of the abomination which makes desolate as revealed by *Daniel*. Once that event transpired, they must flee without a moment's hesitation, and they did!

Before us then is the evidence that these early Christians had a deep understanding of the book of *Daniel* so much so that every member in Jerusalem and Judea was able to positively identify the abomination of desolation. That reveals more than just a casual acquaintance of the great truths contained in *Daniel*, but how much more they understood, we do not know. This incident in the unfolding of the history of the Christian Church could well be entitled,

“Saved by the book of *Daniel* from the Abomination of Desolation.”

A Future Fulfillment

In the very near future, there will be another rise to world power of the final manifestation of the abomination of desolation. Once again, the time will come for the people of God to flee for their very lives and as before, there must be no hesitation, no looking back, no stopping to gather any possessions whatsoever.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 464-465:

It is no time now for God's people to be fixing their affections or laying up their treasure in the world. The time is not far distant, when, like the early disciples, we shall be forced to seek a refuge in desolate and solitary places. As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean

Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal Sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains.

And now, instead of seeking expensive dwellings here, we should be preparing to move to a better country, even a heavenly. Instead of spending our means in self-gratification, we should be studying to economize. Every talent lent of God should be used to His glory in giving the warning to the world.

God has a work for His colaborers to do in the cities. Our missions must be sustained; new missions must be opened. To carry forward this work successfully will require no small outlay. Houses of worship are needed, where the people may be invited to hear the truths for this time. For this very purpose, God has entrusted a capital to His stewards. Let not your property be tied up in worldly enterprises, so that this work shall be hindered. Get your means where you can handle it for the benefit of the cause of God. Send your treasures before you into heaven.

The Falling Away

The next reference in the New Testament to the progressive understanding of the prophecies of *Daniel* was that of the inspired apostle Paul. This great man of God wrote two letters to the church of the Thessalonians in the second one of which he made it clear that the second advent of Christ could take place only after certain prophecies written in the book of *Daniel* had been fulfilled.

Paul was careful not to openly advance the light which he had on the prophecies, for this would unnecessarily give the enemies of the Christian Church occasion to persecute its members unmercifully. Accordingly, he wrote in language such as would be understood by those who knew the prophecies of *Daniel* as he had taught them to these believers when he had previously visited them, but in such a way as would mean nothing to the apostate Jews and the Romans.

This disguising of the prophecies cannot be classed as being deceitfulness on the part of the apostle, for God is under no obligation to supply information to those who have rejected the truth and would use this knowledge to increase the sufferings of His people and threaten the continued survival of the Church. It is for this reason that the prophecies themselves are delivered through symbolic language.

It must never be forgotten that we are at war with a savage, merciless foe. In order for God to command His troops effectively, He must be able to communicate His battle plan to them, both for today and forward to the final conclusion of the great controversy, without His and our enemies becoming conversant with those strategies. Informing His Christian soldiers of His general and specific orders is not the problem. The difficulty lies in God's doing this without transmitting the same messages, at the same time, to the enemies of himself and His people.

In the case of the Thessalonian believers, both the prophecy and the interpretation thereof were hidden behind symbols, a truth which needs to be kept in mind when studying the letter written by Paul to them.

First, the apostle states very clearly that there would be no second coming of Christ until there had been a falling away or great apostasy through which the man of sin, who is the son of perdition, would be exposed for what he is. Of this he wrote:

2 Thessalonians 2

¹ Now, we ask you brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,

² Not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

⁴ Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

The falling away to which Paul is here making reference, occurred in the Christian Church, for it is impossible for the man of sin to rise to universal dominance while the Church of God, remaining free from apostasy, continues as an invincible power in the world. First, the man of sin must himself become firmly established in the Church and must gain control of all its resources. At the time when Paul ministered the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, he saw in the Church as it was at that time, the springing up of the mystery of iniquity which would develop to maximum proportions before Christ could return.

He was able to see that the pagan Roman empire would be superseded by the far worse version of the son of perdition—the papacy—only waiting for the removal of the then-present occupant of the throne of the entire world to clear the way for its ascendancy to absolute domination of all mankind.

It was from the book of *Daniel* illuminated by the Holy Spirit that Paul gained this information. He knew that three of the four world empires had risen and fallen, and the pagan Roman as the fourth such empire must eventually pass away. When it did, then the son of perdition would run its course after which and not before, Christ could come.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 265-266:

Paul's words were not to be misinterpreted. It was not to be taught that he, by special revelation, had warned the Thessalonians of the immediate coming of Christ. Such a position would cause confusion of faith; for disappointment often leads to unbelief.

The apostle therefore cautioned the brethren to receive no such message as coming from him, and he proceeded to emphasize the fact that the papal power, so clearly described by the prophet *Daniel*, was yet to rise and wage war against God's people. Until this power should have performed its deadly and blasphemous work, it would be in vain for the church to look for the coming of their Lord.

2 Thessalonians 2

⁵ Remember you not, [Paul inquired,] that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

Except during those periods when the light was lost through the power of deep apostasy, since Christ's and Paul's time, the understanding of these messages has increased, until today the book of *Daniel* is no longer described as a sealed book. This increase of understanding has not been a random affair, but in a most orderly way, has met each need as it has arisen.

A Gradual Unfolding

For instance, when the time came for the beginning of the great Protestant Reformation, the believers in Jesus were directed by the Holy Spirit to those verses which identified the papacy. Four world empires had risen and fallen. The fourth had splintered into ten parts, then three of them had been uprooted to make way for the rise of the man of sin, otherwise known as the "son of perdition,"⁴ and the "abomination of desolation."⁵

Emboldened by the power of the living, prophetic word, the reformers identified the papacy as the antichrist and boldly preached these understandings to the people.

But they neither generally understood nor preached the meaning of the "time and times and half a time." This light had not yet been revealed in Luther's day, but as the time neared for the termination of the 1260 years in 1798, the prophecies concerning this event became the subject of the most earnest study. God blessed them by shedding much more light on *Daniel*. The "time and times and half a time" were understood, and starting and ending points were identified. As the great moment approached, Bible students were able to predict the fall of the papacy in advance.

No sooner had the event fulfilled the prediction, than the attention of believers was directed by the Holy Spirit to the 2300 days

⁴ 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

⁵ Matthew 24:15.

of *Daniel* 8:14. God unsealed this prophecy resulting in the first, second, third, and fourth angels' movements. What a comprehensive wealth of shining light has now been shed abroad in our hearts through the words of prophecy progressively revealed over so many past centuries.

We are rich though not as the Laodiceans claim themselves to be. Now our knowledge is no longer limited to three angels, or four, but is extended to seven. Now we are conversant with the great powers of the kings of the north and the south.

- We see how the king of the north is the abomination of desolation, how he will plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain, yet will come to his end with none to help him.
- We shall see how he is the robber of God's people, the enemy of all truth, and the pretended ambassador of Christ.
- We will discern that he is that wicked angel cast down from heaven; our relentless, implacable adversary, the devil himself.

Before us is the unsealed book of *Daniel* and its New Testament counterpart, the *Revelation*. Open to our minds are vast fields of thrilling truths calling for eager contemplation, ever-deepening research, and penetrating spiritual insight.

At the head of it all is our great and mighty leader, He who rides forth on a white horse under the title,

Revelation 19

¹⁶ ...KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS,

—our all-conquering Saviour. In short, there is no limit to the unfolding of truth in *Daniel* and the *Revelation*. When we understand what these books mean to us there shall be seen among us a great revival.

3. A Door Standing Open in Heaven

Messenger and News Review, January 1994

Revelation 4:1-11

IN THE last chapter there were listed two major reasons for there being a progressive unsealing of the book of *Daniel*. They are:

1. The ever enlarging need for the continually brighter and still brighter light to flow out to God's people to adequately equip them for their warfare against the powers of evil.

In accordance with this, Jesus laid down the principle that He would tell His people of future events so that when they came to pass, they might believe, or their faith might be confirmed and strengthened. The study of this principle was the subject of our last chapter.

2. Until Christ died on Calvary and rose again triumphant over sin and death, neither He nor any other being had the power to unseal the prophecies of *Daniel*.

This chapter will be devoted to enlarging our comprehension of this point. Let us begin. The reference for our basic information is *Revelation* 4 and 5.

The Throne Room in Heaven

In these two chapters we are provided with an awe-inspiring view into the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary. There in all its living power and splendor stood the throne of God surrounded by four living creatures and twenty-four elders. Let us read with great reverence this revelation of the power and glory of God as it is opened before our wondering gaze.

Revelation 4

¹ After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this!

² Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.

³ And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.

⁴ Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.

⁵ And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thundering, and voices. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.

⁶ Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.

⁷ The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.

⁸ And the four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!

⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever,

¹⁰ The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

¹¹ You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by your will they exist and were created.

No attempt will be made at this stage in our study of *Daniel* and the *Revelation* to draw out all the living truths contained in these verses and those which follow in chapter 5. We shall confine ourselves to those thoughts which teach that only the crucified and risen Christ had the power to unseal *Daniel*, and something of what these truths mean to us.

In the beginning of this particular revelation, John is pointed to a door standing open in heaven, the open state of which reveals the presence within of God the Father, the mighty Creator of the

heavens and the earth. Around the throne are twenty-four elders and four living creatures who are seen to be directing all their praise and adoration to Him who is seated on the throne.

The Sealed Scroll

No reference is made to Christ, the slain Lamb, in chapter 4. He is not introduced until chapter 5 where He is pictured coming forward as the only one with the qualifications needed to unseal the scroll. Then, when this fact is revealed, the praise and adoration of the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures are directed to the slain Lamb.

Thus it is that during chapter 4 when the door in heaven is opened, the scroll in the hand of the Omnipotent One remains sealed with seven seals. So, as the vision opens before us, we are confronted at the same time with an open door on the one hand, and a sealed scroll on the other.

The open door revealed God as the Almighty Creator of the heavens and the earth, and the tried and tested Sovereign of an eternally established government or kingdom. This view gave the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures cause for praise and rejoicing.

But, on the other hand, the fact that no one could be found to open the scroll sealed with seven seals, was cause for the greatest sorrow and the gravest concern. They could be happy for the one situation, but dismayed over the other. What can this mean?

The mighty helper in our understanding of this problem is the law of cause and effect, This is the principle that, until certain qualifications are obtained and conditions met, the end results desired will not be achieved. The scroll could not be unsealed until Christ had become the slain Lamb, and He could not actually be the slain lamb until He had sacrificed himself on Calvary.

The Sanctuary Service

This progression from cause to effect is powerfully pictured in the services of the Old Testament sanctuary where the work began

with the sacrifice of the animal victim in the courtyard; the courtyard being the symbol for this earth. This being so, in order to keep the antitype true to the type, Christ had to be crucified on this earth. And so He was.

Again, in the Old Testament type, it was only when the service in the courtyard was satisfactorily completed that the priest could progress into the first apartment of the sanctuary. So in the antitype. No saving ministry of divine grace could be applied in the sinner's favor until the service in the courtyard had been performed.

Likewise there could be no service in the most holy place until the services in the holy place had been completed both on earth and in heaven.

A qualifying word is needed at this point, for what has been written in the above paragraphs might lead to the conclusion that all those who died up until the commencement of Christ's ministry in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, could never be saved, or had to be saved in some other way than through faith in the gospel.

There are those who take the position that all who have been saved up until the cross, lived during the period of the dispensation of law-keeping, while those who have been saved since, have lived during the kingdom of grace. Thus they teach that those who lived before the cross will inherit the kingdom by the merits gained through faithfully keeping the commandments of God, while those after the cross will be saved by their faith in God's grace. This is the sad doctrine called "Dispensationalism."

All of God's people, whether they lived before or after the cross, are saved in the same way—by faith. The only difference is that those before, rested in a Saviour *to come*, while those after, trusted in a Saviour who *had come*. Wherever the cross is placed, it makes no difference to the effectiveness of God's provision for man's salvation.

The sanctuary and its services are designed to reveal what takes place on earth and in heaven between the cross and the restoration of all things Edenic and glorious. While the light of the Old Testament revelation of the power of God's working to restore the lost image of God in man, is both clear and powerful, it is greatly glorified by the New Testament witness.

This does not mean that we disparage and discard the Old Testament, for that would be a mistake of the most immense proportions.

The Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 3, p. 211-212:

The history of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, as that of the Son of God, cannot be fully demonstrated without the evidence contained in the Old Testament. Christ is revealed in the Old Testament as clearly as in the New. The one testifies of a Saviour to come, while the other testifies of a Saviour that has come in the manner predicted by the prophets.

In order to appreciate the plan of redemption, the Scripture of the Old Testament must be thoroughly understood. It is the glorified light from the prophetic past that brings out the life of Christ and the teachings of the New Testament with clearness and beauty.

The miracles of Jesus are a proof of His divinity; but the strongest proofs that He is the world's Redeemer are found in the prophecies of the Old Testament compared with the history of the New. Jesus said to the Jews,

John 5

³⁹ Search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.

At that time there was no other scripture in existence save that of the Old Testament; so the injunction of the Saviour is plain.

Selected Messages, vol. 3, p. 195:

Abraham was saved by faith in Christ as verily as the sinner is saved by faith in Christ today.

The Challenge of Rebellion

Let us now return to our study of what John saw as recorded in *Revelation* 4 and 5, and which has a direct bearing on the unseal-

ing of *Daniel*. As already noted in this chapter, that which John first saw in heaven was the open door which revealed God the Father in His role as the Creator which He executed through His Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 51:

...from the mighty leviathan that plays among the waters, to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam...

—every part of God’s creative work is an expression of His character of beneficence and love. His was the perfection of government which opened to every one of its subjects, the ultimate in holy, sinless pleasures, unlimited development, and access to all that the vast storehouse of knowledge offered.

In consequence of the rise of Lucifer, the rebel angel, and his success in leading man to join him in rebellion, there was a time when God the Everlasting Father, facing within himself a fearful crisis, came close to closing that door forever. Had that happened, the Father would have betrayed His character as the loving Creator, would have demonstrated that He could not be trusted to deny self no matter what the cost might be, would have become what Satan charged Him with being—a destroyer, not the restorer, and Christ could never have offered himself as a saving sacrifice.

This would have meant that the scroll would have remained sealed with seven seals, for there would have been no Lamb with the power and skill to break the seals and open the scroll. This suggests the possibility that, had God made another choice, then this door would never have been opened, an eventuality of the gravest possible consequence for those who would be saved from sin and eternal destruction.

This was a very real possibility, for, if God the Father had failed to come out on the correct side of His personal crisis, as could most certainly have happened, then that door would have been forever closed. Then none of the events outlined in the book of *Daniel* which were scheduled to transpire once the great controversy began, could ever have happened.

We need to appreciate far better than we do that the total and permanent victory for God and His Son in the plan of salvation was not a simple, foregone conclusion. Christ and His Father, as our mighty Saviours, were not acting out a scripted role like actors in a play in which the playwright controls the entire outcome. They were not compelled to carry out the plan, and They came very, very close to not doing so.

Jesus even came close to never even entering into the role of the Incarnate One, in which case mankind would have been abandoned to its fate. We understand this from the following statement:

Early Writings, p. 126:

Soon I saw Him approach the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father. Said my accompanying angel, "He is in close converse with His Father." The anxiety of the angels seemed to be intense while Jesus was communing with His Father.

Three times He was shut in by the glorious light about the Father, and the third time He came from the Father we could see His person. His countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and trouble, and shone with a loveliness which words cannot describe.

He then made known to the angelic choir that a way of escape had been made for lost man; that He had been pleading with His Father, and had obtained permission to give His own life as a ransom for the race, to bear their sins, and take the sentence of death upon himself, thus opening a way whereby they might, through the merits of His blood, find pardon for past transgressions, and by obedience be brought back to the garden from which they were driven. Then they could again have access to the glorious, immortal fruit of the tree of life to which they had now forfeited all right.

Before sin ever appeared, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, foreseeing that heaven's perfect harmony would be broken by the uprising of rebellion, according to their infinite wisdom and love, designed the perfect plan of salvation to solve the problem when it should arise. At that time, each of the three

covenanted to fill a certain vital role, even though each knew in His omniscience the infinite cost which would have to be paid when the time came.

Right then and there, one or all could have decided that the personal costs would be too great and could have refused to pay the price. Bear in mind that the heavenly Trio were not compelled to undertake the execution of the plan of salvation, nor could they be. Their sacrifice had to be voluntarily made in the absolute sense of that word. Not the slightest pressure of any kind could be a factor in shaping Their decision.

The Desire of Ages, p. 834:

Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race.

So it was that, in the infinitely distant eternity of the past, the plan of salvation for rescuing created beings who would fall into sin, was formulated and then held ready to be put into operation the moment it was needed.

When that time came, the second great moment of crisis confronted the heavenly Trio. I am not here referring to the rebellion of Lucifer, though that was crisis enough, but to the other crisis, the one in which the fate of humanity trembled in the balance as the Father struggled with the question as to whether to let sinners perish, or to permit His Son to sacrifice himself in order to save them.

Remember that the first was when the plan was formed long before it ever was needed, and the second was when its implementation became necessary. The second came as a test which would demonstrate that even for God, it is one thing to make a solemn covenant in times of peace, but it is another matter altogether to keep one's promises when the pressure is really on.

For instance, today, in the relatively quiet time before the setting up of the worldwide image of the beast, when there is no great pressure being brought to bear upon us, it is one thing to

pledge that we will be faithful to God when the image of the beast shall be set up, but it will be an entirely different matter to maintain that pledge under the pressure of the loss of all things, when we are the subjects of the severest persecution, and find death to be the price we seem about to pay.

This is an experience through which even the eternal Father passed, for it was a struggle for Him to stand by the pledge He had made in times of peace, and give His Son permission to put the plan of salvation into effect now that the reality of it, in all its terrible horror, was facing Him.

Early Writings, p. 127:

Said the angel, "Do you think that the Father yielded up His dearly beloved Son without a struggle? No, no." It was even a struggle with the God of heaven, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give His darling Son to die for them.

When the crisis came upon this earth with the entrance of sin, then God the Father found himself involved in an incredible struggle. The mighty power of love for His beloved Son struggled against His infinite love for doomed humanity. A further factor favoring a decision in support of the rescue of sinners from eternal death, lay in His already having committed himself to pay the price for our salvation, but the question was,

"Would He honor that commitment or disregard it?"

What a struggle that must have been! It was not, under any circumstances, an act as in a play where the outcome is determined by the playwright. Nor was God incapable of breaking His covenant with His Son and the Holy Spirit. If it had been impossible for God to change, then there would never have been a struggle, for the outcome would have been a foregone conclusion.

It is true that God said that He changes not, but this is a statement that was proven only after He had committed himself to keep His word under the greatest possible pressure. Only after this commitment was it evident that He did not change and therefore did not sin, and truthfully He could say of himself,

Malachi 3

⁶ I am the Lord, I do not change.

—and also,

James 1

¹³ God cannot be tempted by evil...

In this context we have an interesting point which is that the angels believed that God could change. Otherwise, they would not have been intensely anxious each of the three times God's dearly beloved Son entered into the light which flooded the Father's person. Note those words again:

Early Writings, p. 126:

The anxiety of the angels seemed to be intense while Jesus was communing with His Father.

That the angels believed that God could change is not proof that He could, because the angels did not always understand God. But it is an interesting fact just the same. The Saviour's purpose in entering time after time into His Father's presence was to obtain...

Early Writings, p. 126: [Italics supplied]

...*permission* to give His own life as a ransom for the race, to bear their sins, and take the sentence of death upon himself, thus opening a way whereby they might, through the merits of His blood, find pardon for past transgressions, and by obedience be brought back to the garden from which they were driven.

Total commitment to Gospel Order would have prevented Christ from proceeding with the plan of Salvation without the Father's permission. For that matter, so dependent was Christ on His Father during His incarnation, that the Saviour could not have successfully undertaken the salvation of lost mankind alone anyway.

Youth's Instructor, March 30, 1893:

In all His Godlike deeds, the world's Redeemer declares,

John 5

³⁰ I can of my own self do nothing.

John 10

¹⁸ This commandment have I received of my Father.

“All I do is in fulfillment of the counsel and will of my heavenly Father.” The history of the daily earthly life of Jesus is the exact record of the fulfillment of the purposes of God toward man. His life and character were the unfolding or representation of the perfection of the character that man may attain by becoming a partaker of the divine nature, and overcoming the world through daily conflicts.

So then, God could have decided not to grant permission for His dearly beloved Son to give His life to ransom mankind, but, after a fearful struggle, He chose to make the personal sacrifice. Thereafter, all the resources of heaven were set in motion to effect the salvation of those millions who would accept the gift.

Up until the challenge mounted by Lucifer against the divine government, the angels and all other created beings...

- had never questioned the character of God;
- had never doubted His truthfulness;
- had not the slightest anxiety concerning His absolute justice, integrity, and selfless love; and
- had perfect confidence in all His decisions and actions.

Heaven's governmental system ran with perfect smoothness and without friction of any kind, while upon the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as Creators, but not yet as Saviours, continual praise and unending gratitude were ever flowing. What glorious singing that was as wave after wave of rapture flowed over the Authors of such perfection. God's character provided the angels and the other inhabitants of the universe with causes for joy unspeakable as they became increasingly aware of the perfection of the creation and the government which controlled it.

A Progressive Revelation

Impressive as this spontaneous singing of the angels was, it was not yet praise generated by knowledge of the plan of salvation. The angels and dwellers throughout the universe could not and did not praise God for that of which they knew nothing, and it is

evident that the plan of salvation was not made known to them before it was needed. Note carefully the sequence of events in the following statement:

Early Writings, p. 126:

The anxiety of the angels seemed to be intense while Jesus was communing with His Father. Three times He was shut in by the glorious light about the Father, and the third time He came from the Father we could see His person. His countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and trouble, and shone with a loveliness which words cannot describe.

He then made known to the angelic choir that a way of escape had been made for lost man; that He had been pleading with His Father, and had obtained permission to give His own life as a ransom for the race.

The sequence is as follows:

1. The Saviour was shut in by the glorious light around the Father.
2. After the third emergence, His countenance shone with an indescribable radiance.
3. Then, Jesus announced the existence and structure of the plan of salvation—the way of escape for guilty man.

This statement makes it clear that the plan of salvation was not revealed to the sinless angels, nor in turn to sinful men, until the need arose for it to solve the sin problem. Then, once the need became apparent, the solution, now that it had been made known, began to be understood.

Inevitably, the character of God shone forth with much greater beauty, power, and excellence than ever before. This drew from the angels a corresponding response. They sang praises to God such as they had never sung before, not now only in appreciation of the power and perfection of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as Creators, but additionally, they sang of their wonder, admiration, and delight as they beheld the love of the Godhead in offering to save mankind, no matter what the cost might be to themselves.

Early Writings, p. 126-127:

Then joy, inexpressible joy, filled heaven, and the heavenly choir sang a song of praise and adoration. They touched their harps and sang a note higher than they had done before, because of the great mercy and condescension of God in yielding up His dearly Beloved to die for a race of rebels. Then praise and adoration was poured forth for the self-denial and sacrifice of Jesus, in consenting to leave the bosom of His Father, and choosing a life of suffering and anguish, and an ignominious death, that He might give life to others.

It was not as though God had no alternative options for solving the sin problem. One of these provided for the extermination of all those who dared to step out of line, and in fact, this is what the angels actually expected Him to do as it is written:

The Desire of Ages, p. 37:

With intense interest the unfallen worlds had watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth.

Had God chosen this solution, the result would have been the introduction of a reign of despotism. Anyone who dared to rebel would be ruthlessly eliminated from a kingdom based on a rulership maintained by instilling fear into the hearts of its subjects.

Summary

Let me now summarize the points made in this chapter so far. It is clear then that the Eternal Father came very close to refusing to grant permission for His Son to become the sacrifice by which perishing humanity could be saved. Had He done so, the long series of victories for the cause of truth, which were prophesied to take place between the fall and the cross of Calvary, would never have taken place.

But God the Father did make the correct choice, and as surely as He gained His great personal victory, so surely was the door in heaven made to stand open. Just think of the difference that victory made to history which, rightly understood, is the unfolding of the triumphs of the plan of salvation.

And think of the difference that momentous decision made to the songs of the angels. Before the fall when there had been no question in regard to God's character or the administration of His entirely just laws, the angels had been enraptured by what they knew of God as their Creator. So inspired were they that they sang of Him continually.

It would be well for us if we were located in the position where, like the angels, we could see these wonders of perfection and power for ourselves personally. At the same time, we would need to possess the abilities to really comprehend the beauty and perfection of God's creation and government as they were able to do before man fell and before the revelation of the plan of salvation was made. Like the angels, we will burst forth in continual praise and gratitude to our lovely heavenly Father in proportion to our ability to see what they saw.

But, when the Father won His immense personal battle with himself, and the plan of salvation was opened before the enraptured gaze of the angels, then they sang as they had never sung before, even though there was yet to come the unsealing of the book of *Daniel* which could not take place until Christ had achieved the same victory over himself that His Father had gained.

When that was won and not before, the Lamb had become qualified to unseal the sealed book of *Daniel*. The unsealing of that scroll will be the subject of our next chapter.

4. The Lamb Unseals the Daniel Scroll

Messenger and News Review, February 1994

Revelation 5:1-13

The Two Great Sacrifices

IN THE last chapter, we plainly saw that only after the most terrible struggle with himself, did God the Father give His personal permission to His dearly beloved Son to sacrifice himself in order to save this world and all its sin cursed inhabitants. The mightiest force in existence—His infinite love for His Son—was striving to protect His only begotten from the fate so terrible as that which awaited Him who should be the propitiation for the fallen race.

The Almighty, Omniscient One understood to perfection the awesome cost His Son would have to pay—the rejection, the persecution, the mockery, the scorn, the misrepresentation, the horror of great darkness which would come over Him, and by far the worst, the bottomless gulf of separation which would seemingly come between them forever.

We have but the faintest concepts of the terrible agonies through which His Son would have to pass; of the deep, dark, mysterious dread which would encompass His being, and of the weight of sin bearing down upon Him which would take His life. It was not the Jews nor the Romans who killed our Saviour, but sin itself which was the executioner.

Only by passing through as much as we are personally able to experience of Christ's agonies, could we have even some idea of what the sufferings of Christ were, but His Father knew it all down to the last shred of loss, anguish, pall of darkness, and unutterable sorrow.

The Desire of Ages, p. 693:

Could mortals have viewed the amazement of the angelic host as in silent grief they watched the Father separating His beams of light, love, and glory from His beloved Son, they would better understand how offensive in His sight is sin.

Of that terrible sense of separation from God which Christ suffered it is further written:

The Desire of Ages, p. 753:

But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.

A detailed and vivid description of the terrible ordeal through which Christ was to pass is laid out in *The Desire of Ages*, p. 685-757. There we dimly see in the events which have already happened, that which God clearly and comprehensively understood before any of it had come to pass.

The closer we come to obtaining a truly realistic concept of what took place, the better we shall be fitted to understand what the Everlasting Father went through in His momentous struggle over the fate of humanity. The entering into of a positive awareness of how close we, the members of doomed mankind, came to being left to perish, the more deeply grateful we shall be for the selfless choice which the Father made.

By making that decision, Jehovah opened the door into the future which remained under His control, at least up until the ratification of the covenant provided by Christ's death and resurrection. To achieve that confirmation, another decision had to be made by one of the Godhead, this time by Jesus Christ while clad in weak, fallen, sinful, mortal flesh and blood.

Again, it involved a life and death struggle. Once more the fate of humanity trembled in the balance. As before, the angels looked on in silent anxiety for the outcome which would either establish the kingdom in righteousness, or destroy it forever.

But before this point of truth is explored and developed further, let me direct your attention to the fact that in this chapter we are not studying great decisions which God's people had to make from time to time in order to preserve the plan of salvation, vi-

tally important and fateful as those choices were. What we are considering are the occasions when the Deities themselves had to struggle to make decisions critical to the successful survival of the plan of salvation.

One may argue that if One of the Deities would have failed to keep His promise, God could have instituted another plan, just as King Saul's failure led to his rejection, and his place being filled by another, even David.

That is not true, for the introduction of replacement dynasties does not reveal what would happen if the Saviour failed. While a king and his dynasty can be replaced, the Saviour's position and work could not be. God had only one only-begotten Son who could offer to save the lost, and, if He were to fail, so too would the plan of salvation. God had no back-up even though the possibility for failure was very real and came terrifyingly close to happening. It was an all-or-nothing situation. If Christ had failed to fulfill His appointed mission, all would have been lost. Even the choice which His Father had made after He struggled so terribly over His wonderful love for His Son, would have become of no consequence.

When the Everlasting Father went through that awesome struggle which resulted in His surrendering His only begotten Son to suffer and die for the lost, this did not terminate the need for Deity to be subjected to a further great and terrible struggle in which once more, the fate of humanity would tremble in the balance. That occasion was when, in the Garden of Gethsemane, the salvation of mankind depended on a member of the Godhead, namely God's only begotten Son, entering into His Father's presence three times to supplicate the removal from Him of the responsibility for being the sacrifice by which man could be saved. Of that incredible ordeal, we read as follows:

The Desire of Ages, p. 690-693:

Turning away, Jesus sought again His retreat, and fell prostrate, overcome by the horror of a great darkness. The humanity of the Son of God trembled in that trying hour. He prayed not

now for His disciples that their faith might not fail, but for His own tempted, agonized soul. The awful moment had come—that moment which was to decide the destiny of the world. The fate of humanity trembled in the balance.

Christ might even now refuse to drink the cup apportioned to guilty man. It was not yet too late. He might wipe the bloody sweat from His brow, and leave man to perish in his iniquity. He might say, “Let the transgressor receive the penalty of his sin, and I will go back to my Father.”

Will the Son of God drink the bitter cup of humiliation and agony? Will the innocent suffer the consequences of the curse of sin, to save the guilty? The words fall tremblingly from the pale lips of Jesus,

Matthew 26

⁴² O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, your will be done.

Three times has He uttered that prayer. Three times has humanity shrunk from the last, crowning sacrifice. But now the history of the human race comes up before the world’s Redeemer. He sees that the transgressors of the law, if left to themselves, must perish. He sees the helplessness of man. He sees the power of sin. The woes and lamentations of a doomed world rise before Him.

He beholds its impending fate, and His decision is made. He will save man at any cost to himself. He accepts His baptism of blood, that through Him perishing millions may gain everlasting life. He has left the courts of heaven, where all is purity, happiness, and glory, to save the one lost sheep, the one world that has fallen by transgression. And He will not turn from His mission. He will become the propitiation of a race that has willed to sin. His prayer now breathes only submission:

Matthew 26

⁴² If this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, your will be done.

One may argue that God and Christ are so perfectly righteous that it would be impossible for them to make the commitment to save sinners, and then, when the time came to face the reality of it, refuse to honor their covenant. But perfect righteousness does

not preclude freedom of choice. The gospel does not make a person unable to sin, but able not to sin.

Therefore, God could have chosen not to honor His covenant made with Christ and the Holy Spirit to save perishing sinners. Had He done so, however, He certainly would have acted unrighteously, and therefore sinfully.

One may ask how and why it would have been sin for Him to have exercised His perfect right to choose not to save the lost? The answer to this question is that righteousness is the sacrifice of one's self in service for others regardless of the cost to one's self, while iniquity is service to self no matter what the cost to others. Christ's garments are dipped in blood—His own. Satan's garments are also dipped in blood—that of others.

Had the eternal Father chosen not to permit himself and His Son to sacrifice themselves for the salvation of the lost, then they would have begun to operate according to the principles of the kingdom of darkness, the pathway populated by the unrighteous. While the full manifestation of the outworking of this choice would not be immediately apparent, but would take some time to mature, the end result would be too terrible for words.

Furthermore, unrighteousness would not totally self destruct, because God, having chosen an unrighteous course, would perpetuate sin by His becoming an immortal sinner. The idea that sin can be immortalized is proved by the fact that had Adam, after He had partaken of the forbidden fruit, continued to eat of the tree of life, he would have become an immortal sinner.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 60:

In order to possess an endless existence, man must continue to partake of the tree of life. Deprived of this, his vitality would gradually diminish until life should become extinct. It was Satan's plan that Adam and Eve should by disobedience incur God's displeasure; and then, if they failed to obtain forgiveness, he hoped that they would eat of the tree of life, and thus perpetuate an existence of sin and misery. But after man's fall, holy angels were immediately commissioned to guard the tree of life.

Around these angels flashed beams of light having the appearance of a glittering sword. None of the family of Adam were permitted to pass that barrier to partake of the life-giving fruit; hence there is not an immortal sinner.⁶

If by partaking of the tree of life, man, including sinful man, acquires immortality, then that tree must have in itself the power to perpetuate life. However, it cannot be the source of that life, but can only be a channel between God the Source and the human receiver. Even so, while the tree of life imparts salvation from death, it cannot impart salvation from sin. Only one being can occupy that position and that is Jesus Christ:

Acts 4

¹² Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

John 14

⁶ Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

It is most fortunate for mankind that God made the choice involving the sacrifice of His Son in the first case; and that, in the second case, Jesus won His great triumph over the forces within and around himself, for by this means He was able to confirm or validate that which the Father had elected to do. This has to be so because the Father could not save humanity without the Son, and the Son could not save humanity without the Father.

So it was then that Christ passed through the same agonizing struggle in Gethsemane as that through which His Father passed back when the question was raised as to whether sinners should be abandoned or saved. The two experiences—those of the Father and the Son—are very similar. On both occasions, Jesus appealed to His Father three times.

On the first occasion, Christ sought permission to give His life to ransom the lost. This was the period when the eternal Father suffered greatly, and came close to refusing the request.

⁶ See also *Early Writings*, p. 51, 125, 218; *The Great Controversy*, p. 534.

On the second occasion, Christ again directed His pleas to His heavenly Father, this time supplicating relief from His frightful sufferings, and release from the responsibility of paying the price for our redemption. Now He wished to be permitted, not to save perishing humanity, but to abandon them to their fate, so as to save himself from suffering the ultimate sacrifice.

But, as with the Father, so with the Son, total victory was gained by their both living out the self-renouncing principle of self-sacrificing service to others no matter what the cost might be to one's self. So it is written of our Saviour of that moment when He put away any thoughts of self-preservation and determined to...

The Desire of Ages, p. 693:

...save man at any cost to himself.

While on the first occasion the Son appeared not to be the One suffering, in the struggle in Gethsemane...

...God suffered with His Son. Angels beheld the Saviour's agony. They saw their Lord enclosed by legions of Satanic forces, His nature weighed down with a shuddering, mysterious dread. There was silence in heaven. No harp was touched. Could mortals have viewed the amazement of the angelic host as in silent grief they watched the Father separating His beams of light, love, and glory from His beloved Son, they would better understand how offensive in His sight is sin.

We have seen that the victory gained by the Father was the means whereby His will was the controlling force throughout the Old Testament era. What He predicted would come to pass, did come to pass. A door had been opened into the future. This remains true even though the Church and individuals in that Church suffered many defeats as well as gained victories along the way. But none of those victories could be the final word in the great controversy, and none of those defeats were either.

Consequently, the Old Testament period was one of great opportunity for the people of God, and of this at times they rightly took definite, praiseworthy advantage. Unfortunately, they did

not always take the battle to the heart of the enemy's camp, but were content with a partial achievement. They did not strictly obey the divine command to firstly drive the Canaanite totally out of their own hearts and in turn, from the Promised Land. Again and again they had to return to complete unfinished tasks until God informed them that after a certain point of time, they would no longer be capable as a nation of bringing in everlasting righteousness. Should they fail, as in fact they did, their commission would pass to another people.

But Christ never faltered. No occasion found Him needing to retrace His steps, and He never left behind Him unfinished work. Each step forward was a significant one.

The first great step forward in His confrontation with the sin problem, was His winning of His Father's consent to sacrifice himself in order to save perishing humanity.

The second time He passed through a very great crisis was during the long hours between the commencement of His agonies in Gethsemane and His death next day on the cross. The sufferings were incredible, but so were the gains. The door was opened; the typical services were replaced by the reality; and the scroll in God's hands was unsealed by the Lamb.

The Scene in Revelation 5

All this is marvelously revealed in *Revelation 5*. As John looks upon this wonderful scene, he sees in God's right hand...

Revelation 5

¹ ...a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

Then arises the question as to who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals? In response to this question, it was found that:

³ No one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.

This universal incapacity to reach and read the messages contained in the seven seals, was a cause of great sorrow to John who witnessed to his reaction by weeping profusely,

Revelation 5

⁴ ...because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.

Then comes the joyful news that there was, after all, a solution to this very serious problem. John said:

⁵ But one of the elders said to me, Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.

John's attention was directed to the midst of the throne, where he saw, not a majestic and powerful lion, but a Lamb standing...

⁶ ...as though it had been slain.

This meek and lowly creature,

⁷ ...came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

When this happened, the four living creatures together with the twenty-four elders prostrated themselves before the Lamb, and they sung a new song of glorious, enraptured praise to the Lamb for His achievements in effecting their salvation.

As John listened, he detected the harmonious voices of myriads of angels joining in that glorious tribute of praise. But that was not all, for in addition, he heard...

¹³ ...every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,

—also join in singing with the elders, the living creatures, and the angels in rendering praise to God and to the Lamb.

All this, it must be remembered, was seen and heard by John as he looked in through the door standing open in heaven which revealed the personal triumphs of the Godhead in stabilizing the kingdom forever and forever.

The remarkable scroll, the understanding of the contents of which generated such glorious songs, can be none other than the book of *Daniel*. This must be true because the book of *Daniel* is the only book in the Scriptures which was ever sealed. Only sealed books can be unsealed; only closed doors can be opened.

What was opened were insights into the future. As each seal was broken, fresh developments took place in the struggles between righteousness and iniquity as had already been given through the visions recorded by Daniel the prophet. But, those forecast events could only take place if Christ had won the battle in Gethsemane and on Calvary's cross.

To assist in the understanding of this point, consider how different history would have been if the Father and the Son had failed to win their personal battles in the great controversy. There would have been no propitiation made on the cross, and therefore no ministry in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary. And if nothing happened in the first apartment, then in turn nothing would have been done in the most holy place either.

The last half of the seventieth week and the 2,300 days would have remained a complete mystery, and nothing of the book of *Revelation* would ever have been written. The great Protestant Reformation which was inspired by the truth that salvation is not obtained by our works but by faith in the sacrifice of Jesus, could never have happened. The great second advent movement which has and yet will fill so powerful a role in the closing up of the great controversy, would not have even been a possibility. None of all the accumulated light and truth upon which we feast ourselves today, would have been available to us at the present time.

The very high probability would be that mankind would long since have destroyed itself and the earth before this time. One thing is certain, and it is that there would have been no slain Lamb to take the scroll and unseal the future, and no joy in heaven, no songs of praise, and no salvation for anyone. A depopulated, blackened wasteland would soon have been all that was left of this globe.

Then the promise contained in the statements quoted in the first chapter of these studies could never be fulfilled. Let them be quoted again:

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 114:

When the books of *Daniel* and *Revelation* are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such glimpses of the open gates of heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realize the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 113 [Italics supplied]:

When we as a people understand what this book means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival. We do not understand fully the lessons that it teaches, notwithstanding the injunction given us to search and study it.

The description given us in *Revelation* 4 and 5 of the experience of the dwellers in heaven, is an exact picture of what we will be blessed with, “when we as a people understand what this book means to us.” Then, “...believers will have an entirely different religious experience,” and “...there will be seen among us a great revival.”

Permit me to lay before you a revised version of parts of these statements as they would read when applied to the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, the angels, and the dwellers throughout the universe.

“When the sinless dwellers in heaven understood what this book meant to them, there was seen among them a great revival which was manifest in a great spiritual awakening, not in the sense however of moving from death to life, but of being elevated from life to greater life.”

A Heavenly Revival

Let us now examine the scene portrayed in *Revelation* 4 and 5 to see if these things are so. When these dwellers in God’s presence are first presented to us, they are seen to be enjoying a spiritual experience so rich and vital that they are continually praising

God by both words and actions. But there came the time when their knowledge of the ministry of the Lamb proved to be so deficient, relatively speaking, that not one among all that vast multitude was able to understand how the scroll was to be unsealed, knew of anyone who could unseal it, or understood what its contents were.

It is clear however that when the drama of the Lamb's handling of the problem was enacted before their eyes, then the great and solemn truths of *Daniel* and *Revelation* were unfolded to them. Then it was that they came to understand what the messages of those two great prophets, Daniel and John, meant to them, and absolutely marvelous was the heightened, intensified experience which illuminated them, and the great revival from life to greater life which followed.

Before this enlightenment came, they sang, it is true, but after it came, they sang a new song such as they had never sung before.⁷ It was the expression of highest praise for the achievements of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the earth. It could be sung in the intensity and veracity in which it was, only by those whose eyes had been opened, and whose ears were made sensitive to hear the deep mysteries of God's living truth. They sang as those who saw with sympathetic understanding how close the Father and the Son had come to abandoning them just when they needed Them the most. They understood as never before, that God's kingdom had been saved from destruction, and how their places in that kingdom had been preserved for all eternity.

The reality and perfection of their deliverance was marvelous in their eyes, the character of God was revealed in such selfless beauty, and His power was manifest in such all-conquering magnitude, as to draw forth from those myriads of sinless beings the most glorious songs of praise ever up to that time to flow from created beings. They had seen what *Daniel* meant to them and there had been generated in them a great, new surge of inspiration.

⁷ See *Revelation* 5:9-14.

What happened in heaven to the sinless inhabitants there, once *Daniel* was unsealed to them, was the revelation of what would take place in the personal experience of those of God's children on earth to whom also *Daniel* became a book unsealed. To them as was noted in the first chapter of this series, was the promise of a great revival once the books of *Daniel* and the *Revelation* were understood by them.

This is the objective of these studies—to so unseal these two wonderful presentations of the gospel of Jesus, that the believers will experience a great revival and be blessed with an entirely different experience than they now possess. May that purpose be gloriously fulfilled in God's true children today.

5. Parallels

Messenger and News Review, March 1994

THERE is a great deal more to be learned from *Revelation* 4 and 5 than is revealed by our study so far, and much more light will shine forth from chapters yet to be written in this series of studies. For the moment however, the primary purpose of our study of those two chapters has been achieved, namely that, though the prophecies recorded in the book of *Daniel* were sealed at the time they were given, the hour has come when they have been unsealed as never before.

The good news is that the book of *Daniel* has been unsealed. This is a most valuable and comforting assurance to us, for the information contained in this book, along with *Revelation*, is especially recorded for those of us who live in these, the final hours of human history.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 112-113:

The light that Daniel received from God was given especially for these last days. The visions he saw by the banks of the Ulai and the Hiddekel, the great rivers of Shinar, are now in process of fulfillment, and all the events foretold will soon come to pass.

Those who already have an extensive knowledge of these two books will be well aware that these prophecies are most definitely being fulfilled at the present time, exactly as predicted. The nations are aligning themselves behind the man of sin in preparation for the final confrontation against the principles of truth and righteousness. With great clarity the outcome is shown to be an utter and eternal defeat for the forces of darkness, and the everlasting triumph of the Prince of Peace. The end is coming with both speed and surety. Be ready for it!

Parallels as Prophecy

In order to rightly understand the contents of these two books, we are directed to:

The Upward Look, p. 161:

Consider the circumstances of the Jewish nation when the prophecies of *Daniel* were given. The Israelites were in captivity, the Temple had been destroyed, their Temple service suspended. Their religion had centered in the ceremonies of the sacrificial system. They had made the outward form all-important, while they had lost the spirit of true worship. Their services were corrupted with traditions and practices of heathenism, and in the performance of the sacrificial rites they did not look beyond the shadow of the substance. They did not discern Christ, the True Offering for the sins of man.

We would not be directed to look into the circumstances of the Jewish nation unless their situation as a people was the important setting or context of the message of *Daniel*. It will be found that the condition of the apostate church organizations of today is a duplication of the spiritual bankruptcy of the Jewish nation of Daniel's day. We may draw a parallel between the circumstances of each, and we can also parallel the way in which they arrived at their deplorable spiritual and physical condition.

With this and other parallels between the Jews and their modern counterparts we need to be thoroughly familiar. It is very safe to say that ignorance of the relationship of past to modern events paralleling each other, leaves one sorely deficient in comprehending the messages God sent through Daniel the prophet who received them from Gabriel.

The study of parallels is an extremely important means of discerning the development of the progress of the great controversy. Its reliability as a means of conveying truth is guaranteed because history repeats itself. It is a form of prophecy. It does not repeat the past in every single detail, but it does follow through the vital principles with predictable certainty. If there is any doubt in your mind about this, consider the following statement and others which will follow:

The Great Controversy, p. 343:

The work of God in the earth presents, from age to age, a striking similarity in every great reformation or religious movement.

The principles of God's dealing with men are ever the same. The important movements of the present have their parallel in those of the past, and the experience of the church in former ages has lessons of great value for our own time.

One reason why parallels are so accurate and predictable is that:

The principles of God's dealing with men are ever the same.

If there is one thing we can rely on, it is that we serve an unchangeable God. So it is that when we are in a certain situation, we have only to find out what God did for some other person or nation in a similar situation, to know what He will do for us. God is absolutely consistent in this regard as is confirmed by testimony after testimony in the Scriptures. As we plunge more deeply into our study, we will learn more from various clear examples of this. Realizing this wonderful dependability of the all powerful God to always react in an utterly consistent manner, provides us with ever increasing confidence in Him as the great Leader of His true people.

We read the next sentence from the quotation above:

The important movements of the present have their parallel in those of the past...

As we progress, we will need to identify how many important movements of the past there were at the time when the *Daniel* prophecies were given, and just what movements of the present are the antitype of those in the past.

But first, I must advance sufficient though not exhaustive evidence to confirm that parallels are an authentic guide to the correct understanding of Bible prophecy. This is especially necessary because there are sincere Bible students who have considerable difficulty understanding that history repeats itself, and that the important movements of the present have their parallel in those of the past. Furthermore, those who do not accept but rather oppose present truth, see no light in parallels at all, even though the evidences supporting them are so conclusive.

Exodus and Advent Movements

For instance, it is clearly written that God led Israel out of Egypt in the same way in which He later led the Advent people out of Babylon. This parallel is confirmed by the following quotation:

The Great Controversy, p. 457-458:

The history of ancient Israel is a striking illustration of the past experience of the Adventist body. God led His people in the advent movement, even as He led the children of Israel from Egypt. In the great disappointment their faith was tested as was that of the Hebrews at the Red Sea. Had they still trusted to the guiding hand that had been with them in their past experience, they would have seen the salvation of God. If all who had labored unitedly in the work in 1844, had received the third angel's message and proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have been warned, the closing work completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people.

The two histories, that of the Hebrews and that of the Adventists, are certainly a matching series of events or a striking historical parallel. The departure from Egypt on the part of the Jews, matches the coming of the Advent people out of Babylon in 1844. After both, followed the great test of faith—for the Hebrews it was the crossing of the Red Sea; for the Adventists it was surviving the great disappointment.

The next great event for the Hebrews was their receiving the ten commandments at Mt. Sinai, followed by their coming to Kadesh-barnea where they were poised at the entrance to the promised land.

So it was that after the great disappointment, the Advent people received the great central principle of the law which was the seventh day Sabbath, along with health, dress, and other extensive reforms. Following this, at Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the years 1888-1893, they were offered righteousness by faith in verity, the means by which they would have been readied for participation

in the great second advent, but, as the Hebrews lost their opportunity to enter Canaan because of their unbelief, so, in like manner, the Advent people lost their appointment with destiny. The great second advent has now been seriously delayed by little over a century since Minneapolis.

After a long period of wilderness wandering, the Hebrews were brought back to Kadesh-barnea for a second attempt at entering Canaan, but again lack of faith caused further delay because they were forced to detour around the Dead Sea.

Modern Israel has followed the pattern with remarkable accuracy. After having been brought up to the message of righteousness by faith for the second time, they turned their backs on the light. Only a surviving remnant are detouring through the final approach to the finishing of the work.

Those who are familiar with these histories will have no difficulty recognizing the existence of these striking parallels. It is the truth that we are repeating the history of that people.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 160:

Satan's snares are laid for us as verily as they were laid for the children of Israel just prior to their entrance into the land of Canaan. We are repeating the history of that people.

The Great Controversy, p. 458:

It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But...

Hebrews 3

¹⁹ ...they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Because of their backsliding and apostasy they perished in the desert, and others were raised up to enter the Promised Land. In like manner, it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed and His people should remain so many years in this world of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God. As they refused to do the work which He had appointed them, others were raised up to proclaim the message. In mercy to the world, Jesus delays His coming, that sin-

ners may have an opportunity to hear the warning and find in Him a shelter before the wrath of God shall be poured out.

In this parallel, the important movement of the present is the Advent people, while that of the past is the nation of Israel. I have not attempted to match all the points where these two important movements of the past and present parallel each other, but sufficient evidence has been presented to confirm that they do so. The latter is repeating the mistakes of the former.

In order to confirm the principle of parallels as a means of predicting the future, let us now assemble a very short list of Bible examples of them. Some of these will be studied in detail in the course of our gathering the blessings of the prophecies of *Daniel* to ourselves.

Noah's Day and the Last Days

The first of these I will list is the parallel of the last days with the times of Noah as taught by Christ himself who said:

Matthew 24

³⁷ But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

One important principle to be observed when studying parallels is that it is rare indeed for the duration of the parallels to be the same. For instance, Noah preached for one hundred and twenty years, but the warning being sounded in these last days is of longer duration. A number of people, assuming that these time periods would be the same, predicted that the end would come one hundred and twenty years after 1844, in which case Christ would have returned in 1964. That He did not is self-evident, for here in 1994, thirty years later, He still has not appeared.

There is good reason for these differences in duration. Among other factors, God is able to exert a more powerful influence in one period than He is during its parallel. This capacity on God's part through His faithful children, is directly proportional to the number of righteous souls who are in His service, and to the depth of their spiritual experience. The more God's presence

through righteous souls is a significant factor in the formation of events, the more the development of sin is retarded and righteousness promoted.

Jacob's Night and the Time of Trouble

The next parallel to be added to our list is the parallel known in Scripture as “the time of Jacob’s trouble.” Referring to that are the following words:

The Great Controversy, p. 616:

The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob’s trouble.

Jeremiah 30

⁵ Thus says the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.

⁶ ...all faces are turned into paleness.

⁷ 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.

Jacob’s night of anguish, when he wrestled in prayer for deliverance from the hand of Esau (*Genesis* 32:24-30), represents the experience of God’s people in the time of trouble.

Again, please note that the lengths of time involved are not the same. Jacob agonized in prayer for half a night, whereas in the coming conflict with the powers of darkness, the struggle will go on for a longer period, though for how much longer we do not as yet know.

Ten Plagues of Egypt and Seven Last Plagues

Then there is the parallel between the ten plagues which destroyed Egypt and the seven last plagues which will destroy this earth:

The Great Controversy, p. 627-628:

When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark (*Revelation* 14:9-10), will be poured out. The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel were similar in character to those more terrible and

extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God's people.

Babylonian Captivity and Papal Domination

Then there was the time spent by the Jews in Babylonian captivity paralleling the time spent by the church in papal servitude between 538 and 1798:

Prophets and Kings, p. 714:

Today the church of God is free to carry forward to completion the divine plan for the salvation of a lost race. For many centuries God's people suffered a restriction of their liberties. The preaching of the gospel in its purity was prohibited, and the severest of penalties were visited upon those who dared disobey the mandates of men. As a consequence, the Lord's great moral vineyard was almost wholly unoccupied. The people were deprived of the light of God's word. The darkness of error and superstition threatened to blot out a knowledge of true religion. God's church on earth was as verily in captivity during this long period of relentless persecution as were the children of Israel held captive in Babylon during the period of the exile.

This is but a very short list of the many parallels to be found in the Scriptures as a result of the principles of God's way of dealing with men. Without the ability to understand parallels, it would be quite impossible to rightly interpret the great messages to be found in *Daniel*, which in turn would make it impossible to achieve adequate preparation for Christ's second coming. These truths are strongly emphasized in the following paragraph.

Review and Herald, April 20, 1897:

The Old and New Testaments are linked together by the golden clasp of God. We need to become familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures. The unchangeableness of God should be clearly seen; the similarity of His dealings with His people of the past dispensation and of the present, should be studied. Under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, Solomon wrote,

Ecclesiastes 3

¹⁵ That which has been is now; and that which is to be has already been; and God requires that which is past.

In mercy God repeats His past dealings. He has given us a record of His dealings in the past. This we need to study carefully; for history is repeating itself. We are more accountable than were those whose experience is recorded in the Old Testament; for their mistakes, and the results of those mistakes, have been chronicled for our benefit. The danger-signal has been lifted to keep us off forbidden ground, and we should be warned not to do as they did, lest a worse punishment come upon us.

The blessings given to those of past generations who obeyed God are recorded that we may be encouraged to walk circumspectly, in faith and obedience. The judgments brought against wrong-doers are delineated that we may fear and tremble before God. This Scripture biography is a great blessing. This precious instruction, the experience of ages, is bequeathed to us.

6. National Apostasy — National Ruin

Messenger and News Review, April 1994

In the study of *Daniel*, we are instructed to:

The Upward Look, p. 161:

Consider the circumstances of the Jewish nation when the prophecies of Daniel were given. The Israelites were in captivity, the Temple had been destroyed, their Temple service suspended. Their religion had centered in the ceremonies of the sacrificial system. They had made the outward form all-important, while they had lost the spirit of true worship. Their services were corrupted with traditions and practices of heathenism, and in the performance of the sacrificial rites they did not look beyond the shadow of the substance. They did not discern Christ, the True Offering for the sins of man,

THIS period during which the prophecies of *Daniel* were given lasted from early in the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon until the third year of Darius, King of Persia. At least seventy years were needed to cover this interval of time. Now we need to discover what were the circumstances in which the Jewish nation was bound throughout this time period.

Although it might not seem to be so at this stage in our study of the books of *Daniel* and the *Revelation*, the consideration of the circumstances of the Jewish nation at the time when the *Daniel* prophecies were given, is a definite part of the message of these articles. This consideration is so necessary and important that our study of *Daniel* and the *Revelation* would be seriously incomplete without its inclusion.

The circumstances of the Jewish nation during the time specified was one of total ruin. They had lost everything. It would have come close to being impossible for things to have been any worse, but, though they had lost everything, enough of them had survived to provide the nucleus for the rebuilding of the nation.

Israel's Prosperity

Four centuries before, the twelve tribes of an undivided Israel had advanced under God's blessing and through David's generalship from conquest to conquest over the enemies who surrounded them. Chief of these were the Ammonites and their allies whose power was effectively broken. Their attempt to destroy God's people only gave Israel the opportunity to attain to the pinnacle of her greatness as the leading educational, economic, military, and religious power on earth at that time.⁸

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 716:

The kingdom of Israel had now reached in extent the fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham, and afterward repeated to Moses:

Genesis 15

¹⁸ Unto your seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.

Israel had become a mighty nation, respected and feared by surrounding peoples. In his own realm David's power had become very great. He commanded, as few sovereigns in any age have been able to command, the affections and allegiance of his people. He had honored God, and God was now honoring him.

Thus matters stood when David died and Solomon had come to the throne. So thoroughly were the enemies of Israel subdued, that the Scriptures record that King Solomon had peace on all sides. No one among the enemies of the Most High living on this earth then dared go to war with the Hebrews.

The reign of King Solomon over a kingdom at rest from either defensive or offensive warfare, was designed by God to set the nation free from all preoccupations so that they could concentrate on establishing all the religious elements in the economy of Israel and develop them to the highest degree. Central to this work was the erection of the temple of God,

The Great Controversy, p. 23:

...the most magnificent building which the world ever saw.

⁸ See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 713-715, for details of this struggle with the Ammonites and their allies.

King David had collected vast stores of gold and precious materials for the construction of this edifice, the details for the building of which were given by inspiration of God, the same Architect who had provided the plans and specifications for the erection of the wilderness sanctuary. In spite of King David's intense desire, in the latter part of his life, to see the temple built before he died, the Lord informed him that because he had been so heavily engaged in bloody wars, he could not be involved in the building of the temple.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 712:

The reason why David was not to build the temple was declared:

1 Chronicles 22

⁸ You have shed blood abundantly, and have made great wars: you shall not build a house unto my name,...

⁹ Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon [peaceable], and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.

¹⁰ He shall build a house for my name.

The Great Controversy, p. 23:

A thousand years before [Christ sat on the Mount of Olives and foretold the destruction of the second temple], the psalmist had magnified God's favor to Israel in making her holy house His dwelling place:

Psalms 76

² In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion.

Psalms 78

⁶⁸ [He] chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which He loved.

⁶⁹ And He built His sanctuary like high palaces.

The first temple had been erected during the most prosperous period of Israel's history. Vast stores of treasure for this purpose had been collected by King David, and the plans for its construction were made by divine inspiration. *1 Chronicles* 28:12, 19. Solomon, the wisest of Israel's monarchs, had completed the work. This temple was the most magnificent building which the world ever saw.

Seven years were spent by thousands of diligent, enthusiastic workers in the erection of the structure and in making all the furnishings which are so symbolic of the various phases of Christian experience. In the end:

Prophets and Kings, p. 36:

Of surpassing beauty and unrivaled splendor was the palatial building which Solomon and his associates erected for God and His worship. Garnished with precious stones, surrounded by spacious courts with magnificent approaches, and lined with carved cedar and burnished gold, the temple structure, with its broi-dered hangings and rich furnishings, was a fit emblem of the living church of God on earth, which through the ages has been building in accordance with the divine pattern, with materials that have been likened to...

1 Corinthians 3

¹² ...gold, silver, precious stones,

Psalms 144

¹² ...polished after the similitude of a palace.

Of this spiritual temple Christ is...

Ephesians 2

²⁰ ...the chief Cornerstone;

²¹ In whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto a holy temple in the Lord.

Then came the service of dedication which must have been one of the most inspiring occasions in the history of Israel, indeed, in the history of the world. Ponder the setting, the conditions, and the resulting spiritual and emotional atmosphere. Here was Israel, once a poverty stricken, despised, and oppressed group of slaves, not even considered a nation by those around them, now exalted to the highest military and economic position among the nations. She commanded respect and received honor as never before. She no longer suffered the retributive judgments of God because of her sins, but realized a sense of God's favor and of belonging to Him as His own sons and daughters.

And then there was King Solomon, endowed with the greatest gift of wisdom ever given to a man. What possibilities for righteous leadership lay within his grasp! What hope of a bright fu-

ture must have inspired the Israelites at this time! The assembled people must have felt transported to another world, as if heaven had already opened her gates to let them in.

The effect of all this was further heightened by the time of year chosen for the dedication.

Prophets and Kings, p. 37:

The time chosen for the dedication was a most favorable one—the seventh month, when the people from every part of the kingdom were accustomed to assemble at Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. This feast was preeminently an occasion of rejoicing. The labors of the harvest being ended and the toils of the new year not yet begun, the people were free from care and could give themselves up to the sacred, joyous influences of the hour.

Thus even the time selected for the dedication produced an atmosphere of intense spiritual inspiration, and the place where the temple itself was built was regarded as sacred ground where significant events had taken place in the past.

The spot on which the temple was built had long been regarded as a consecrated place. It was here that Abraham, the father of the faithful, had revealed his willingness to sacrifice his only son in obedience to the command of Jehovah. Here God had renewed with Abraham the covenant of blessing, which included the glorious Messianic promise to the human race of deliverance through the sacrifice of the Son of the Most High. See *Genesis* 22:9, 16-18. Here it was that when David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings to stay the avenging sword of the destroying angel, God had answered him by fire from heaven. See *1 Chronicles* 21. And now once more the worshipers of Jehovah were here to meet their God and renew their vows of allegiance to Him.

What would it be to have been a spectator at this wonderful event, but how much more to have been a participant in the activities, services, and events of that day. Pray that as you read these words the Spirit of the Lord will, in your imagination, enable you to be there to see...

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 38:

...the hosts of Israel with richly clad representatives from many foreign nations, assembled in the temple courts.

See the scene as one of unusual splendor. Hear the singers singing together with one hundred and twenty priests sounding their trumpets. Feel the single pulse of harmony which bound every heart and mind in perfect unity. Look upon the billowing cloud which filled the entire temple and, for a time, prevented the priests from ministering within the building, and see it as a glorious witness of the living presence of God in their midst whose blessing was upon them. Behold them free from feelings of guilt, resting in the confidence that their works were approved by God.

Upon seeing the cloud, King Solomon mounted an elevated platform, upon which he uttered the prayer of dedication, which is one of the truly great prayers recorded in the Bible.⁹

As he ended his prayer, fire from heaven consumed the sacrifice. When the people beheld these tokens of divine approval, they united in worship and praise to God.

Prophets and Kings, p. 45:

Then king and people offered sacrifices before the Lord.

2 Chronicles 7

⁵ ...so the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.

For seven days the multitudes from every part of the kingdom, from the borders “of Hamath unto the river of Egypt,” “a very great congregation,” kept a joyous feast. The week following was spent by the happy throng in observing the Feast of Tabernacles. At the close of the season of reconsecration and rejoicing the people returned to their homes,

2 Chronicles 7

¹⁰ ...glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the Lord had showed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel His people.

This is a wonderful picture of glorious spiritual, intellectual, physical, and material prosperity with Israel standing on the pinnacle of her greatness. God and His people were working toward

⁹ See *Prophets and Kings*, p. 40-42.

a better world as the righteous attributes of the everlasting Father were exemplified in His people. This was not the time for describing the Jewish people as a nation suffering ruin.

Israel's Ruin

But, it was not so some four hundred years later. Then the illustrious nation as it had been under King Solomon, was replaced by a totally ruined people. After the death of King Solomon, the united people had been split into two opposing factions. One part called "Israel," or "The Northern Kingdom," consisted of ten tribes, while the other, made up of the remaining two tribes, was known as "Judah," or "The Southern Kingdom."

The decline of Israel was more rapid than that of Judah, for it required only two hundred and nine years after the death of King Solomon for Israel to finally reach a state of total ruin at the hands of the ruthless, pitiless Assyrians, whereas Judah survived three hundred and forty-five years from the death of King Solomon until it was reduced to utter desolation by the Babylonians.

So great was the ruin which attended Israel's demise that her people were scattered among the nations with no hope of ever again becoming a distinct people.

Prophets and Kings, p. 351:

At the time of Hezekiah's accession to the throne of Judah, the Assyrians had already carried captive a large number of the children of Israel from the northern kingdom; and a few years after he had begun to reign, and while he was still strengthening the defenses of Jerusalem, the Assyrians besieged and captured Samaria and scattered the ten tribes among the many provinces of the Assyrian realm.

The subjects of the kingdom of Judah would have shared the fate of those of the northern kingdom much sooner than they did, but for the great deliverance from the Assyrians effected by God through good King Hezekiah. God accepted his repentance and answered his prayer for salvation from the enemies of Israel. Except for good King Josiah, the rulership provided by the kings of

Judah who succeeded King Hezekiah, hastened the downward plunge into total ruin instead of arresting the forces of darkness. Inevitably, the worst possible outcome overtook the rebellious Jews. Here is a vivid description of their finally being reduced to these terrible circumstances:

Prophets and Kings, p. 458-460:

The weakness of Zedekiah was a sin for which he paid a fearful penalty. The enemy swept down like a resistless avalanche and devastated the city. The Hebrew armies were beaten back in confusion. The nation was conquered. Zedekiah was taken prisoner, and his sons were slain before his eyes. The king was led away from Jerusalem a captive, his eyes were put out, and after arriving in Babylon he perished miserably. The beautiful temple that for more than four centuries had crowned the summit of Mount Zion was not spared by the Chaldeans.

2 Chronicles 36

¹⁹ They burnt the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

At the time of the final overthrow of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, many had escaped the horrors of the long siege, only to perish by the sword. Of those who still remained, some, notably the chief of the priests and officers and the princes of the realm, were taken to Babylon and there executed as traitors. Others were carried captive, to live in servitude to Nebuchadnezzar and to his sons,

²⁰ ...until the reign of the kingdom of Persia:

²¹ To fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah.

What an incredible transition from the national prestige, glory, and power which existed in the first portion of King Solomon's reign, to the pathetic state of affairs attending the end of the temple, the wasting of the entire land, the burning of Jerusalem, the scattering of many of the people, and the slaughter of almost all the remainder.

One, namely Jeremiah, who was witness to it all, described the national ruin in these grieving words:

Lamentations 1

¹ How does the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!

² She weeps sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she has none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies.

³ Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude: she dwells among the heathen, she finds no rest: all her persecutors overtook her between the straits.

⁴ The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness.

⁵ Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper; for the Lord has afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions: her children are gone into captivity before the enemy.¹⁰

The story of Israel is one of the saddest ever to be found in human history. Here was a people who had realized so much of the glorious blessings promised to them, but who, instead of faithfully preserving the conditions for the continuation of their blessings, utterly failed to fulfill their side of the covenant. Consequently, they lost everything to the enemies of God and man. Their material losses were enormous, and their spiritual deprivations were beyond computation. They descended from the highest to the lowest where all that remained above extermination was bare survival.

The Parallel to Today

Their history is the indisputable confirmation of the sobering truth that national apostasy is inevitably followed by national ruin. It declares that the deeper the apostasy, the more terrible the ruin. Repeatedly, this message is recorded in the inspired word, but nowhere so frequently as in reference to the last day events. There it is stated again and again that the setting up of the Sunday Law as the supposed solution to all of man's problems, will be the erection of the image of the beast, and will also be the act

¹⁰ See also *Prophets and Kings*, p. 461-462.

of national apostasy. Once this is done, national ruin will speedily follow.

The Signs of the Times, March 22, 1910:

When the Protestant churches shall unite with the secular power to sustain a false religion, for opposing which their ancestors endured the fiercest persecution; when the state shall use its power to enforce the decrees and sustain the institutions of the church—then will Protestant America have formed an image to the papacy, and there will be a national apostasy which will end only in national ruin.¹¹

But we who are students of last day events know that there is nothing singular about this development and its sure consequences. Instead, we see in it the deadly repetition of past history wherein every apostasy, be it of an individual, group, or nation, has ended in ruin for the apostates.

Let no one fail to recognize this relationship between cause and effect. Let each know that as certainly as a very terrible and total apostasy developed during the period between King Solomon's reign and the death of the last king of the southern kingdom, so the same apostasy is developing during the interval of time between the glorious rise of Protestantism, and the rapidly approaching image of the beast. Past history is being repeated as is verified by observation and such statements as the following:

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 116:

We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Many of the prophecies are about to be fulfilled in quick succession. Every element of power is about to be set to work. Past history will be repeated; old controversies will arouse to new life, and peril will beset God's people on every side. Intensity is taking hold of the human family. It is permeating everything upon the earth.

The law of cause and effect cannot be modified in any way, for no matter what men may do in an effort to avoid or change results, apostasy can only end in ruin. Literally billions of people down through very close to six thousand years have declared in

¹¹ Also found in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 976.

one way or another that they love apostasy, but hate the ruin which attends it. Yet, their love of apostasy is so great, that they prefer total apostasy with total ruin, above total righteousness with total prosperity. Thus it was in the experience of ancient Israel, and thus it is again being demonstrated today.

7. Apostasy: The Starting Point

Messenger and News Review, May 1994

IN THE last chapter, we looked together at the illustrious beginning in Solomon's time of an era in the history of Israel that was bright with the promise of a glorious future. Instead came the entirely unexpected, increasing impotency in their confrontation with their enemies until total apostasy coincided with utter ruin.

Such was the state of the nation when, in the days of the potentate, King Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel and his three friends were inducted into service in the Babylonian court.

The Background

The history of ancient Israel would have contained no surprises if her people had continued forward in the way in which they had begun. Obedience to God was the tried and proven formula for guaranteed success, blessing, and prosperity as their past history and present experience were showing them.

God had demonstrated that His was the only way of life and prosperity during the leadership of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, various deliverers, Samuel, David, and Solomon. So effectively had He done so, that He left them without any reason to look elsewhere for guidelines to glory.

Therefore, the only sensible, practical thing for them to do was to tenaciously refuse to depart from God's proven way in the least degree. In this respect someone has coined a most useful phrase which reads as follows:

“When you are on a good thing, stay with it!”

But, Israel had exhibited a persistent determination to forsake that “good thing” until their staggering losses, incredible sufferings, and prolonged and miserable servitudes, caused them to return briefly to the Lord from time to time for a respite from these burdens. But each such recovery was followed by a greater depth of degradation and deprivation of their resources than before. Their pitiful condition was the fruit of their own doing.

A Little Company Standing in the Light

But not all of them who were carried off to Babylon were in the same category, for there were those who were in captivity through no fault of their own whatsoever. They were suffering for the sins of others, not their own. Those in this category who are best known to us are Daniel and his three friends who inherited a fearful legacy of apostasy and its attendant ruin for which they were not responsible. They did not share in the departure from the truth which marked the lives of their fellow Hebrews.

If all Israel had been as faithful to their heavenly Father as were those four young men, there never would have been the great apostasy, nor the dreadful ruin which overtook the nation. The glorious physical, mental, and spiritual state with which they had been invested when King Solomon led the people in the dedication of the temple of the Lord, would have remained in all its glory with them to this day.

We are rapidly approaching that moment when international apostasy shall have brought universal ruin to this earth. When this time arrives, it will be found that another little company, standing in the light of the divine Presence, will have lived free from participation in the prevailing apostasy and will prosper in this dark and trying hour. The history of Daniel and the other faithful three is being repeated.

This record of their amazing triumphs has to be of exceptionally pointed interest to us, for upon us rests the responsibility of duplicating their incredible achievement on a global scale. The measures which they took by which they were saved from defeat, will work with the same consistent reliability for us. But for them to do so, we must understand what it is that causes an individual, a church, or a nation, to apostatize, be it in Daniel's time or our own.

Spiritual Blindness

This is most important, for, apostates generally do not know that they have fallen. Instead, in most cases, they think they are serv-

ing God with the most commendable devotion, and are most surprised when they discover that they have God's disapproval instead. Thus the Laodiceans, who are in a fearful state of apostasy, do not know that they are...

Revelation 3

¹⁷ ...wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

So it also was with the Jews in the days when Malachi was the Lord's messenger to Israel. They had wandered far from God who was now lovingly calling them to return to Him. Their response was in the form of defensive questions:

Malachi 2

¹⁷ In what way have we wearied Him?

Malachi 3

⁷ In what way shall we return?

⁸ In what way have we robbed You?

Again and again, God had commissioned His messengers to convey explicit answers to these very questions, but a blindness rested upon them which, due to their stubborn determination not to repent, became impenetrable and ruinous.

Ultimate ruin is the tragic ending of apostasy, but what is its beginning? We must so thoroughly understand the answer to this question, that we will have the capacity to instantly identify the presence of apostasy when it appears. To achieve that, we must become searchingly acquainted with the detailed story of the planting of the seeds of apostasy at various points in the church's history.

Solomon's Good Beginning

In this study, we could very well go back to the time when the first evil seed lodged in Lucifer and began to germinate, from where the apostasy grew in and through him to its present awesome proportions, but we will begin with the seed sowing in Solomon's day by which a fresh germination saw the introduction and maturation of another departure from God and His truth.

At first, King Solomon chose to walk in the way of humility and mistrust of self. Marvelous were the power, wealth, wisdom, and honor which attended him as he walked in the way of the Lord. It was God's plan for him and all Israel that it should ever be thus.

Prophets and Kings, p. 25:

Solomon was anointed and proclaimed king in the closing years of his father David, who abdicated in his favor. His early life was bright with promise, and it was God's purpose that he should go on from strength to strength, from glory to glory, ever approaching nearer the similitude of the character of God, and thus inspiring His people to fulfill their sacred trust as the depositaries of divine truth.

When, early in his reign, the Lord asked him in a dream to name what he wished to attend his kingship, he did not ask to have those things for which a proud man would ask. Instead, rating himself as if he were but a little child, not knowing how to come in or go out, he asked for wisdom, discernment, and understanding that he might judge with equity and impartiality.

God, knowing that the consistent application of these gifts would never result in apostasy, but only in a closer walk with Him, was naturally well pleased with the choice the king had made. The Lord advised him that, because he had selflessly asked for that which would enable him to serve God and His people with humility and success, He would add the honor and riches for which he had not asked.

Prophets and Kings, p. 31-33:

The wisdom that Solomon desired above riches, honor, or long life, God gave him. His petition for a quick mind, a large heart, and a tender spirit was granted.

1 Kings 4

²⁹ God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore.

³⁰ And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

³¹ For he was wiser than all men;...and his fame was in all nations round about.

1 Kings 3

²⁸ And all Israel...feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.

The hearts of the people were turned toward Solomon, as they had been toward David, and they obeyed him in all things.

2 Chronicles 1

¹ Solomon...was strengthened in his kingdom, and the Lord his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly.

For many years Solomon's life was marked with devotion to God, with uprightness and firm principle, and with strict obedience to God's commands. He directed in every important enterprise and managed wisely the business matters connected with the kingdom. His wealth and wisdom, the magnificent buildings and public works that he constructed during the early years of his reign, the energy, piety, justice, and magnanimity that he revealed in word and deed, won the loyalty of his subjects and the admiration and homage of the rulers of many lands.

The name of Jehovah was greatly honored during the first part of Solomon's reign. The wisdom and righteousness revealed by the king bore witness to all nations of the excellency of the attributes of the God whom he served. For a time Israel was as the light of the world, showing forth the greatness of Jehovah. Not in the surpassing wisdom, the fabulous riches, the far-reaching power and fame that were his, lay the real glory of Solomon's early reign; but in the honor that he brought to the name of the God of Israel through a wise use of the gifts of Heaven.

It is a source of wonderment that such a marvelous embarkation on life's journey, should end in shipwreck. I ask again as to how it could? It all began with the commencement of the Israelites' losing sight of their destiny, of their forgetting why they had been established in the land of promise.

The Purpose of Israel

The question is,

"Why had He settled them there?"

Prophets and Kings, p. 15:

It was for the purpose of bringing the best gifts of Heaven to all the peoples of earth that God called Abraham out from his idolatrous kindred and bade him dwell in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 12

² I will make of you a great nation,
—He said,

² ...and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.

It was a high honor to which Abraham was called—that of being the father of the people who for centuries were to be the guardians and preservers of the truth of God to the world, the people through whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed in the advent of the promised Messiah.

During the immediate years following the flood, the need for such a ministry became desperate, for men had almost completely lost the knowledge of God's true character, their minds having been darkened by idolatry. This system of religion can only degrade man, for, by seeking to place him in the position which only God can occupy, it separates him from the Source of all light and truth, so that he stumbles along in darkness.

Prophets and Kings, p. 16:

God's law must be exalted, His authority maintained; and to the house of Israel was given this great and noble work. God separated them from the world, that He might commit to them a sacred trust. He made them the depositaries of His law, and He purposed through them to preserve among men the knowledge of himself. Thus the light of heaven was to shine out to a world enshrouded in darkness, and a voice was to be heard appealing to all peoples to turn from idolatry to serve the living God.

To achieve this, God chose the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to be the people through whom He would shine forth the glorious saving light of living truth. He rescued them from Egyptian slavery, led them through all their desert wanderings, and, after serious delays, finally established them in the Promised Land.

But they were not thus located to garner to themselves the wealth of the world, even though Canaan's geographical position was ideally suited for the vigorous carrying forward of the grandest business enterprises.

A study of the geography of the world as it was divided up in the time when King Solomon sat upon God's throne, will quickly reveal how that a very large proportion of earth's trade had of necessity to pass through the land corridor between the Mediterranean Sea and the Arabian Desert. Traders laden with the treasures of Spain, Italy, Greece, and the rest of what is now known as Europe, found this a natural bridge to the markets of Africa as did also those from Persia, India, and other merchants from the east. These would return by the same route carrying the riches of the lands they had visited back to the northern markets. So an unceasing flow of trading traffic passed through the Promised Land thus giving the Israelites extensive opportunities for personal and national enrichment.

But the Lord did not purpose that Canaan should become primarily the business center of the world, nor did He plan for them a poverty stricken existence either. On the contrary He intended that in spiritual, mental, physical, and monetary wealth, they were to be the richest people on the face of the earth, as it is written:

The Desire of Ages, p. 28:

Had Israel been true to God, He could have accomplished His purpose through their honor and exaltation. If they had walked in the ways of obedience, He would have made them...

Deuteronomy 26

¹⁹ ...high above all nations which He has made, in praise, and in name, and in honor.

Deuteronomy 28

¹⁰ All people of the earth, [said Moses,] shall see that you are called by the name of Jehovah; and they shall be afraid of you.

Deuteronomy 4

⁶ The nations which shall hear all these statutes [shall say,] Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

But because of their unfaithfulness, God's purpose could be wrought out only through continued adversity and humiliation.

There are many declarations made in Scripture of the high levels of prosperity which God intended His people should enjoy. They were to be the head and not the tail, the first in every new discovery, the leaders in all the sciences. Jerusalem was to have been the house of prayer for all people, and her people the wonders of the world.

But all this was to be used only in God's service. Under no circumstances were they to make their beautiful location at the crossroads of the then known world, to be, first and foremost, a great, prosperous business center. To fulfill their reason for being in that choicest of lands, and to establish immunity from apostasy, Israel was to found and maintain the Promised Land as the evangelistic center of the world. Business interests were to be only of a secondary nature. Throughout that holy land, righteousness was ever to reign supreme, and the gospel principle of self-sacrificing service for others no matter what the cost to themselves, was to be the abiding rule of the life.

Such light, shining with ever increasing power and brilliance, would not fail to reach out and catch the attention of the heathen throughout the world. Firstly, it would make converts in the nations immediately across its borders, then, in ever-widening circles, would eventually exert its holy, saving influence to the uttermost ends of the earth. Thus the everlasting gospel would fulfill its divinely appointed task through the Church too preoccupied with its mission of salvation to be diverted to the incubation of the seeds of apostasy. All this is pictured in the following paragraph:

Prophets and Kings, p. 19:

The children of Israel were to occupy all the territory which God appointed them. Those nations that rejected the worship and service of the true God were to be dispossessed. But it was God's purpose that by the revelation of His character through Israel men should be drawn unto Him. To all the world the gospel

invitation was to be given. Through the teaching of the sacrificial service, Christ was to be uplifted before the nations, and all who would look unto Him should live. All who, like Rahab the Canaanite and Ruth the Moabitess, turned from idolatry to the worship of the true God were to unite themselves with His chosen people. As the numbers of Israel increased, they were to enlarge their borders until their kingdom should embrace the world.

Dazzled by Business Opportunities

Tragically, Israel, after a good beginning, became dazzled by the splendid business opportunities laid out before them, and became devoted to the acquirement of riches instead of building a righteous kingdom which would reveal the character of God in every detail of its operations. As they gathered much to themselves, the desire for more and still much more became a binding, blinding obsession with them.

Terrible were the penalties exacted upon them by the operation of the law of cause and effect. Men soon began to put more trust in the gifts from the Giver than in the Giver himself. No one felt secure until he was amassing wealth, then more wealth, and still more. There was no limit at which he would settle. This led to the development of greed, exaction, oppression, pride, hatred, and kindred evils, as the deadly apostasy grew in them until its effects on the nation were terrible.

The Sabbath rest principle in the operation of which God alone is the Plan Maker, Problem-Solver, and Burden-Bearer, was laid aside in favor of men following out their own judgment. When they did, their decisions were directly contrary to the expressed will of God even though they prided themselves that all that they did was to His glory and the extension of His kingdom. What men deemed to be the wisest course of action, was guaranteed to result in failure, loss, impossibility, and defeat, and invariably did, though not seemingly so at first. Instead, the move appeared to be attended by God's blessing, which when viewed by those who ex-

ecuted the plan, assured them that they had acted wisely and honorably.

Where Solomon Diverged

It was King Solomon himself who by his powerful example, diverted his people into the way of unrighteousness by resorting to human devisings as the deadly substitute for strict obedience to God's commands. But they did not appear to be such to him or his people. On the contrary, by clothing the plan with a zeal for the advancement of God's kingdom in the world, the king and his people were convinced that this justified the action taken. They were well pleased with what they had done "for the Lord" and felt sure the Almighty was delighted with their zeal to serve Him.

And what was this outstanding move? It was the marriage with the daughter of the King of Egypt. This move bore all the characteristics common to the early steps in the generating of a deep apostasy, which are:

1. The plan is born of a powerful desire to promote God's kingdom; this is the sheep's clothing which disguises the wolf hiding underneath;
2. To carry it out requires that man's way or solution must be exalted above that of God's;
3. This involves direct disobedience of God's law which transgression, they in their own minds justify on the basis of the fallacy that the end validates the means;
4. The immediate result is that the moves made appear to bring great blessing in their train;
5. When the people see this they feel that God is assuring them that He personally approves of their action.

Thus the breaking of the law is established as "the way of life,"¹² whereas, it is just as much the pathway of death as ever it was. Any disobedience, no matter how attractively it is clothed, is apostasy.

¹² *Proverbs* 6:23.

Let us now examine the steps by which King Solomon sowed the seeds of apostasy in the kingdom according to the progression outlined above,

Prophets and Kings, p. 53:

In seeking to strengthen his relations with the powerful kingdom lying to the southward of Israel, Solomon ventured upon forbidden ground. Satan knew the results that would attend obedience; and during the earlier years of Solomon's reign—years glorious because of the wisdom, the beneficence, and the uprightness of the king—he sought to bring in influences that would insidiously undermine Solomon's loyalty to principle and cause him to separate from God. That the enemy was successful in this effort, we know from the record:

1 Kings 3

¹ Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the City of David.

There it is—the sowing of the seeds of apostasy. Let us examine it point by point. Firstly, he was seeking to strengthen the bond between himself and the powerful king of Egypt. His motives were highly commendable, for thus he planned to build up and strengthen God's kingdom on this earth, but in order for the plan, as the king had designed it, to become operative, it had to involve breaking the law, which is the next step in apostasy. No law can be kept by breaking it, nor can we do the right thing by trying to establish it in the wrong way.

The law of God with which King Solomon was familiar and which he broke, forbade his marriage to an idolatrous person, and the forming of alliances with the nations around about. They had been directed by the Lord to be a separate, peculiar people.

The immediate results were very gratifying. King Solomon's Egyptian wife was converted, her father captured Gezer, killed its Canaanite inhabitants, and gave it as a present to his daughter, thus strengthening the kingdom of Israel. King Solomon took the opportunity to rebuild and fortify this city, thus strengthening his positions along the Mediterranean sea coast.

It is a mistake to suppose that all that appears to be good comes only from God, and that all that appears to be evil comes only from Satan. Let no mistake be made here. Satan, the master counterfeiter, is well able to make evil appear as the seeming garments of pure and holy righteousness. This is his way of deceiving God's people. He makes good appear evil, and evil appear good!

Therefore, it was Satan who viewed with satisfaction all the "good things" which followed King Solomon's successful formation of a bond between Israel and Egypt. He would even have delighted in the conversion of the Egyptian princess, for he could have afforded to lose a little in order to gain much. The gains listed in the next paragraph came as a result of pursuing a course contrary to true obedience to the law of God.

Prophets and Kings, p. 53:

From a human point of view, this marriage, though contrary to the teachings of God's law, seemed to prove a blessing; for Solomon's heathen wife was converted and united with him in the worship of the true God. Furthermore, Pharaoh rendered signal service to Israel by taking Gezer, slaying...

1 Kings 9

¹⁶ ...the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, [and giving it] for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife,

This city Solomon rebuilt and thus apparently greatly strengthened his kingdom along the Mediterranean seacoast. But in forming an alliance with a heathen nation, and sealing the compact by marriage with an idolatrous princess, Solomon rashly disregarded the wise provision that God had made for maintaining the purity of His people. The hope that his Egyptian wife might be converted was but a feeble excuse for the sin.

The immediate results were seemingly an accumulation of great blessings—the formation of a powerful alliance with Egypt, the marriage to a lovely bride, her conversion, the acquirement of Gezer, and the strengthening of the kingdom.

But the long-term result coming some centuries later was total apostasy accompanied by total ruin.

Such is the structure of the beginnings of a great apostasy. Satan knows how to take its elements and combine them in such a way that they will separate God's children further and further from God until the apostasy is total, and only ruins are left. He knows how prone we are to subscribe to the prevailing fallacy that the end result justifies the means by which we intend to build God's kingdom. He knows that if we can be persuaded to downgrade the vital importance of strict obedience to God's law, apostasy is certain to follow.

So he proposes a plan which in some way promises us a satisfying outcome. In Abraham's case, it was the provision of a son.

The plan as proposed by the devil is "sanctified" with the argument that the kingdom of God will be strengthened by the implementation of the plan. But the plan, in order to succeed, must include the breaking of God's law. In King Solomon's case, he formed an alliance with an idol worshiping king and married his idolatrous daughter. In Abraham's case he committed adultery with Hagar, at the instigation of his wife.

Satan knows how important it is at this stage that the scheme appear to be highly successful as it did in both Abraham's and Solomon's cases, for then he will know that the breaking of the law will be treated as proof that the law can be modified to suit the situation.

Thus the breaking of the law will be regarded as the keeping of it, and apostasy advances from depth to greater depth masquerading as the way of loyalty to God, when actually the professed believer in Jesus has been deceived as to the true nature of what is happening.

8. Apostasy is Preventable

Messenger and News Review, June 1994

The Gradual Drift into Apostasy

ONCE King Solomon had lost his grip on the truth that the end does not justify the means, he found it extremely difficult to win his way back from being under the dark clouds of apostasy, although he finally did. However, while he himself was thoroughly repentant before he died, he was not able to undo much of the damage done.

As the years rolled by after his death, except for the godly influence of a few good kings of the southern kingdom such as Kings Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah, the terrible apostasy strengthened and deepened. The Lord looked to these men to lead the people back to the operation of the divine principles of kingdom-building, but it proved to be a futile expectation.

In addition, there were some mighty prophets such as Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, and Jeremiah who delivered powerful messages of warning and instruction designed by the Lord himself to arrest the drift into apostasy which is walking separately from and contrary to the supreme Ruler of the universe.

Furthermore, there were men among the patriarchs whose experiences revealed the cause of apostasy, how to recognize its presence, and how it is to be solved. Abraham, Jacob, and Moses were three whose lives witnessed to the truth that apostasy is curable, provided one truly repents of this condition, and really gets right down to the heart of what apostasy is.

It will not be sufficient to say that apostasy is departure from God. Our understanding must go far deeper than that, or we shall be classified by heaven as mere surface readers. We will have to understand in what subtle way it is able to masquerade as zeal for God, while being in fact, departure from Him.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 112:

God's Spirit has illuminated every page of Holy Writ, but there are those upon whom it makes little impression, because it is im-

perfectly understood. When the shaking comes, by the introduction of false theories, these *surface readers*, anchored nowhere, are like shifting sand. They slide into any position to suit the tenor of their feelings of bitterness....

Daniel and *Revelation* must be studied, as well as the other prophecies of the Old and New Testaments. Let there be light, yes, light, in your dwellings. For this we need to pray. The Holy Spirit, shining upon the sacred page, will open our understanding, that we may know what is truth.

This knowledge must be acquired by everyone who would make his calling and election sure. You who set out to recognize the presence of this deadly enmity against the Lord, will find that, surprising as it may be, it is among God's people themselves that apostasy germinates. After all, it was within the brightest and best angel, Lucifer, that the first apostasy ever to appear began to manifest itself.

Of course, we cannot expect to find apostasy germinating among and within the hearts of those in the fallen churches, the godless, and the heathen, for they are already apostate. At varying points in the past, these departees from truth and righteousness abandoned their faith in the Almighty and have walked apart from Him ever since.

A Universal Confederacy of Evil

In the final conflict there will be a reassembling into the formation of one vast universal confederacy of evil of every one of those powers which have apostatized from God's law and service. There will be found in every nation, kindred, and people those who have cast their loyalties on the side of the enemy.

Selected Messages, vol. 3, p. 392-393:

In the warfare to be waged in the last days there will be united, in opposition to God's people, all the corrupt powers that have apostatized from allegiance to the law of Jehovah. In this warfare the Sabbath of the fourth commandment will be the great point at issue, for in the Sabbath commandment the great Lawgiver identifies himself as the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

But there have ever been those faithful ones in the church of the Lord, and it was in this class that we find Daniel and his friends. Amid the prevailing apostasy, they stood separate from it all despite the fearful pressure on them to yield their righteous principles. Their story is the record of their incredible faithfulness among those who were in a state of foolish departure from the living God. It is the revelation of a little company standing in the light who, when conditions were the darkest, shone forth the brightest.

They showed that they recognized apostasy when they saw it, understood what caused it, and were well aware of how to guarantee it would find no lodgment within them. If only the rest of the Israelites had taken the time and the effort to be likewise equipped to meet the enemy, and had never departed from strict obedience to the law of God, there would never have been the enforced subjection to Babylon, the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem, and the irrecoverable scattering of many of the people.

The great, terrible, and eventually incurable apostasy of Judah, the southern kingdom, when Daniel and his companions were in Babylonian captivity, has its counterpart in the apostasy now developing throughout the world. It is again rising in spirit, practice, and self-confidence, just as it did in the past.

To successfully withstand the incredible pressures which will be brought to bear upon us, like Daniel, we must be able to recognize this evil when we see it, be able to penetrate its disguise, and know what measures to employ to become an impregnable fortress, proof against the strong, almost overmastering temptations of the enemy.

Once we have learned what Daniel had to meet, and the way in which he successfully met his foes, we must diligently apply the truths which have been revealed to us, and thereafter never take a single backward step, or, if we do, to make haste in recovering what we have lost. Any delay gives the poison of apostate proce-

dures time to blur our perceptions of right and wrong, and this is something we cannot afford to permit to happen to us.

To the Law and the Testimony

One of the first things to discover about apostasy is its deceptive nature. It is so subtle a counterfeit and steals upon its victims so imperceptibly, that, before they are aware of their danger, they are ensnared by it. But there is a perfect safeguard from falling into apostasy found in such scriptures as:

Isaiah 8

²⁰ To the law and to the testimony: if they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Every day, great or small decisions must be made. These will be made for right or wrong depending on whether they are made according to inclination or lawful principles. If motivated by inclination, then they are contributions to apostasy, but if motivated by principle and are approved by the law and the testimony, then they work for the consolidation of the life unto righteousness.

In practical terms, when faced with the need to make a decision, bring the question to the light of what says the law and make your decision there for the right by exercising faith in God's power to make your will effective.

Here on this point countless dedicated Christians have stumbled very badly. Consider Abraham for instance. He and his wife were childless, even though they had been promised the very special son through whom the Saviour would come to earth. After many years had passed by during which the son of promise still did not appear, they succumbed to the pressure to take the task out of God's hands into their own. They concluded that the responsibility fell on them to do something about this problem. So they made the plan by which Hagar would bear the child.

But, with an unbiased mind, they did not bring it to the law and to the testimony to see if it passed its searching scrutiny. Had they done so, they would have very quickly discerned that adultery, the key-action at the very heart of their scheme and essen-

tial to its success, was prohibited by the law. They were to learn eventually, thanks to the patient, loving, teaching ministry of their heavenly Tutor, and from the harvest of woe they garnered from their misdeed, that strict, undeviating obedience is the only framework within which the kingdom of righteousness can be successfully constructed.

For Abraham, the precious truth that everything must be tested and passed as lawful before being put into operation, was finally driven home when the Lord directed him to take his precious son and offer him for a sacrifice. What a test that was for him to face! When he passed it, what a giant leap away from apostasy it was!

A plan had been formed, not by man, but by God, in which plan, Abraham was to journey to the top of Mt. Moriah, and there actually sacrifice the promised son as a blood offering. Here, some will object that if the plan had been brought to the law and tested, it would have been rejected on the basis of the command, “You shall not kill,”¹³ and Abraham would have been greatly relieved.

But, as already stated above, it was God who had formed the plan, and Abraham had to be immovably settled on the truth that God will never issue a command requiring any of His children to break one of His commandments. Whether God speaks directly or through His law, He is to be obeyed. The ten commandments are the basic expression of His will while all the rest of His commands are expansions and details of the originals.

Therefore, the directive for him to sacrifice his son was not an order to break the law even though that is exactly what it appeared to be.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 148:

Satan was at hand to suggest that he must be deceived, for the divine law commands, “You shall not kill,” and God would not require what He had once forbidden.

Under the circumstances when it was given to Abraham and by whom it was given, the command to sacrifice Isaac was not a vio-

¹³ *Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17.*

lation of the law of God. Abraham was entirely satisfied that the order to sacrifice Isaac came from God and therefore must be obeyed despite Satan's arguments to the contrary.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 151:

Satan was near to whisper doubts and unbelief, but Abraham resisted his suggestions. As they were about to begin the journey of the third day, the patriarch, looking northward, saw the promised sign, a cloud of glory hovering over Mount Moriah, and he knew that the voice which had spoken to him was from heaven.

What a difference this was from the procedures by which Ishmael became a member of Abraham's family! Then, Abraham and Sarah had devised a scheme by which they hoped to bring forth the promised child, even though, as in King Solomon's case, it required the breaking of the law to carry out the scheme.

That God could in righteousness command Abraham to sacrifice his son is a demonstration of His genius as a skillful Saviour. By this means, Abraham was delivered from the disposition revealed in his and Sarah's plot to solve their problems without checking with the law to test and see if it was indeed lawful.

There are those who teach that because God is God, He has the right to destroy any one or more of His subjects as He sees fit at any time. But God is different from earthly potentates in that the law, being the transcript of His character, declares that He therefore does not kill.

The Great Controversy, p. 434:

The law of God in the sanctuary in heaven is the great original, of which the precepts inscribed upon the tables of stone and recorded by Moses in the Pentateuch were an unerring transcript. Those who arrived at an understanding of this important point were thus led to see the sacred, unchanging character of the divine law. They saw, as never before, the force of the Saviour's words:

Matthew 5

¹⁸ Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.

The law of God, being a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, must forever endure, “as a faithful witness in heaven.”¹⁴ Not one command has been annulled; not a jot or tittle has been changed. Says the psalmist:

Psalms 119

⁸⁹ Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven.

Psalms 111

⁷ All His commandments are sure.

⁸ They stand fast forever and ever.

Signs of the Times, March 12, 1896:

The law of God is the expression of His character. God possesses absolute, invariable, and immutable independence, and His law is without variableness, unalterable, eternal, because it is the transcript of His character. No event can take place that will in any sense make it necessary to declare a law of a contrary nature.

Psalms 19

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.

Any change in the law would mar its perfection. The slightest variance in its precepts would give reason to the hosts of heaven and to unfallen worlds to think that God’s counsels and declarations are not to be relied upon, but need to be remodeled, because they are of a faulty character. Should any change be made in the law of God, Satan would gain that for which he had instituted controversy.

Herein is to be found one of the great differences between the true God and the false ones. The true God is righteousness itself; the law is the transcript of His character; and He behaves at all times with reference to its precepts. With Him there can never be one law for the people and no law for the king.

The doctrine which espouses this theory is called, “The Divine Right of Kings.” It proposes that the king is answerable to no man or woman throughout the kingdom, and is required to obey none of its laws. If he commits adultery, or executes someone who has disobeyed or offended him, he is not punished, but is merely exer-

¹⁴ *Psalm 89:37.*

cising his right as the king. If someone owns land or a business enterprise which he covets, he is free to seize it.

Not all the ancient kings ruled in this absolute fashion. There were some who made an appearance of being answerable to the people and the law, but, on the whole, the laws were written to protect the king from the people, and not the people from the king. Thus was the door opened to despots and tyrants who considered that the people existed for no other purpose than to serve the “upper” classes.

The Desire of Ages, p. 550:

In the kingdoms of the world, position meant self-aggrandizement. The people were supposed to exist for the benefit of the ruling classes. Influence, wealth, education, were so many means of gaining control of the masses for the use of the leaders. The higher classes were to think, decide, enjoy, and rule; the lower were to obey and serve. Religion, like all things else, was a matter of authority. The people were expected to believe and practice as their superiors directed. The right of man as man, to think and act for himself, was wholly unrecognized.

But God’s kingdom is built on a different system.

Psalms 97

² Clouds and darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.

Therefore, it is the truth that the law of God, according to which He governs His entire universe, is a transcript of His character.

As it was in Abraham’s and Sarah’s case, so it was with King Solomon, when the same failure to bring his beautiful, cherished plan to the law of God to see if it passed “the fitness test,” left the king and the subjects of his kingdom without protection against apostasy. If King Solomon and all his people had brought the king’s attractive and desirable scheme to the law to check on whether it was permissible or forbidden, he would never have formed the alliance with the king of Egypt, nor would he have

married the Egyptian princess. He would have advanced the work of God without resorting to such procedures.

If he and those under his command, had continued to apply this system of decision-making so long as they lived, they would have been kept free from apostasy, and would have advanced from one height of glory and prosperity to the next. They would never have experienced total apostasy and total ruin. For this reason, God instructed the Kings of Israel to keep the words of the law ever before them so that they could judge all things by this unerring standard.

Deuteronomy 17

¹⁸ And it shall be, when he sits upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites:

¹⁹ And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:

²⁰ That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

The Lord their God took this step because He understood that only those who tested every action by the law and acted in harmony with its precepts were safe from apostasy.

Prophets and Kings, p. 52:

Hundreds of years before Solomon came to the throne, the Lord, foreseeing the perils that would beset those who might be chosen as rulers of Israel, gave Moses instruction for their guidance. Directions were given that he who should sit on the throne of Israel should “write him a copy” of the statutes of Jehovah,

Deuteronomy 17

¹⁸ ...in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites.

¹⁹ It shall be with him, [the Lord said,] and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:

²⁰ That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

In connection with this instruction the Lord particularly cautioned the one who might be anointed king not to...

¹⁷ ...multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

To live thus,

Matthew 4

⁴ ...by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God,

—requires the development and deployment of a strong, living, active faith, for appearances can be, and usually are, very deceptive. By this I mean that disobedience can produce pleasing results at least during the period immediately following the transgression, while obedience can be followed by very displeasing outcomes.

Temporal Success Leads to Self-Confidence

For instance, King Solomon's flagrant failure to make certain his "lovely" plan had been carefully and thoroughly tested by the law and the testimony would have caused him to seriously misjudge the outcome, and to mistake the identity of the one, even Satan, who was showering blessings upon him and his kingdom. Let it not be forgotten that Satan...

The Great Controversy, p. 589:

...will favor and prosper some in order to further his own designs.

Because King Solomon had not taken the wise precaution of checking his plan against the law and the testimony before putting it into action, he would have judged himself righteous in his own eyes, and the results of his action a great enrichment to the cause of God. He had:

1. Contracted a powerful alliance with a neighboring kingdom,

2. Gained a beautiful wife, and
3. Enlarged his dominion by being presented with Gezer.

Nothing, it seemed, could go wrong even though in disharmony with the law and the testimony. There seemed to be much light in man's way above God's way.

King Solomon would have been quite sure that all this was but the outworking of the divine blessing, of which he would very much like to enjoy a great deal more. Thus the "success" of the first departure from the pathway of strict obedience was followed by multiplied exaltations of man's way against the law, instead of God's way in the law and according to law.

That which made the mischief worse was the belief on the part of the transgressors that they were defenders of the law of God which they believed they kept in the spirit and to the very letter.

- Were they not faithful observers of the seventh-day Sabbath?
- Did they not recognize Jehovah as being the one true God?
- Was not the Angel of the covenant tabernacled among them?
- Were they not observing all the sacred ordinances as described in detail to Moses on the mount?
- Was not the cloudy Presence visibly with them day and night?
- What more did they need by way of divine endorsement than all that which they already had?

They would have rated their deviations from strict obedience to the law as being the witness of the extent of their zeal to serve God, and would have been grieved with God had He indicated displeasure with their offering. By dwelling on these questions, they successfully reassured themselves that they were safely within God's will, and could expect more and still more prosperity as time passed by.

One of the problems which needed correction was the separation which they made between the ten commandments on the

one hand and divine guidance on the other. Only those who obey the law of God to the best of their knowledge are guided by God in reality. All others are disobedient transgressors who neither truly obey the law nor are guided by God.

However, as mentioned above, when King Solomon supposed that all the enrichments came as a result of God's blessings upon his plans, naturally he wanted more such "blessings." So he looked for and found such opportunities by which to enter into alliances with heathen potentates, obtain many more wives, and get much more gold and silver.

In referring to King Solomon's involvement with the King of Egypt and his daughter, the following points are made:

Prophets and Kings, p. 53-54:

For a time God in His compassionate mercy overruled this terrible mistake; and the king, by a wise course, could have checked at least in a large measure the evil forces that his imprudence had set in operation. But Solomon had begun to lose sight of the Source of his power and glory. As inclination gained the ascendancy over reason, self-confidence increased, and he sought to carry out the Lord's purpose in his own way.

He reasoned that political and commercial alliances with the surrounding nations would bring these nations to a knowledge of the true God; and he entered into unholy alliance with nation after nation. Often these alliances were sealed by marriages with heathen princesses. The commands of Jehovah were set aside for the customs of surrounding peoples.

Note carefully the perceptive words, "inclination gained the ascendancy over reason," and, in the light of what developed in the reign of King Solomon, understand that when this happens, apostasy is being established.

Know then that if the same things happen to us, the time has come to realize that we have failed to keep a faithful watch over ourselves against this deadly separator from God. It would then be time to undertake a thorough work of deep heart searching, and true reformation so that God's kingdom shall not be built according to man's inclination but according to God's ways. We

must make certain that our reasoning is sound and truly scriptural, for there is the danger of our trying to argue away the awful effects of apostasy.

Prophets and Kings, p. 54:

Solomon flattered himself that his wisdom and the power of his example would lead his wives from idolatry to the worship of the true God, and also that the alliances thus formed would draw the nations round about into close touch with Israel. Vain hope! Solomon's mistake in regarding himself as strong enough to resist the influence of heathen associates was fatal. And fatal, too, the deception that led him to hope that notwithstanding a disregard of God's law on his part, others might be led to revere and obey its sacred precepts.

It is quite amazing to see how illogical human reasoning can be when once it becomes separated from the Light. Here was King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, supposing that he could win souls to perfect keeping of the law, while he himself was breaking it. This is an impossibility. He who calls upon men to live righteously must firstly himself be righteous.

The finest example of this is given in the ministry of Jesus Christ who permitted no evil thought to remain in His mind for an instant of time. No matter how great the temptation to compromise His principles, He judged all things by the law and permitted nothing to guide Him except it passed the test of the law.

Education, p. 78:

What He taught, He lived.

John 13

¹⁵ I have given you an example, [He said to His disciples,] that you should do as I have done.

John 15

¹⁰ I have kept my Father's commandments.

Thus in His life, Christ's words had perfect illustration and support. And more than this; what He taught, He was. His words were the expression, not only of His own life experience, but of His own character. Not only did He teach the truth, but He was the truth. It was this that gave His teaching, power.

Separation from God is characterized by departure from the righteousness which is in the law of God. Any such estrangement to whatever degree it is entertained, is apostasy of which Satan is the administrator. This evil development is entirely his doing with the intention of gathering the entire world under his dominion.

The law of God is not obscure, complicated, or difficult to understand. How is it then that apostasy springs to life among the very people who love the Lord, belong to His movement, long for His speedy return, are prepared to make any sacrifice for the sake of the truth, and extol the beauty and power in the law? This is a sobering question, with which you are confronted, for, if you are one of God's true people, you are in the very place where apostasy is spawned, where you must effectively discern its presence, and refuse to fall under its deceptive power.

Obviously, Satan is a wily foe who knows better than to come against the enlightened people of God in a manner which will be open and honest. Instead he must make darkness appear to be light, and light, darkness. Thus he must nullify the witness of the test of:

Isaiah 8

²⁰ To the law and to the testimony: if they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light [but only darkness] in them.

In the case of Abraham, what the law declared to be darkness, was all light to the aging pair until the time came when God was able to penetrate the darkness enshrouding the patriarch's mind. In the cases of Joseph and Daniel, they instantly applied the test:

Isaiah 8

²⁰ To the law and to the testimony: if they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

As a result of his applying the test to the temptation imposed on him by Potiphar's wife, Joseph expressed his findings in these words:

Genesis 39

⁹ There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

Now things really began to happen. Darkness gathered around him. He was falsely accused, lost his employment and almost his life, and was cast into a loathsome dungeon. It seemed that the word of God needed to be rewritten to read:

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

Even so, Joseph remained loyal to the test of *Isaiah* 8:20 and was eventually rewarded with great honor and prosperity. His life proves that victory over apostasy, is victory over ruin.

Once King Solomon had repented, his later life endorsed the same truth. He was very fortunate to be able to bear this witness, for once a person's feet begin to tread the pathway of apostasy, it is seldom that they turn again into the peaceable pathway of righteousness. A seemingly incurable blindness takes hold of his faculties, which it is most difficult to penetrate.

Breaking the Bonds

This was clearly revealed again during Christ's efforts to bring the light to the Jews in His day.

The Desire of Ages, p. 489:

Many had been impressed and almost persuaded; but they did not act upon their convictions, and were not reckoned on the side of Christ. Satan presented his temptations, until the light appeared as darkness. Thus many rejected the truth that would have proved the saving of the soul.

Apostasy has a fearful bewitching power which has the incredible effect of turning once sane men into unreasoning persecutors, bigots, false accusers, self-servers, and such like. In the great final day of solemn reckoning, however, none will be able to plead that they had no defense against this deadly influence. Before they came to the place where light appeared as darkness, they were

convicted of the truth, but, by failing to act upon these convictions, they deprived themselves of the capacity to understand the pit into which they were surely sliding. Once people arrive at this point, there seems to be nothing which will save them.

But these bonds can be broken, and must be broken before it is forever too late. The cause of God in Daniel's day urgently required at least a little company in whose members the power of apostasy had been completely broken. A larger company would have also been advantageous, though there was much more glory to God when a mere handful was able to maintain lives of perfect obedience at a time when the great nation of Babylon was steeped in apostasy along with the professed people of the Lord. No matter where one turned, there was rebellion and apostasy. Only the faithful few stood out untouched by it.

In Babylon, confrontation after confrontation faced the noble four. On one side stood the mighty King of Babylon at the head of the most powerful military, religious, financial, educational, and other forces on the earth at that time. Pitted against them was God's tiny army of four young men. What a daunting task faced those unarmed, youthful Hebrews!

At that time, all the nations of the world found themselves obliged to respect and honor the Chaldean colossus as was demonstrated at the enforced worship of the golden image. The balance of power seemed to rest with the Babylonians so convincingly, that the Hebrew youths appeared doomed to speedy elimination.

Never have the forces facing each other been more unequal, yet in every single confrontation, the Lord, through the four, was the overcomer. While Babylon's military progress across the length and breadth of the earth had been a triumphant one, to which the Babylonians had pointed as convincing evidence that their system of kingdom building was the only correct procedure to follow, the Lord powerfully and successfully demonstrated that this was the case only on a very limited, short-lived duration.

Even then, those who followed the behavior pattern of the four, had blessings in the present, and promises for the future of which the apostates knew nothing.

9. The Sin Against the Holy Spirit

Messenger and News Review, July 1994

THE book of *Daniel* along with the *Revelation*, was specifically written for those of God's people who shall be His instruments through whom He will fight the final, decisive battle of the great controversy. The more clearly we comprehend the nature and magnitude of the coming crisis, the better we shall appreciate and be benefited by the history of what Daniel and his three friends faced and overcame. For those determined to emerge triumphant over the beast and his image, the history of the battles which Daniel and his three friends fought and won under the most forbidding circumstances, is very essential study material.

By means of this study, it will be seen that we are passing over the same ground that Daniel and his three friends did, and God is now preparing His people to possess the same qualifications as did those four young men, in order to meet the same apostasy which is rising in the same way and with the same results.

The apostates, many in number, will firmly believe that they are doing God's will, and that those who lead out in the pathway of disobedience, together with those who follow them, are the beneficiaries of God's personal blessings and approval. All others will be called upon under threat of persecution even to the sacrifice of life itself, to bow to the prevailing iniquity.

Thus, those who are in the wrong will think themselves to be totally in the right, while those who are in the right will fear that they are failing the Lord of glory. Thus confusion will characterize the situation on every hand. Satan will be delighted, for he operates most successfully when he is able to make light appear to be darkness, and darkness appear to be light. He knows that this is an excellent procedure for strengthening and encouraging his own forces, and he hopes thereby to unsettle the faith of the true believers. God's true people must become experts at detecting the enemy behind his disguises. They must learn how effective is Satan's tactic of mislabeling truth and error.

Those in Daniel's day in whom apostasy had become totally incurable had arrived at this fearful condition by calling light darkness, and darkness light. By their doing that, they committed the sin against the Holy Spirit which is the unpardonable sin.

What It Is

Whenever reference is made to the unpardonable sin, a sensation of fear is generated. Unsure exactly what this sin really is, many are deeply troubled lest they have already committed it without their knowing it. They are frightened by the sinister mystery with which Satan has clothed the sin against the Holy Spirit.

It would be of great value for us to learn just what the unpardonable sin is, how it is committed, and how one can be saved from it.

The unpardonable sin is committed when a person arrives at the place where He attributes the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan while, at the same time, calling the work of Satan, the work of God. In the Bible, it is called blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Luke 12

¹⁰ And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.

In the Spirit of Prophecy this sin is described in the following manner:

The Desire of Ages, p. 324-325:

In rejecting Christ the Jewish people committed the unpardonable sin; and by refusing the invitation of mercy, we may commit the same error. We offer insult to the Prince of life, and put Him to shame before the synagogue of Satan and before the heavenly universe when we refuse to listen to His delegated messengers, and instead listen to the agents of Satan, who would draw the soul away from Christ. So long as one does this, he can find no hope or pardon, and he will finally lose all desire to be reconciled to God.

The unpardonable sin is not one single sin, but is a series of rejections of the voice of the Holy Spirit in a person's own heart.

When that voice is rejected, the person becomes blinded and hardened until God cannot reach him any more. This sin is unpardonable, not because the Lord has arbitrarily decreed that it be so, but its actual structure makes it to be such.

When he at first willfully rejects the truth of God and calls it the error of Satan, he eventually comes to the point where he actually believes that the truth of God is the error of Satan, and the lie of the devil is the truth of God. Thus, the more God tries to reach him with His loving appeals, the more emphatically he rejects those appeals. In this way he cuts off the access of that ministry by which alone he can be brought to repentance.

At first the sin is not unpardonable in the absolute sense of the word, but is unpardonable only so long as a person rejects the voice of the Holy Spirit. As the statement above says,

The Desire of Ages, p. 325:

So long as one does this, he can find no hope or pardon...

But this continues only so long as he does this, which means that his sin is conditionally unpardonable. If he ceases his resistance to the Holy Spirit's ministry and allows his conviction to lead him to true, cleansing repentance, then God's pardon can reach him again. Otherwise he becomes hardened and self-deceived, and consequently he will enthusiastically welcome the sophistries of Satan because he believes them to be light from God.

Thus, the more God tries to reach him with His pardon, the more vigorously He is rejected, while the more that Satan seeks him, the more he is welcomed. Under these conditions, it is obviously impossible to reach the soul with the divine gift of pardon. It is in this sense that the sin is unpardonable.

Once people have come to an advanced degree of hardness of heart, it is impossible that light shall ever again be correctly evaluated by them.

The Desire of Ages, p. 325:

...[they] will finally lose all desire to be reconciled to God.

When a person's heart has become hardened toward God's truth to the point where it can no longer be softened, then the sin remains unconditionally unpardonable. Souls can become so terribly hardened, prejudiced, and resistant against the light, that not even mighty messages, miracles, or the raising of the dead can change their thinking. Such was the state of the Jewish leaders in the days of Christ.

The Review and Herald, January 18, 1898:

They [the Pharisees] attributed to satanic agencies the holy power of God, manifested in the works of Christ. Thus the Pharisees sinned against the Holy Ghost. Stubborn, sullen, iron-hearted, they determined to close their eyes to all evidence, and thus they committed the unpardonable sin.¹⁵

The Beginning in Solomon's Day

Let us briefly return to King Solomon's apostasy to see how this condition develops. This tracing of the rise of the man of sin is very necessary for those of us who have consecrated ourselves to be members of the Lord's army in the last days, for we must pass over the same testing ground.

It all began for King Solomon with the recognition of what he thought would be a wonderful opportunity to increase the security, wealth, and power of his and God's kingdom on the earth. He saw that he could form a military alliance with the king of Egypt and could marry the king's daughter. He should have known better than to suppose that such a plan would produce the desired results, for every plan which involves the breaking of the law actually weakens the king and his subjects. Initially this will not be apparent but will become so in due time.

King Solomon's motives were excellent in character, for it is right and proper to work with consuming zeal for the building of God's kingdom. But it is essential that this effort be expended according to righteous principles and procedures. These do not include alliances with those who are not interested in God's truth.

¹⁵ Also in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1092.

The inspiring promise coming to us from the courts of glory has been:

Revelation 22

²⁰ Surely I am coming quickly,

—and the eager response from the hearts of generation after generation of Christ's followers has ever been:

²⁰ ...Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

That would also have been King Solomon's sincere desire. To demonstrate his willingness and eagerness to build up God's kingdom and to hasten Christ's coming was a truly commendable reaction on his part.

But he needed to exercise great care to ensure that the attractive scheme before him which was designed to ally him to the King of Egypt, was a plan from God, and as such did not come from the devil himself. It was entirely possible for Satan to have been the author of the scheme, for the devil knows just how to tempt us into trying to build God's kingdom in the wrong way.

An important lesson to be learned from this possibility of Satan's being the author of a plan which we feel came from God, is that no plan should ever be put into operation without its true character being positively determined. Permit nothing to be left to chance, and be prepared to make no moves until the testing process has clearly identified the true character of the plan. In these last days especially, we cannot afford to make any mistakes. Check and double check every plan suggested to you to make absolutely sure it is from God.

Remember, it is much easier to reject a plan when it is first presented to you than to firstly accept it, and then later, to retract your stand.

Satan is an expert at setting this trap for child of God after child of God, so many of whom have failed to escape the tempter's snare. The greatest of men, such as Abraham and Moses, were among those who fell under this delusion for a considerable portion of their lives. So, when this proposal for the advancement of

the interests of the Lord was laid before him, King Solomon should have been quick to ask the question,

“Is it according to the law and to the testimony?”

And when he had found that it was not, as he surely would have done, then he should have instantly and uncompromisingly rejected it.

Without a doubt, the Holy Spirit was present to prompt the king through the personal ministry of his guardian angels to “look before he leaped.” If he had not become so infatuated by the dazzling scheme, he would have been receptive to this heavenly influence coming through to him from the Holy Spirit through the angels, and been saved from laying the foundation for the building of fearful apostasy.

No doubt there was some hesitation on the king’s part before his proceeding with the plan due to the Holy Spirit’s touching a tender conscience not yet hardened through repeated rejections of His appeals. Throughout the implementation of the scheme, King Solomon would have been haunted with misgivings as to the validity of the plan, but he would have felt reassured that the plan was from God when that which he hoped to gain from it, began to materialize.

This rejection of the small voice of the Holy Spirit was the beginning of the sin against the Holy Spirit.

It was by the enemy that the operation was formulated, but now it was attributed to God. Thus God was made to appear to be the law-maker who broke His own laws in order to build His kingdom. However, it was really Satan who had masterminded the entire plan including its seeming success. It was the enemy who had suggested this method of kingdom building, and he made certain that the results supported his teaching that if it is good, it can only come from God, irrespective of whether the law must be broken to gain the blessing or not.

A critical point had been reached by the king, for apostasy was about to take root again in the nation. To avert the impending

ruin, the king had to correctly and unsparingly identify who was the author who had planned this alliance with the powerful king of Egypt. Was it God, or was it Satan? The Holy Spirit would have urged him to ask this question.

It should have been a simple matter to find the answer to that vital question, but herein is a marvelous thing. The wisest man on earth, King Solomon, who was personally endowed with wisdom from on high, fell into Satan's trap and proved himself less able to perceive the craft of the devil than Daniel and his three friends. This is the result of the rejection of the Spirit's voice. There is absolutely no way by which King Solomon's scheme could have come from God, for He builds His kingdom by the Holy Spirit in righteousness as it is written:

Revelation 19

¹¹ Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

It is in righteousness, which is law-keeping, that God builds His kingdom, in which there is no place for lawbreaking whatsoever. There was no place for alliances with an idol-worshipping king of Egypt, nor was there any place for marriage with his daughter, nor for receiving a heathen city as a gift. The kingdom of God was not to be built by any of those means.

The future of King Solomon and his people at this time was very much at stake. Either they would descend into ever deepening apostasy, or they would turn their backs on the disobedient world and build God's kingdom in righteousness. To achieve the latter required that the King be able to discern by the Holy Spirit whether the outworkings of his plan were those of God or of the devil.

To many people, the raising of this question seems unwarranted, but it is a question which needs to be asked, for the whole undertaking was in direct violation of God's expressed will. He had decreed, for good reason, that the kings of Israel were not to form alliances with idol-worshipping kings, were not to marry

women who were idolaters,¹⁶ even if there was a promise of their conversion, and were not to assemble large amounts of gold and silver.¹⁷ Thus spoke the pure and holy Word of the living God against which no man can argue.

God does not give such instructions for nothing, nor do the blessings which seem to result from the transgressions of these counsels in any wise change the character of these violations. Therefore those blessings could not have been from God, and to say that they were, was to call the work of Satan, the work of God.

Thereafter, every time the opening came when King Solomon was afforded the opportunity to enter into an unlawful, and therefore unholy alliance with the surrounding nations, he usually judged this as being the work of God when it was the work of Satan. The time came when he no longer had any problem with the breaking of the law. It is not surprising then that he simply proceeded from one depth of apostasy to the next, ever calling his sins by the wrong name. It is no wonder that his course proved ruinous to himself and the nation.

Fortunately for the king himself, his eyes were eventually opened to see the relationship between his apostasy and impending ruin before it was forever too late. He came to the place where he saw through the disguises of the devil and was thereafter able to call darkness, darkness, and light, light. Until this capacity was developed and firmly established in his life, there was no hope of arresting his ever deepening apostasy.

Obedience to the Commandments in Babylon

To sin against the Holy Spirit is to reject God's law until we are so blinded that for us this is no rejection any more.

Prophets and Kings, p. 83 [Italics supplied]:

It is as true now as when the words were spoken to Israel of obedience to His commandments:

¹⁶ *Exodus* 34:12-16

¹⁷ *Deuteronomy* 17:14-20.

Deuteronomy 4

⁶ This is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations.

Here is the only safeguard for individual integrity, for the purity of the home, the well-being of society, or the stability of the nation. Amidst all life's perplexities and dangers and conflicting claims, the one safe and sure rule is to do what God says.

Psalm 19

⁸ The statutes of the Lord are right,
—and,

Psalm 15

⁵ He that does these things shall never be moved.

Those who heed the warning of Solomon's apostasy will shun the first approach of those sins that overcame him. *Only obedience to the requirements of Heaven will keep man from apostasy.* God has bestowed upon man great light and many blessings; but unless this light and these blessings are accepted, they are no security against disobedience and apostasy. When those whom God has exalted to positions of high trust turn from Him to human wisdom, their light becomes darkness. Their entrusted capabilities become a snare.

In those few forceful words are revealed to us the messages of warning and of promise contained in the book of *Daniel*. On the one hand we will find portrayed the ever worsening apostasy, with its follower, devastating ruin. On the other hand we will view the incredible obedience of four young men whose lives were proof against apostasy and ruin because, no matter what the circumstances were, their first and only loyalty was to the King of kings. To them, whatever God said, was law. They recognized only one rule in life and that was unquestioning, uncompromising obedience, no matter what the cost might be.

No sooner had they arrived in Babylon than their resolve was tested over the issue of the king's food and drink. Utterly refusing to compromise their principles in the least, though ever manifesting courtesy, respect, and meekness, they endured that test and the manifold temptations which followed it.

They experienced some vindication of the correctness of their stand when they emerged without a peer from King Nebuchadnezzar's personal examination of their schooling. Soon after came the ordeal of the fiery furnace, but there was no moving those young heroes. They would rather die than disobey. Wonderful was the prosperity which followed as they were promoted to high administrative offices in service to, and under the protection of, the King of Babylon.

These stories and more will be studied in the chapters yet to follow, with each one confirming that:

Prophets and Kings, p. 83

Only obedience to the requirements of Heaven will keep man from apostasy.

Two Kinds of Obedience

Because there are two kinds of obedience revealed in the lives of men and women, one of which is true, while the other is counterfeit, I will take a little time and space defining the differences between the two. I do this in an effort to make sure we do not mistake false obedience for the true, and are left wondering why we still have the problem of apostasy and its attendant ruin.

The Desire of Ages, p. 668:

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service.

When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.

What do the words mean which say, "All true obedience comes from the heart"? Does this mean that if we obey with sincerity, earnestness, dedication, and integrity, then we satisfy this specification? It means all that, but more than that. From this list a spe-

cific element is lacking. It is that a person must have had eradicated from within his heart, the old evil nature, and through the miracle of the new birth, have received a new life in place of the old. The statement before us then is saying that all true obedience springs from the new heart, not from a stony heart which is cold and dead.

Such an obedience does not need to be forced from the person, for when we are obeying God, we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. A good tree does not have to be forced to produce good fruit. Nor does a truly born again Christian who keeps his spiritual life aglow with the love of Jesus, have to force himself against his nature to obey.

Of course, the fleshly body is another matter, for if we follow the impulses of that nature, we certainly would not be obeying Jesus. But we are studying the obedience which springs from the heart, not the one which so many well-meaning but misinformed people try to forcibly extract from the fleshly nature and which God cannot accept.

The futility of trying to bring obedience from a heart which has not been exchanged for a new and living one is readily illustrated by any attempt which might be made to force a thorn bush to produce apples. It is to attempt an impossibility. Nothing of enduring value can be achieved by this means, although it can be made to appear that an outward conformity to the law has been achieved. This capacity produces a modified improvement which is accepted by many as if it really were true righteousness. Great care must be exercised in identifying true manifestations of the law versus the false, for Satan is a master craftsman when it comes to plotting deception.

When He was here on earth, our Saviour was frequently confronted with subtle temptations which required highly developed spiritual perceptions in order to correctly identify and then reject them. Fortunately for us, on every single occasion when Satan came against our Saviour even with his most masterful devices, Jesus discerned who he was, what was the nature of the decep-

tion being practiced upon Him, and knew exactly how to meet it. Consequently, there was not a single occasion when the slightest trace of apostasy could be found in Him.

Those who are determined to have no part in the great, final apostasy, must develop the ability to recognize temptations for what they are temptations—and not make the King Solomon mistake of calling darkness, light, and light, darkness, which is the sin that cannot be pardoned. This ability can be acquired only as we always obey the voice of the Holy Spirit.

The Example of Jesus

Jesus is the ultimate overcomer who only called light, light, and darkness, darkness. How did He manage to achieve this flawless witness? To find the answer, let us turn to one of the many occasions when He was powerfully tempted to deviate left or right, but, discerning the tactics of the enemy, He knew exactly how to meet them and promptly and victoriously did.

The study of any one of Christ's temptations and victories will serve to illustrate the point under consideration, but, from them all, I choose the devil's scheme designed to prevent the Redeemer from making His final journey to Jerusalem and His crucifixion.

The Desire of Ages, p. 486:

To the heart of Christ it was a bitter task to press His way against the fears, disappointment, and unbelief of His beloved disciples. It was hard to lead them forward to the anguish and despair that awaited them at Jerusalem. And Satan was at hand to press his temptations upon the Son of man.

Why should He now go to Jerusalem, to certain death? All around Him were souls hungering for the bread of life. On every hand were suffering ones waiting for His word of healing. The work to be wrought by the gospel of His grace was but just begun. And He was full of the vigor of manhood's prime. Why not go forward to the vast fields of the world with the words of His grace, the touch of His healing power? Why not take to himself the joy of giving light and gladness to those darkened and sorrowing millions? Why leave the harvest gathering to His disci-

ples, so weak in faith, so dull of understanding, so slow to act? Why face death now, and leave the work in its infancy?

The foe who in the wilderness had confronted Chris assailed Him now with fierce and subtle temptations. Had Jesus yielded for a moment, had He changed His course in the least particular to save himself, Satan's agencies would have triumphed, and the world would have been lost.

Christ's life on this earth was meticulously planned with nothing left to chance. The plan was formulated with careful reference to the outworking of cause and effect, and the ebb and flow of all the forces involved. Faithful adherence to the predeterminations detailed in the divinely arranged program was critical for success, even though only at the most fearful personal cost and incredible sufferings for the members of the Godhead.

For Satan, everything depended on his finding a defect in the plan, for, if in some detail he could cause Christ to deviate from it, he would triumph as the conqueror in the great controversy. So he formulated a counterfeit plan which he hoped would greatly appeal to the humanity of Christ. He did not call for the abolition of the plan, but only for its modification. That was all that was needed to destroy it.

Appealing to Christ's great love for perishing humanity, he pointed to a vast host of needy souls still unreached by the gospel and argued that He could postpone the crucifixion long enough to satisfy the needs of these desperate cases. Then He could give himself as the Sacrifice.

The revised version of the divine arrangement was attractive to the humanity and to the divinity of Christ. For His flesh, it offered escape from sufferings and death at least for the time being; for His sense of work satisfaction, it offered the opportunity to completely supply the needs of perishing millions; and from the point of view of his divinity it offered the fulfillment of the yearnings of His infinite love for those dying without help. Through these avenues of temptation,

The Desire of Ages, p. 486:

The foe who in the wilderness had confronted Christ assailed Him now with fierce and subtle temptations.

For Christ to have yielded a single step, apostasy would have set in just as it did in the days of King Solomon. One rejection of the Spirit's voice would have led to another. The character and structure of the temptations were the same and were to be dealt with in the same way, by bringing them to the law and the testimony under the direction of the Spirit.

And what was the law at this time? It was the will of God as revealed through priests and prophets throughout the Old Testament. Obeying that was all that with which Christ had to concern himself.

The Desire of Ages, p. 486 [Italics supplied]:

But Jesus had "steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." *The one law of His life was the Father's will.* In the visit to the temple in His boyhood, He had said to Mary,

Luke 2

⁴⁹ Wist you not that I must be about my Father's business?

At Cana, when Mary desired Him to reveal His miraculous power, His answer was,

John 2

⁴ My hour is not yet come.

With the same words He replied to His brothers when they urged Him to go to the feast. But in God's great plan the hour had been appointed for the offering of himself for the sins of men, and that hour was soon to strike. He would not fail nor falter. His steps are turned toward Jerusalem, where His foes have long plotted to take His life; now He will lay it down. He set His face steadfastly to go to persecution, denial, rejection, condemnation, and death.

If King Solomon, in obedience of the Holy Spirit's voice, had made his Father's will the one law of his life and had successfully taught Israel to do the same forever, there never would have been apostasy, nor would there have been national ruin. Daniel and his companions would never have been carried captive to Babylon,

for there would never have been a Babylon ruling the world, and certainly not ruling Israel. Only when God's people descend into apostasy can Babylon rise to world dominion. How differently the world's history books would have been written!

10. The Two Israels

Messenger and News Review, August 1994

WHEN King Nebuchadnezzar went to war against Israel, there were two forces named Israel arrayed against him, but he saw only one. By far the larger section of these two Israels was composed of those who had sunken into deep apostasy and were rapidly being reduced to total ruin.

Israel in Name Only

This larger group was made up of the people of the nation, its military forces, the government, the religious orders, and the kings. These claimed that, without question, they were the true Israel of God, and that to them belonged the covenant of promise, the illustrious history of the great victories of the past, and the promise of a glorious future under the Messiah's coming reign. But in this they were badly mistaken, for the apostate Israel was not the same righteous, all-conquering people who had walked with God in living faith and overcome their foes. They were Israel in name only.

Yet they were so blind to their true condition that they clung to the attractive though delusive claim that they alone were the chosen ones, and would remain so forever. They had lost sight of the principle that, so far as God is concerned, continuing as His representatives is determined by their continuation in all the righteous qualifications. It is not a denominated people with whom the Lord will work, and upon whom He will shower His richest blessings, unless they maintain the living experience with which they qualified to receive God's commission in the first case.

The Desire of Ages, p. 466-467:

The Pharisees had declared themselves the children of Abraham. Jesus told them that this claim could be established only by doing the works of Abraham. The true children of Abraham would live, as he did, a life of obedience to God. They would not try to kill One who was speaking the truth that was given Him from God. In plotting against Christ, the rabbis were not doing

the works of Abraham. A mere lineal descent from Abraham was of no value. Without a spiritual connection with him, which would be manifested in possessing the same spirit, and doing the same works, they were not his children.

In defiance of this principle even when their national apostasy was bringing them national ruin, they still proclaimed in their proud self-confidence that they were the elect.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 294:

The Jewish people cherished the idea that they were the favorites of heaven, and that they were always to be exalted as the church of God. They were the children of Abraham, they declared, and so firm did the foundation of their prosperity seem to them that they defied earth and heaven to dispossess them of their rights. But by lives of unfaithfulness they were preparing for the condemnation of heaven and for separation from God.

True Israel

The other Israel, numerically by far the smaller of the two groups, was made up of those who had remained free from apostasy and were still true to God regardless of the rebellion which marked the main body. It is to this company that Daniel and his three young friends belonged. They were the true Israel of whom there were many more than those four who remained true to God during the final stages of the apostasy, the consequent ruin of Israel, and the seventy years of captivity.

Strong proof of this is provided in the number of captives in Babylon who longingly awaited the happy day when they could return to their own land and resume lives of faithful obedience there. Almost fifty-thousand rejoiced when the day of release finally came by King Cyrus' decree which permitted and even encouraged the Jews to return home and rebuild the sacred temple and the city of Jerusalem.

Prophets and Kings, p. 558-559:

Tidings of this decree reached the farthestmost provinces of the king's realm, and everywhere among the children of the dispersion there was great rejoicing. Many, like Daniel, had been studying the prophecies, and had been seeking God for His

promised intervention in behalf of Zion. And now their prayers were being answered; and with heartfelt joy they could unite in singing:

Psalm 126

¹ When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion,
We were like them that dream.

² Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
And our tongue with singing:
Then said they among the heathen,
The Lord has done great things for them.

³ The Lord has done great things for us;
Whereof we are glad.

Ezra 1

⁵ The chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, —these were the goodly remnant, about fifty thousand strong, from among the Jews in the lands of exile, who determined to take advantage of the wonderful opportunity offered them,

⁵ ...to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.
Their friends did not permit them to go empty-handed.

⁶ All they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things.

And to these and many other voluntary offerings were added...

⁷ ...the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem;...

⁸ Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer,...

¹¹ ...five thousand and four hundred

—in number, for use in the temple that was to be rebuilt.

This was no picture of apostasy or of ruin. It was a lovely fresh beginning entered into by a remnant who were glad to consecrate all they had and were, to re-establish the worship of the living God on this earth. Of course, they had not yet attained to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus, but they were growing in grace and relatively free from apostasy. Had they not been, they would have been uninterested in returning to build the city and the temple.

During the seventy years many children would have been born to faithful parents who would have instructed the little ones to avoid those steps which drag one down into apostasy. At the same time there would have been many who would have died grieving over the staggering losses to which Israel had been subjected, but cherishing the promises in the prophecies of deliverance and restoration.

For the time being at least, the curse of apostasy, destined once more to creep into the ranks again, was stayed, for, unless they had been converted in the meantime, the large numbers of apostates who had been the problem in the lead up to the beginning of the seventy years, were either dead, or mostly scattered throughout the earth. If no other blessing was gained, at least the nation of Israel was cleansed in preparation for their fresh start. They were thus able to enter into the work of restoration relatively unhampered by apostasy.

These faithful ones were those who made up the true Israel of God, though unrecognized as such by any one else upon the earth at that time. Inevitably, the time was soon to come when the King of Babylon and all his mighty counselors would find themselves confronted by the real Israel.

Four Classifications of True Israel

There were four classifications into which the true Israel of God may be divided during this time of desolations and of subsequent restoration.

1. THE MAIN BODY OF MEMBERS

Firstly, there was the main body with its members scattered throughout the city and the nation. These receive little if any mention in the sacred writings, but this does not mean that they made no valuable contribution to the onward progress of the work of the Lord during the actual captivity. God's instruction to them through the prophet Jeremiah had been that they were not to stir up trouble by manifesting a rebellious spirit. Instead, they

were to promote the peace of the land by their quietly submitting to the temporary dominion of Babylon.

Prophets and Kings, p. 440-441:

Through Jeremiah, Zedekiah and all Judah, including those taken to Babylon, were counseled to submit quietly to the temporary rule of their conquerors. It was especially important that those in captivity should seek the peace of the land into which they had been carried. This, however, was contrary to the inclinations of the human heart; and Satan, taking advantage of the circumstances, caused false prophets to arise among the people, both in Jerusalem and in Babylon, who declared that the yoke of bondage would soon be broken and the former prestige of the nation restored.

These instructions from the Lord countermanding the declarations of the false prophets, came through a short time before King Nebuchadnezzar finally came against Jerusalem and destroyed it even though he had planned not to do so. The provocation for his changed course of action was generated by Zedekiah's and the other apostate's rejection of the Lord's commands. They misinterpreted the motive for God's directives which they chose to believe were plottings designed by Jeremiah to betray the nation into King Nebuchadnezzar's hands.

This was just the way in which those within whom rebellion reigns would react. Whatever God said, they would do the opposite. So when in His measureless love, God advised them to humbly submit to their conquerors, they chose to disobey and rebel. All the apostates who did so, soon passed from the scene of action never to be seen or heard from again. This they deserved to be, for they spurned one of the greatest manifestations of love ever directed to mankind.

Prophets and Kings, p. 441-442:

With what tender compassion did God inform His captive people of His plans for Israel! He knew that should they be persuaded by false prophets to look for a speedy deliverance, their position in Babylon would be made very difficult. Any demonstration or insurrection on their part would awaken the vigilance

and severity of the Chaldean authorities and would lead to a further restriction of their liberties. Suffering and disaster would result. He desired them to submit quietly to their fate and make their servitude as pleasant as possible; and his counsel to them was:

Jeremiah 29

⁵ Build houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them;

⁷ And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall you have peace.

But while the rebellious apostates did not have it in their hearts to obey, the true Israel of God naturally did. We can be assured that they built houses, planted gardens, ate the fruit therefrom, and sought the peace of the Babylonian kingdom so long as it survived. Except where the laws of the land were in conflict with God's commandments, they rendered them careful and respectful obedience.

Likewise they respected their conquerors, avoiding needless confrontations at all times. It was not the time for great struggles and wonderful victories. That lay in the past, and would come once more in the future. In the meantime, it was not the time for the people of God to make a time of trouble for themselves.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 206:

I saw that it does not glorify God in the least for any of His people to make a time of trouble for themselves. There is a time of trouble just before God's people, and He will prepare them for that fearful conflict.

In the meantime, we are not to sit idly by waiting for these testing times to come over us. Today while the opportunity remains, we are to make every effort to have our positions placed before the people in the right light. Jacob's course of action when threatened by a very angry Esau, is upheld before us as an example of what we should do.

The Great Controversy, p. 616:

On reaching the borders of the land, he was filled with terror by the tidings of Esau's approach at the head of a band of warriors, doubtless bent upon revenge. Jacob's company, unarmed and defenseless, seemed about to fall helpless victims of violence and slaughter. And to the burden of anxiety and fear was added the crushing weight of self-reproach, for it was his own sin that had brought this danger. His only hope was in the mercy of God; his only defense must be prayer. Yet he leaves nothing undone on his own part to atone for the wrong to his brother and to avert the threatened danger.

So should the followers of Christ, as they approach the time of trouble, make every exertion to place themselves in a proper light before the people, to disarm prejudice, and to avert the danger which threatens liberty of conscience.

The instruction given here for those of God's people who shall be alive during the coming time of trouble, applied with equal force to those of His people who were captive in Babylon. Times had changed, but the principles had not. Nor did it constitute permission on the part of those who accepted and obeyed these instructions to relax their faithful obedience to God's laws. No compromise was allowed.

In certain respects, it was more difficult for them to establish and maintain the happy balance between seeking the peace of Babylon, and still maintaining a life of righteousness. One of the greatest dangers facing the faithful Jews would have been the tendency to drift toward materialism, but at least many of the fifty thousand who established their houses and gardens apparently escaped this deadly threat. If they had not, they would have established their possessions in Babylon on a permanent basis, and they would not have gone back to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and the sanctuary.

Sad to say, there were many others outside the fifty thousand who did place a greater value on the prosperity which they had built up, than on their responsibility to serve God and finish His work.

Prophets and Kings, p. 598:

Under the favor shown them by Cyrus, nearly fifty thousand of the children of the captivity had taken advantage of the decree permitting their return. These, however, in comparison with the hundreds of thousands scattered throughout the provinces of Medo-Persia, were but a mere remnant. The great majority of the Israelites had chosen to remain in the land of their exile rather than undergo the hardships of the return journey and the re-establishment of their desolated cities and homes.

So, here is the Israel to whom I have given my first classification with the explanation as to why there is little if anything heard of or from them during their captivity. They, by their quiet obedience to God's advice to build, plant, and seek the peace of the land, provide us with a picture of an industrious, religious people who maintained their love for God and their loyalty to Him, while waiting in obscurity for the day of their release.

There should be no difficulty in seeing that this situation corresponds with our position at the present time as we wait patiently for our coming Redeemer while contributing as much as possible to the peace of the country in which we live. I emphasize that it is not a time for the relaxing of our principles, but rather of deep heart searching, and of thorough preparation for what is rapidly approaching. If we were as aware as we should be of how many will be caught unprepared and unfit by that day, we would be far more diligent in making our calling and election sure.

2. THE PROPHETS AND PRIESTS

Into the second classification, I would place Ezekiel and the minor prophets, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, most of whom prophesied before the captivity had fully begun. They bore the messages of warning and reproof mainly to sinking Israel and to neighboring nations such as Egypt, Nineveh, Tyre, Sidon, and Edom.

The remaining minor prophets were Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, all of whom were raised up after the captivity was over. These Spirit-filled men were very effective in en-

couraging the Jews in the rebuilding of the Temple, and in inspiring them to turn their faces away from deadly apostasy.

What is recorded for our learning are the major messages proclaimed by these men, but we must understand that they would have done much personal work, visiting, encouraging, and instructing all those whose hearts were open to learn the sacred truths. No record of this work has been kept even though they would have spent more time and effort in this ministry in the overall than in the presentation of their major messages.

Also included in what I am calling the second class of the faithful ones would have been the priests who, as far as they possibly could under the prevailing circumstances, would have continued their divinely appointed ministry even when made captive and brought to Babylon. It is true of course that the ministry previously carried on in the temple was discontinued due to the destruction of that building, but we can rely on the continuation of whatever was possible without their having the temple building.

For instance, at least in the early stages of their captivity, they had no supply of sacrificial animals due to their coming to Babylon without any of them. Then there was the unlikelihood of their captors permitting any meetings of any size to celebrate any of the annual feasts, for fear that they would be used to foment insurrections. Therefore, at best, there would have been a very limited ceremonial system in operation, while at the worst, there would have been none at all.

It would seem that Daniel and his three friends could have won some liberty for their countrymen as a result of their being elevated to high positions in the kingdom, but there is no explicit evidence that this was so.

3. THE YOUNG PRINCES OF ISRAEL

Now we turn to those whom I have classified as the third class carried to Babylon. They were those chosen by Ashpenaz according to the specifications laid down by King Nebuchadnezzar, the details of which are as follows:

Daniel 1

³ Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles,

⁴ Young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans.

How many there were altogether, we are not told, but we can expect that there was quite a number of them. Anticipating that there would be eliminations of those who could not stand the pace, we would expect the king to have selected more than were needed at first, so that he would have had enough in the end.

Although the mighty monarch did not realize it, these were they whose day of opportunity had come to glorify God, to bring the blessing of thorough conversion to the king of Babylon, and later be instrumental in winning the consent of King Cyrus of the kingdom of Medo-Persia to release the captives. But, except for the faithful four, when this day of opportunity came for these chosen princes, they were unprepared for it, and it left them standing empty-handed. They are never heard of again.

4. THE SPIRITUAL WARRIORS

So we therefore turn to my fourth classification of which there were only four young men, the leading figure among whom was Daniel, a youth of eighteen years.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, p. 570:

Daniel was but eighteen years old when brought into a heathen court in service to the king of Babylon, and because of his youth his noble resistance of wrong and his steadfast adherence to the right are the more admirable. His noble example should bring strength to the tried and tempted, even at the present day.

This is the classification in which we need to be deeply interested and into which we must strive to enter, for, once again, the confrontations with the king of the world are to be repeated with the same results of unqualified success for God's faithful ones.

What, back in Daniel's day, seemed to be one hopeless situation after another, turned into a succession of wonderful triumphs over the evil one, and provide us with clear revelations of how God's people will achieve all the divine purposes in the final overthrow of the Babylonian colossus. What took place back there is to be repeated, though on a much grander scale. It will be the final manifestation of the man of sin, and his final defeat.

While the reduction of the Babylonian Empire to utter ruin in the past was not the final destruction of that great, rebellious, antichristian system, its utter, irrecoverable decimation in the future will be. This time she will fall, never to rise again much to the sorrow of all those who have profited from her crimes, but to the immense relief of those who live righteously. This devastation is described for us in the *Revelation*:

Revelation 18

⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.

⁵ For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

⁶ Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her.

⁷ In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.

⁸ Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.

There is the description of the absolute ultimate in apostasy which will have developed to this point beyond which there are no more depths of iniquity to plumb. This will not be manifest only on a national scale accompanied by national ruin. Instead, the proportions will be global, and the consequent ruin will be universal, for every being on this planet whose name is not then

written in the book of life, will be involved in the general utter destruction.

The losses then to be experienced by Babylon the Great will be beyond computation as attested to by the surviving businesses of that time:

Revelation 18

⁹ The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning,

¹⁰ Standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.

¹¹ And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore:

¹² Merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble;

¹³ And cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men.

¹⁴ The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all.

¹⁵ The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

¹⁶ And saying, Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls!

¹⁷ For in one hour such great riches came to nothing. Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance

¹⁸ And cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What is like this great city?

¹⁹ They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.

²⁰ Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!

This rejoicing on the part of God's people will not be occasioned by their seeing the utter, universal ruin, and incredible losses consuming Babylon's supporters, for, while they hate apostasy from the truth, they will have great compassion for those who will have lost all in the battle of life. It is the system of soul-destroying iniquity which they hate because there is nothing in it in the end but malignity and eventual death. It is the final destruction of the cancerous system which will give them perpetual satisfaction.

That happy day is coming and when it has arrived, then at last we can all go home.

Revelation 18

²¹ Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.

²² The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore.

²³ The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.

²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.

But Babylon the great will not be reduced to permanent ruin until God has the company of people through whom He can bring about her irrecoverable fall. Look over those four classes listed and described above to see which of them had in themselves the capacity to turn every attack made on them into a singular defeat for the Babylonians and victory for the Almighty and His people.

Look again and see which of the four groups advanced step-by-step right into the heart of the mighty King Nebuchadnezzar until he was so thoroughly converted that he served the Lord with a

pure heart. What a mighty fall of Babylon that was, the dethronement of the spirit and system of evil itself. This is the direction in which God desires that every person shall take—namely out of sin into righteousness.

But from the glory of Babylon ruled by the converted King Nebuchadnezzar, his sons chose the pathway of apostasy until the evil system arrived at the uttermost depths of iniquity. The height of King Nebuchadnezzar's righteousness at its shining best, was exceeded by the depths to which its last king fell.

And which of those four classifications of Israel described above was God's special instrumentality to bring about the end of ancient Babylon?

Sound and solid believers though they were, they were not those of the first class upon whom this responsibility rested. Their important work most of all was to survive, to provide a continuation of the righteous seed, that is, to build houses and plant gardens while avoiding confrontations which could have provoked their conquerors to obliterate them from the face of the earth. As it was, an attempt was made to destroy them all in the days of Queen Esther.

Let us not minimize the importance of their discharging of this responsibility, for it was critical to the eventual victory being gained. All of them played their part, of course, but we seek that one class which finally triumphed.

It was not the second class made up of the major and the minor prophets who finished the work of felling that great city, Babylon. Their mission was to instruct the believers how to be good survivors.

It certainly could not have been the third class, the young men chosen for special work in the kingdom, but who failed in the first test they faced.

This leaves but the fourth class—the faithful four—Daniel and his three friends, whose absolutely incredible victory reveals to us

just how God will finalize the utter destruction of the evil system in the end.

Today, our main preoccupation is spiritual and material survival, so that if you belong to the first class, you do well. If God has called you as He called the prophets to instruct the survivors, you do even better, but make certain that you pass every test large and small, lest you fail as did those chosen ones in Babylon.

Our confrontations with the Babylonian system have but just begun, and we are not yet adequately prepared to stand as did the faithful four. When we are, let us have acquired all of the power, courage, and faithfulness exemplified in those splendid young men. Our hour of destiny is coming swiftly. Let us be fully prepared to meet it!

Babylon Falls by the Power of the Gospel

Some may ask how we conclude that four faithful souls could effect the utter fall of ancient Babylon? Instead, they might claim that this was the work of the Medo-Persian armies. On the surface of it this is true, but there are principles involved which need to be understood.

An important one of these is that the gospel never leaves you as it found you. If it fails to bring deliverance from sin, it will harden, not soften.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 681:

Let ministers and people remember that gospel truth hardens when it does not save. The rejection of light leaves men captives, bound about by chains of darkness and unbelief. The soul that refuses to listen to the invitations of mercy from day to day can soon listen to the most urgent appeals without an emotion stirring his soul.

The more powerful the presence of the Holy Spirit is in the gospel, the more rapid the decline in an individual or a nation which dares to resist its power.

Thus it was in the case of Ancient Babylon. We have yet to learn how truly great was the incredible spiritual power pos-

sessed by Daniel and his three friends. When we understand that, we will see why it was that the kingdom survived only seventy years, whereas subsequent world empires lasted much longer.

11. The Two Babylons

Messenger and News Review, September 1994

IT IS the truth of God that Paradise cannot be regained until Babylon, and Babylon the Great, have been blotted out of existence. As Daniel and the faithful three faced the mighty king who in their day had chosen to operate by Babylonian principles, so we shall face the masses who in these last days will be identified as Babylon the Great. The victory God will once more gain through His people has to be just as complete, as convincing, and as permanent as the flawless triumph achieved by God through His chosen instrumentalities in the termination of ancient Babylon. We are called to the kingdom for just such a time as this, and we cannot escape our appointment with destiny unless we die first, or surrender our grip on the truth.

The Nature of Babylon the Great

What, it may be asked, is the difference between Babylon as it was in the time of Daniel, and Babylon the Great?

The first difference to be noted is that while Babylon has occupied all of past and present history, Babylon the Great is still in the future and appears in those prophecies which inform us of the very final events of human history. This is the great antichristian power which, prior to the great second advent of Christ, will be Satan's last desperate attempt to successfully overthrow God's government, and establish himself and his rulership in the place belonging to the Almighty which He alone has the power to occupy.

According to my computerized concordance of the Bible, there are only two references in the entire Bible in which this title appears. Both are in the New Testament and both are in the *Revelation*, where they are located in the prophecies of Chapters 17 and 18. Here are those verses:

Revelation 17

⁵ And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Revelation 18

¹ After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.

² And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!

The first of these two Scriptures describes the judgment of the great harlot whose name is Babylon the Great. She is far from being alone, for she is...

Revelation 17

⁵ ...the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth.

With such evaluations of her as these, there is no place for her in the divine order. Rather, John was shown her evil character as the destroyer of the people of God, the slaughterer of the saints of the Most High. Here is his testimony:

⁶ I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

If nothing else, this effort on her part demonstrates on whose side she will stand in the conflict between good and evil, between God and Satan. No one will have any difficulty discerning the answer to this question, for it is too self-evident. Clearly, she is the great enemy of God and man, who is bent at all costs on destroying all that is righteous, just, and true. She is devoted to rebellion against God, and is bent on fostering disobedience and stimulating apostasy.

She is pictured sitting on a savage beast with seven heads and ten horns, thus signifying the universal support received by her from the civil powers. The beast represents the civil authorities of

every nation, tongue, and people whose vast resources and far reaching powers will be available to track down, identify, and wreak attempted revenge on the righteous. There will be no place for God's people to hide, no permanent refuge, and, in the end, no protection by human laws.

The ten horns symbolize the ten major religious groups that will exist at that time and the civil powers that support them. These shall give their strength to the woman as she eventually goes forth with unrestrained fury to make war with the Lamb of God in the persons of His saints.

Although the people of God have the whole world pitted against them, and although it will appear that God has forsaken them and that they are about to seal their testimony with their blood, yet it will be the harlot, Babylon the Great, who will suffer the defeat from which she will never rise again. This is pictured in the sudden reversal of fortune for the apostate woman in these words:

Revelation 17

¹⁶ And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.

¹⁷ For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.

¹⁸ And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.

The Warning Against Babylon

God, in His infinite love and mercy, has not left His people to be taken by surprise but has revealed this oncoming plot on the part of Babylon the Great to destroy them. He has done this through the sure word of prophecy under the guarantee that:

Amos 3

⁷ Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets,

In consequence of this divine provision, the children of God who avail themselves of these mercies, are of the light, not of the darkness, and need never be caught by surprise as Paul wrote in his first letter to the Thessalonians:

1 Thessalonians 5

¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.

² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

³ For when they say, Peace and safety! then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this day should overtake you as a thief.

⁵ You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness

⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

As surely then as Babylon the Great is rising to her marvelous, seemingly invincible final day of glory, so certainly will God sound His warning with ever increasing power to the peoples of the entire world. This is prophetically pictured by another angel coming down from heaven having great authority, and by whose ministry the peoples of the entire world will have the opportunity to be saved from her deceptions and come over to the Lord's side.

Already, God has sent out the three angels with their warnings against the worship of the beast and his image, but even though sent to the entire world, and even though constituting the most fearful denunciations ever directed against the disobedient, they have been largely unheeded. It is as it was in the days of Noah.

The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 4, p. 208-209:

The Lord, in His great mercy, does not bring judgments upon the earth without giving warning to its inhabitants by the mouth of His servants. Says the prophet Amos,

Amos 3

⁷ Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He reveals His secret unto His servants the prophets.

When the iniquity of the antediluvians moved Him to bring a flood of waters upon the earth, He first made known to them His purpose, that they might have opportunity to turn from their evil ways. For a hundred and twenty years was sounded in their ears the warning to repent, lest the wrath of God be manifested in their destruction.

But the message seemed to them an idle tale, and they believed it not. From unbelief they proceeded to scorn and contempt, ridiculing the warning as highly improbable, and unworthy of their notice. Emboldened in their wickedness, they mocked the messenger of God, made light of his entreaties, and even accused him of presumption. How dare one man stand up against all the great men of the earth? If Noah's message were true, why did not all the world see it and believe it? One man's assertion against the wisdom of thousands! They would not credit the warning, nor would they seek shelter in the ark.

As it was then, so it will be in the day when that which has been so long predicted will actually come to pass. They will then find that, while they could ignore, ridicule, and treat as being of no effect the warnings carried by God's appointed messengers, they will be unable to argue against the actual events themselves. Of that day it is written:

Revelation 16

¹⁹ Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

While the title, Babylon the Great, appears but twice in the Scriptures, the equivalent, "great Babylon," is also recorded twice, once in *Daniel*, and once in *Revelation*. The great Babylon in *Daniel* is a different kingdom from that in *Revelation*, but the same name is used to indicate the same principles of operation and the same world dominating power.

The Spirit of Self-Sufficiency

The spirit of self-sufficiency is characteristic of Babylon. It is the manifestation of the problem at the heart of the great controversy

between Christ and Satan. The enemy, Lucifer, determined to institute a new order of government in which he would allocate to himself the position occupied by Christ. To do this was an impossibility, for he lacked the qualifications needed which were, among others, that he would have to have had the nature both of the Creator and the creature. This was necessary, for anyone who would be the occupant of the position Christ held, would have to have had full access to God the Father on the one hand, and yet be one with the creatures on the other.

Yet Satan considered that he had accomplished his self-centered purpose and expressed his conviction to this effect through the king of Babylon, when he declared his convictions in these words:

Daniel 4

³⁰ Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?

But he had not actually won the supremacy over God, nor will he ever achieve such an ambition. This is most fortunate for us for, were he to achieve this, it would be at the cost of certain, total disconnection from God the Life-giver, which of course is certain death. No one can survive complete separation from the great Source of life.

Why is She Called Great?

We who will face this mystery of iniquity in just the same manner as the four Hebrew youths faced the mighty king of the world, must understand in what sense Babylon the Great is called great when her principles of operation are identical with those of ancient Babylon. The answer is that it is a matter of scale, intensity, and proficiency. The scale will be global, the intensity will be the highest pitch, and the proficiency of the most sophisticated kind possible after six thousand years of the closest scientific study into what may be achieved.

Her Policy: Convert or Die

She is very skillful in approaching her intended victims. Her policy is to come at first with a kindly demeanor to those who do not

yet support her in her quest for world supremacy. But when that fails, every weapon of compulsion is brought to bear upon the hapless victim, with the ultimatum—submit or perish, conform or die.

The Signs of the Times, May 6, 1897:

Trial and persecution will come to all who, in obedience to the Word of God, refuse to worship this false sabbath. Force is the last resort of every false religion. At first it tries attraction, as the king of Babylon tried the power of music and outward show. If these attractions, invented by men inspired by Satan, failed to make men worship the image, the hungry flames of the furnace were ready to consume them.

So it will be now. The Papacy has exercised her power to compel men to obey her, and she will continue to do so. We need the same spirit that was manifested by God's servants in the conflict with paganism. Giving an account of the treatment of the Christians by the emperor of Rome, Tertullian says,

“We are thrown to the wild beasts to make us recant; we are burned in the flames; we are condemned to prisons and to mines; we are banished to islands,—such as Patmos,—and all have failed.”

So it was in the case of the three Hebrew worthies; their eye was single to the glory of God; their souls were steadfast; the power of the truth held them firmly to their allegiance to God. It is in the power of God alone that we shall be enabled to be loyal to him.

This does not mean that these characteristics and attitudes are manifest by Babylon at all times and in all places, for this would not be true, even though they are always present. There are periods during which her power has in a measure been broken. During these times, she has presented a pleasing appearance before the world, and lies low while regathering her strength. This she is diligently doing at the present time, in the belief that her day of opportunity will come again.

Furthermore, it is too limited an identification of her to name a particular person, church organization, or nation as being the one or more so named, for these are merely they who provide support

for her and without whom she would cease to exist. She is the ultimate in rebellion against God and His people, and leaves no means untried whereby she might annihilate them.

At times it appears that she has successfully achieved this villainous purpose, but though each onslaught against the people of God seemed more than sufficient to achieve her malignant designs, they arose freer, stronger, and more enlightened out of every campaign mounted against them. The more resolutely and vigorously Babylon wages war against the Church, the weaker she becomes. A cover to cover reading of the survey of history as found in *The Great Controversy* will verify that.

In the great day of final reckoning, it will at last be really seen that:

Revelation 18

²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.

What a terrible indictment that is when the charge is the guilt of the murder of every person who has ever lived including our beloved Saviour. The worst aspect of this awful slaughter lies in the fact that Satan's primary target is the people of the Lord who are so totally undeserving of such treatment. This anger is directed against those whom Christ instructs to:

Luke 10

³ Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.

Manifestations of Babylon

Naturally and correctly, we expect that Babylon the Great will be much more of the same thing that Babylon is. Our identification of this mighty power, Babylon the Great, is something more than we expect Babylon to be and so we should. In the past there have been a succession of establishments fitting Babylon's character and devoted to her objectives.

The first one revealed itself when Cain killed his brother in an outburst of religious persecution.

This side of the flood, there was the Tower of Babel erected as a manifestation of defiance against the God of heaven. It was designed to advertise the notion that men could solve all their problems without reference to God. When that evil enterprise came to nothing, the Babylon of that day fell, never to rise again.

In those days, the sun god was elevated as the reincarnated Nimrod referred to in:

Genesis 10

⁸ Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth.

⁹ He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord.

¹⁰ And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.¹⁸

In Daniel's day, the mighty, all conquering power called "Babylon" built its capital astride the great river Euphrates. Seemingly, she was impregnable and invincible, but in one night she fell, never to rise again forever. So followed Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, the Papacy, and the fallen, Protestant Churches which are also Babylon, as it is written:

The Review and Herald, September 12, 1893:

The fallen denominational churches are Babylon.

The truth now being presented here is that all these individual, successive falls happened in turn to various forces designated in some way or another as being "Babylon." Because they were separated by time and place from one another, none had the right to be called, "Babylon the Great," but let them all be brought together in one great universal confederacy of evil, all developed to the highest pitch of satanic and human culture and learning, and all united in one common purpose, namely, defiance of the Creator's government and authority, then will "Babylon the Great" most certainly have emerged and established herself.

¹⁸ For a more detailed description of the rise and fall of Nimrod, see *Behold Your God*, Chapter 20.

A Great Universal Confederacy of Evil

That just such a confederation of all the highly developed forces of the evil powers of darkness is being organized is revealed for us in the sacred writings of which we will study more in depth and detail later. In the meantime, here are some of those reports of what is developing even now:

Revelation 17

¹³ These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.

¹⁴ These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 983:

There will be a universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan's forces.

Revelation 17

¹³ ...and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

Thus is manifested the same arbitrary, oppressive power against religious liberty, freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, as was manifested by the papacy, when in the past it persecuted those who dared to refuse to conform with the religious rites and ceremonies of Romanism.

In the warfare to be waged in the last days there will be united, in opposition to God's people, all the corrupt powers that have apostatized from allegiance to the law of Jehovah. In this warfare the Sabbath of the fourth commandment will be the great point at issue; for in the Sabbath commandment the great Lawgiver identifies himself as the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

Thus we are informed that all the corrupt powers which have apostatized from true, loyal service to God will be unified as they go forth in their warfare against God and his people in the great final confrontation between the forces of light and darkness. Every person, every business principle, every type of organization, and so forth which is not on God's side is an apostasy from the truth. There is no exception to this rule. No one apostatizes from anything else except the truth of God. This can only mean that

the entire world will be arrayed against us. When the magnitude of these combined forces becomes apparent to us, we shall better appreciate how great is the task confronting us.

Of course the actual individuals who made up the various Babylons of the past, will not be present on this final battlefield, for they will have long since passed from the scene of action, but they have left behind them the accumulation of more and still more of Babylonian ideas, principles, and concepts to which every passing generation with its advancement of learning, has added its terrible contributions.

Even Satan's treasure house of increased skill and understanding has been considerably enlarged. Consider this in the light of the following statement:

The Great Controversy, p. ix-x:

The great controversy between good and evil will increase in intensity to the very close of time. In all ages the wrath of Satan has been manifested against the church of Christ; and God has bestowed His grace and Spirit upon His people to strengthen them to stand against the power of the evil one. When the apostles of Christ were to bear His gospel to the world and to record it for all future ages, they were especially endowed with the enlightenment of the Spirit. But as the church approaches her final deliverance, Satan is to work with greater power. He comes down,

Revelation 12

¹² ...having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time.

He will work...

2 Thessalonians 2

⁹ ...with all power and signs and lying wonders.

For six thousand years that mastermind that once was highest among the angels of God has been wholly bent to the work of deception and ruin. And all the depths of satanic skill and subtlety acquired, all the cruelty developed, during these struggles of the ages, will be brought to bear against God's people in the final conflict. And in this time of peril the followers of Christ are to bear to the world the warning of the Lord's second advent;

and a people are to be prepared to stand before Him at His coming,

2 Peter 3

¹⁴ ...without spot, and blameless.

At this time the special endowment of divine grace and power is not less needful to the church than in apostolic days.

At the present time then, all the Babylonian forces are quietly but efficiently gathering their resources in preparation for their final confrontation with the forces of light and truth. In many cases, they are unaware of their own strategies, and do not understand where they are going, but under Satan's supervision are going there nonetheless. The following statement is a revelation in this respect:

The Great Controversy, p. 581:

God's word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare. She is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men. She is piling up her lofty and massive structures in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions will be repeated. Stealthily and unsuspectedly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike. All that she desires is vantage ground, and this is already being given her. We shall soon see and shall feel what the purpose of the Roman element is. Whoever shall believe and obey the word of God will thereby incur reproach and persecution.

Daniel's Example

So then, Daniel faced Babylon, but we are facing Babylon the Great. Because of what he went through as a pioneer or a pathfinder, our mission will be somewhat better defined, and, by the sure word of prophecy, we will understand better what to expect. I am sure that Daniel and his three noble friends did not fully understand the real significance of their stand, just as later,

Daniel did not fully comprehend the prophecies he was receiving by divine inspiration.

Prophets and Kings, p. 547:

Honored by men with the responsibilities of state and with the secrets of kingdoms bearing universal sway, Daniel was honored by God as His ambassador, and was given many revelations of the mysteries of ages to come. His wonderful prophecies, as recorded by him in Chapters 7 to 12 of the book bearing his name, were not fully understood even by the prophet himself; but before his life labors closed, he was given the blessed assurance that “at the end of the days” in the closing period of this world’s history—he would again be permitted to stand in his lot and place. It was not given him to understand all that God had revealed of the divine purpose.

Daniel 12

⁴ Shut up the words, and seal the book,

—he was directed concerning his prophetic writings; these were to be sealed,

⁴ ...even to the time of the end.

⁹ Go your way, Daniel,

—the angel once more directed the faithful messenger of Jehovah;

⁹ ...for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

¹³ Go your way till the end be: for you shall rest, and stand in your lot at the end of the days.

God, knowing all too truly that the apostasy of Israel would bring about such utter ruin that even the population would be removed from Judah to Babylon, planned to turn a disaster into a mighty blessing. He would use the entire situation as an educational parallel to teach those of us upon whom the ends of the world are come, just how to relate to Babylon in the last days.

Education, p. 57:

The same mighty truths that were revealed through these men, God desires to reveal through the youth and the children of to-day. The history of Joseph and Daniel is an illustration of what He will do for those who yield themselves to Him and with the whole heart seek to accomplish His purpose.

As these studies continue, we will learn something of what these mighty truths are, but in the meantime what an inspiration it is to see the mighty foe toppled by Daniel and his friends in the past and by their counterparts in the future.

This battle against Babylon the Great will be the struggle which will terminate all of the conflicts in which men have ever been involved for whatever reason, and in particular those designed to enforce one man's religion on another. All the Babylons of the past have fallen, Daniel's day is in the past, and now Babylon the Great is rising to universal domination. Her warfare will not be directed against man, but against God and His saints. The conflict will be terrible, and will come close to being lost, but the forces of righteousness will prevail. However, let it be known that God will not commit His forces to the battle until they are truly ready, until He knows that they will triumph!

The story of Daniel and his three friends is a lesson book of the highest value in learning how to send Babylon the Great like a great millstone to the bottom of the sea. When that event arrives, we shall rejoice with joy everlasting knowing that our enemy is forever separated from us, and Christ is King forevermore.

12. Truth and Love, the Prevailing Power

Messenger and News Review, October 1994

IN DANIEL'S day, Babylon's rise to undisputed world supremacy was only possible because of the ever-deepening apostasy of most of the children of Israel. Had God's people ever remained the military, moral, and religious force they had been when Solomon mounted the throne, Babylon would never have become the ruler of the world.

But Israel had fallen away, and Babylon had succeeded to the position of world supremacy which threatened the very existence of God's people. Having foreseen the approaching peril, the Lord was not caught by surprise but made full provision to meet the crisis.

Saving Daniel and the Princes

In dealing with this problem, God could not employ the weapons of force in His intervention no matter how closely Satan moved toward the realization of universal supremacy. The nature of that intervention came in the form of special protection provided for those who were still God's honest children to whom the apostasy was not attributable. In His own way, the Lord was able to influence the Babylonian king to bring an advance group of key personnel from Judah to Babylon in order to ensure their protection from the fury of the soldiers of King Nebuchadnezzar when Jerusalem was finally attacked and destroyed.

The revelation of God's providential intervention is recorded in *Jeremiah* 24:1-10, where, under the symbolism of two baskets of figs, one very good and the other very bad, God explained the fates of those who remained true to the Lord on the one hand, and those who were apostate on the other.

The two groups of course did not share the same fate, for those who were apostate were to suffer destruction, while the others symbolized by the good figs, had received a very special solution to their problem. They had been sent by God to Babylon ahead of

the holocaust which later engulfed Jerusalem and the temple with unrestrained savagery. Those who were sent were as follows:

Jeremiah 24

¹ The Lord showed me, and there were two baskets of figs set before the temple of the Lord, after Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the princes of Judah with the craftsmen and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon.

These included Daniel and his three friends who were princes among those of the royal class who were taken to the land of the Chaldean conquerors. These are referred to by King Nebuchadnezzar as...

Daniel 1

³ ...the king's descendants.

And how was it that this group of princes and skilled workmen went ahead to the land of their exile? Heaven's action was a matter of divine intervention successfully executed by God without His using force. It all came about as follows:

There was in King Nebuchadnezzar's ambitious planning for Babylon, the gathering together in one center of the best intellects and the most skilled artisans to be found throughout the then known world. In this way he would increase Babylon's intellectual might and extend its knowledge of the sciences, thus enhancing the glory of the kingdom.

The lordly monarch was apparently anxious to implement the plan as soon as possible and was therefore susceptible to suggestions which might be made to him. So God through the angels surrounded the king with an influence leading him to bring certain of the princes and skilled workers to the great city ahead of many of the others. Later God revealed the plan and He who was its Author to Jeremiah. He also declared that He had made this arrangement for the good of those for whom it had been formulated—those who had been sent ahead into the land of the Chaldees.

Jeremiah 24

⁵ Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent out of this place for their own good, into the land of the Chaldeans.

God foresaw very clearly the coming of those events which would make it necessary for Him to send these craftsmen and princes to Babylon for their own good. He understood the fearful conditions which were developing over Jerusalem and which would make it almost impossible to survive once the storm really broke.

Those changing conditions were the result of the treacherous behavior of the last king of Judah, King Zedekiah. When King Nebuchadnezzar first came against Jerusalem and overcame it, he did not destroy the city or the temple, nor did he even terminate the kingdom. Instead, Judah was permitted to continue as a separate rulership.

Prophets and Kings, p. 439:

The kingdom of Judah, broken in power and robbed of its strength both in men and in treasure, was nevertheless still permitted to exist as a separate government. At its head Nebuchadnezzar placed Mattaniah, a younger son of Josiah, changing his name to Zedekiah.

This was a great privilege for which King Zedekiah owed an immense debt of gratitude. Well would it have been for him and God's people had he been true to the trusts placed in him.

Prophets and Kings, p. 440:

Zedekiah at the beginning of his reign was trusted fully by the king of Babylon and had as a tried counselor the prophet Jeremiah. By pursuing an honorable course toward the Babylonians and by paying heed to the messages from the Lord through Jeremiah, he could have kept the respect of many in high authority and have had opportunity to communicate to them a knowledge of the true God. Thus the captive exiles already in Babylon would have been placed on vantage ground and granted many liberties; the name of God would have been honored far and

wide; and those that remained in the land of Judah would have been spared the terrible calamities that finally came upon them.

This is the bright and hopeful picture of what might have been, but tragically, matters did not develop in that direction. Embedded in the heart of Judah's king was the terrible spirit of rebellion which controlled him against any better desires he might have possessed.

False prophets, predicting an early reversion of their plight, found an answering chord in the heart of King Zedekiah, and stirred him, as soon as the opportunity presented itself, to betray the sacred trust he had led King Nebuchadnezzar to bestow upon him. Before he could rise in revolt, however, King Zedekiah's position was threatened by the unrest caused by the activities of the false prophets, by which he was brought under the suspicion of treason,

Prophets and Kings, p. 447:

....and only by quick and decisive action on his part was he permitted to continue reigning as a vassal.

But this solemn renewal of his covenant was but short lived, for, once back in Jerusalem, he began plotting rebellion in the vain hope of breaking from Babylon's dominion.

2 Chronicles 36

¹² He did evil in the sight of the Lord his God, and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the Lord.

¹³ And he also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear an oath by God; but he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the Lord God of Israel.

It was to Egypt that King Zedekiah turned in his revolt against the king of Babylon. In doing so, he went directly against the counsels of the Lord through His messenger, Jeremiah the prophet, and thus gave abundant cause for the fury of King Nebuchadnezzar to be fully awakened, as it certainly was.

Prophets and Kings, p. 450-451:

Foremost among those who were rapidly leading the nation to ruin was Zedekiah their king. Forsaking utterly the counsels of the Lord as given through the prophets, forgetting the debt of gratitude he owed Nebuchadnezzar, violating his solemn oath of allegiance taken in the name of the Lord God of Israel, Judah's king rebelled against the prophets, against his benefactor, and against his God. In the vanity of his own wisdom he turned for help to the ancient enemy of Israel's prosperity,

Ezekiel 17

¹⁵ ...sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people.

King Zedekiah could hardly have done a more thorough or successful job of enraging the king, had he set out to deliberately do so. If there is one thing above all others which stirs up the spirit of one person against another, it is the betrayal of trust. The higher the position of the one betrayed, the greater the fury he manifests. Imagine the unrestrained wrath of the mighty potentate, King Nebuchadnezzar, when news reached him that King Zedekiah had approached the king of Egypt with a plan for their joint revolt against him.

He would have risen from his throne utterly determined to show no compassion, mercy, or leniency whatsoever anymore. This time he would so utterly waste Jerusalem that its fortifications, leveled with the ground, would be rendered valueless as a defense against its enemies. He would likewise raze the glorious temple, burn the entire city, and slaughter many of the people. In particular, the king and the princes would be put to death with terrible cruelty.

All that the king purposed to do he did. Firstly, he eliminated the Egyptian threat and then besieged Jerusalem until it fell. Then he vented his incredible anger on King Zedekiah and his sons, the princes.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, p. 184-185:

But the weakness of Zedekiah was a crime for which he paid a fearful penalty. The enemy swept down like a resistless

avalanche and devastated the city. The Hebrew armies were beaten back in confusion. The nation was conquered. Zedekiah was taken prisoner, and his sons were slain before his eyes. Then he was led away from Jerusalem a captive, hearing the shrieks of his wretched people and the roaring of the flames that were devouring their homes. His eyes were put out, and when he arrived at Babylon he perished miserably. This was the punishment of unbelief and following ungodly counsel.

In this paragraph is written the certain fate of the princes, Daniel and his three friends, had they not been sent to the land of the Chaldees for their own good. They would have been slain in Zedekiah's presence even though they were not the direct sons of the king.

Jeremiah 52

¹⁰ Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes. And he killed all the princes of Judah in Riblah.

The putting out of Zedekiah's eyes was an act of unbelievable cruelty which provides us with a strong indication of how stirred up was the anger of King Nebuchadnezzar. No one will gouge another person's eyes out unless he himself is blind with rage and out of control as King Nebuchadnezzar would have been.

So then, it certainly was for their own good that God caused Daniel and his companions to be sent to Babylon before the holocaust took place. It was a masterpiece of problem-solving by which God demonstrated His marvelous capacity for delivering His people without the employment of weapons of force.

A Company of Dedicated Believers

But, without for one moment lessening the glory of God in rescuing the faithful four, there was a much more important issue to be dealt with than mere physical deliverance. The very existence of righteousness had to be preserved, no matter what the cost, provided the rescue package did not involve any breaking of the law. The fierce and furious Babylonian lion was about to devour the pitiful remnant of God's people, and it seemed as if there was nothing and nobody who could save them.

In such a moment in the history of time and eternity, God had to have at His command a company of utterly dedicated believers in whom resided the awesome power and perfection of His righteousness, and on whom He could rely no matter what the circumstances, to remain faithful to His commands. There did not have to be a large number of them, for numbers belong to the world of force.

In the case of Daniel and his friends, God won the first battles which were over the temperance issue, through a mere four very young men. The next contest involving the command to bow before the golden image, was won by only three, while thereafter one man was sufficient. This does not mean that there had to be a minimum of four to begin with, although having others to stand by is a big help provided they do not crumble under pressure. Should they do so, they become a great trial which makes it more difficult for the faithful ones to remain unyielding.

The reason for there being only four to begin with was because that was the number available. If there had been forty, or four hundred, or any other number, God would have used them all with equal impartiality according to their individual capacities. The numbers or shortage of them would have made no difference to Him provided there was at least one with the necessary capacities including perfect sinlessness, with which to outmatch our deadly enemy.

On the global scale, the same principles are in operation. That is why victory in the end will depend on so few even as it did in Daniel's time. If those last few were to die or desert to the enemy, God would be defeated and would lose the great controversy, and nothing would remain for us apart from eternal death.

Matters came shudderingly close to this awful failure on the part of God's people in Daniel's time, and it will come to the same dreadful edge of failure in the coming final crisis when all the issues will be contested and resolved so completely, that they can never trouble us again forever.

The Use of Force in Ancient Israel

Ancient Israel failed because, among other things, they thought that they had to build God's kingdom by employing the same tactics, weapons, and strategies as those employed by their enemies who concentrate their time, skills, and energies on building Satan's kingdom. They deluded themselves that, while the end result had to be different, the way to reach these very opposite targets was the same.

On the basis of this reasoning, the Jew and the Gentile both employed the same weapons of warfare and met each other in pitched battles in which thousands upon thousands died. Thus under Joshua and later David, Israel mounted campaigns against the Canaanites, Philistines, Ammonites, Amalekites, and other nations, usually with great apparent success.

But this procedure failed to fill the land with righteousness. Instead there were constantly recurring descents into apostasy which was the only result that could be expected. Apostasy was the fruit. The use of force as in warfare was the root. Just as surely as the one is employed, the other will follow. Thus the awful apostasy which culminated in the utter ruin which overtook Israel in Daniel's day was but the fruit of their attempt to establish themselves as a righteous nation by using unrighteous procedures.

This agrees with an earlier study in which I pointed to King Solomon's disobedience as being the cause of his apostasy. The use of force is just as much a procedure condemned by God as was King Solomon's forming an alliance with the King of Egypt, or the marrying of his daughter, the Egyptian princess. The result of the one is the same as that of the other—utter ruin.

God's Opportunity

It is when this ultimate outworking of the wrong procedures has arrived, that the way is opened for God to really work. Thus when both the northern and the southern kingdom of Israel had been stripped of every vestige of military power, and it appeared

that for the cause of God all was lost, the way was opened for God to call in His army and plant it right in the heart of the enemy's camp in fulfillment of the promise:

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, p. 163:

Faith is the living power that presses through every barrier, overrides all obstacles, and plants its banner in the heart of the enemy's camp.

That army was made up of four strictly obedient young men, the mighty, pure, and holy angels of the Lord, and the awesome power of the Holy Spirit. At its head was the Captain of our salvation, Jesus Christ, our invincible Lord. Unlike the Babylonians who were led by their commander to wage war in unrighteousness, the army of the Lord went forth conquering and to conquer by using only the weapons of righteousness as it is written:

Revelation 19

¹¹ Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

Had God chosen to fight according to the principles of unrighteousness, He would have used the vastly superior weapons of force and destruction which were at His command to instantly obliterate Satan and his followers.

The Review and Herald, September 7, 1897:

Satan's representations against the government of God, and his defense of those who sided with him, were a constant accusation against God. His murmurings and complaints were groundless; and yet God allowed him to work out his theory. God could have destroyed Satan and all his sympathizers as easily as one can pick up a pebble and cast it to the earth. But by so doing he would have given a precedent for the exercise of force. All the compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. He would not work on this line. He would not give the slightest encouragement for any human being to set himself up as God over another human being, feeling at liberty to cause him physical or mental suffering. This principle is wholly of Satan's creation.

The definite conviction possessed by almost everyone down through history is that, while some problems can be solved by the presentation of goodness, mercy, and love, almost every one of life's problems demands some degree of the employment of force. But what God is saying so plainly is that, seeing that the exercise of force is exclusive to Satan's kingdom and is as totally excluded from God's, then the final battle so soon to be fought will be waged by God's people without the slightest reliance on compelling power in any shape or form whatsoever.

Force of Arms, or Truth and Love?

This introduces the sobering realization that any movement of God's people, past, present, or future, which in any way relies upon or turns to the weapons of Satan's kingdom, may experience victories over him but cannot utterly and permanently defeat him, and therefore cannot be God's instruments by whom He will conclude the great controversy. They themselves no doubt will gain eternal life after passing through the grave, provided they lived up to all the light they had received, but will not experience translation. That wonderful privilege awaits the formation of a company of believers each member of which is totally committed to the rejection of even the slightest concession to the use of force. They will be the one hundred and forty-four thousand.

Abraham successfully relied on the force of arms to rescue Lot, but, in doing so, he employed that which belonged to Satan's kingdom. Therefore he could not give a conclusive demonstration of God's making war without using the weapons of physical warfare. Fortunately he so clearly saw how wrong the system of force is, that he abandoned it, for we never hear of his resorting to these measures again.

Isaac and Jacob renounced the weapons of physical warfare and thus came closer to the mark.

But after their deliverance from Egyptian slavery, the Israelites seized the first opportunity to acquire enough weapons to equip an army, by which instrument of destruction they murdered the

Canaanites, and usurped possession of their land by using methods which God would never have used. In their acquisition of that which the Lord had promised them as a possession, they acted no differently from the heathen over whom God had planned that truth and love were to be the prevailing or overcoming power.¹⁹

At first, the application of aggressive warfare by the Jews was very successful, but the principle that all who live by the sword will perish by the sword, remained valid nonetheless even as Jesus warned it would:

Matthew 26

⁵² But Jesus said to him, Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

Revelation 13

¹⁰ He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

When Jesus came as the first and final word on the subject, He achieved that which all others thought to be impossible. He demonstrated quite conclusively that any believer who, under Christ's command and in the awesome power of the Holy Spirit goes to war equipped only with truth and love, are unconquerable. From the human standpoint, this is attempting the impossible, for unarmed Christians are seen to be as sheep led to the slaughter with no hope of survival unless there are adequate forces present to turn the tide. Jesus demonstrated that His kingdom cannot be built by using force in any shape or form whatsoever. He showed how that only when truth and love are the prevailing powers, can a kingdom be established eternally.

The Prevailing Power

Let us note this principle as declared in another statement very similar to the one quoted above:

¹⁹ See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 759.

The Desire of Ages, p. 759:

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.

Let us focus our attention on the words, "prevailing power." To prevail means to overcome, to conquer, to gain the ascendancy. Those who do not understand God's character, nor by what principles and procedures He builds His kingdom, do not comprehend that truth and love could even be the prevailing powers.

If the professed believer in Jesus, as he comes to really understand that truth and love are to be the prevailing power, finds himself staggering at the thought of Christ, the Sinless One, going to war so "inadequately" armed, then what will he do when he is "restricted" to the same weapons? How often the people of the Lord, finding themselves unable to see how truth and love can possibly succeed in the crisis facing them, turn to solutions of their own devising, in which reliance is not placed on truth and love as being the prevailing power.

But God expects every one of His children without any exceptions to enter into his daily conflicts armed only with truth and love as being the prevailing powers in their deadly warfare against the kingdom of darkness and death. If the believer in Jesus is not equipped with the full and final display of truth and love, he is not yet qualified to be a member of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, and consequently is not yet ready to fight in the concluding battle of the great controversy. He will not be able to share in the bringing down of Babylon the Great.

The location of Daniel and his three friends in Babylon was God's deployment of His army. In His preparation of them for their special mission, He had made certain that they were charged with the life giving forces of truth and love, and then placed them

in the very heart of the kingdom, face to face with the king himself. In the book of *Daniel* is recorded the story of how completely and permanently truth and love prevailed over error and hatred.

It is the great lesson book for those whom God will soon deploy in the very heart of Babylon the Great where truth and love will prevail, and from which confrontation Babylon the Great will emerge totally and eternally defeated.

As we then proceed with the study of *Daniel* and the *Revelation*, we must keep ever before us the realization that these two books reveal that in the final battle, the prevailing power will be truth and love. The weapons of force will not be the masters then. If we fail to understand this, we will have missed the message of these two books.

To assist you all in your search for a correct understanding of these books, I shall write these studies from the point of view that truth and love are to be the prevailing power.

13. The Role of Jeremiah the Prophet

Messenger and News Review, November 1994

Jeremiah 1

The Condition of God's People

THE inspired records of the history of the children of Israel between King Solomon's grave apostasy and the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, are so dark with kings, priests, and people walking in terrible iniquity and utterly refusing to be corrected, that we tend to gain the impression that there were no righteous people left in the land during that period.

This impression is heightened by the fact that true religion was so unpopular, that to espouse it was to attract severe persecution and even suffer death as a result of confessing it. At the same time, idol worship held almost the entire nation in its bewitching power. In the service of sin, the apostate people found a joy of which they would permit no one to deprive them.

Sensing the futility of openly trying to correct the corruption and the prevailing iniquity, those who were true and loyal to God adopted a low profile, for which reason we tend to consider that they did not exist. But there were a number of hidden ones who were true and faithful to their God, a goodly remnant who lived by the principles of truth and righteousness.

But it is the words of the prophets which give us the only truly accurate assessment of the condition of the people at that time, and theirs was a bleak report indeed. Micah could find none with the divine character, while Isaiah spoke of there being only a very small remnant remaining.

Prophets and Kings, p. 324:

This was indeed a time of great peril for the chosen nation.

Only a few short years, and the ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel were to be scattered among the nations of heathendom. And in the kingdom of Judah also the outlook was dark. The forces for good were rapidly diminishing, the forces for evil multiplying. The prophet Micah, viewing the situation, was constrained to exclaim:

Micah 7

² The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men.

⁴ The best of them is as a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge.

Isaiah 1

⁹ Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, [declared Isaiah,] we should have been as Sodom, and...Gomorrah.

The Beginning of Jeremiah's Work

But, faithful among the faithless was Jeremiah who was called at an early age to be God's messenger to the southern kingdom. His call came in the thirteenth year of the reign of King Josiah, and was followed by forty years of ministry during the reigns of Kings Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah.

Jeremiah 1

¹ The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin,

² To whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.

³ It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.

Those were difficult years during which Jeremiah had to continually contend with hate-charged opposition. He was falsely accused, unjustly imprisoned, and condemned to death, though the sentence was overruled by some powerful men.

But worse still were the agonies he suffered as he beheld the terrible apostasy of his beloved people, the betrayal of the sacred trusts with which God had endowed them, and their ever increasing devotion to the degrading rites of idolatry. His was not a ministry filled with joy and gladness, but it was one he faithfully performed, while looking to God to take care of consequences. God gave the messages. Jeremiah faithfully and unsparingly delivered them to the people.

Prophets and Kings, p. 408:

For forty years Jeremiah was to stand before the nation as a witness for truth and righteousness. In a time of unparalleled apostasy he was to exemplify in life and character the worship of the only true God. During the terrible sieges of Jerusalem he was to be the mouthpiece of Jehovah. He was to predict the downfall of the house of David and the destruction of the beautiful temple built by Solomon.

And when imprisoned because of his fearless utterances, he was still to speak plainly against sin in high places. Despised, hated, rejected of men, he was finally to witness the literal fulfillment of his own prophecies of impending doom, and share in the sorrow and woe that should follow the destruction of the fated city.

Jeremiah's Relevance to Today

Our interest in Jeremiah, the prophet, is not generated simply because of his being the powerful messenger of God to a people, who, to all appearances at least, were sinking into incurable apostasy and subjecting themselves to hopeless ruin. While that was an extremely important part of his work, it is to the other purpose of his commission to which our attention is turned—the special preparation of Daniel and his companions for their battles with, and their total victory over the mighty Babylon.

This remarkable prophet had a dual commission to fulfill. Firstly, he was raised up to communicate the straight testimony to the house of Judah during the time when the Lord made his final attempt at rescuing His beloved people from total ruin. Secondly, he was appointed to the special ministry of preparing and equipping the mighty army of four princes which were to meet and overcome Babylon.

It is of great significance and importance that their triumph was a type which shows the way in which the modern-day Babylon is to be so totally vanquished by a little company armed only with truth and love and endowed with the awesome power of the Holy Spirit.

In Daniel's day, extraordinarily special training and equipment were needed to ensure the certain triumph of the cause of righteousness. Babylon was a foe not to be taken lightly, for her status was that of world conqueror. It was the faithful four who engaged the enemy on the battlefield, but it was Jeremiah through whom God communicated the fitness for them to fight and win, armed only with the weapons of spiritual warfare. Without the special ministry of Jeremiah, the four young men could never have accomplished what they did.

Once more, this warfare is to be repeated, for again the little company composing the army of the Lord of Hosts will take to the battle field, but not before they have been adequately trained and equipped to fight and win.

Through the counterpart of Jeremiah the prophet, God must again do His faithful work, not on the last great battlefield, but in diligent preparation for it. When the Lord deems that His army is ready, He will commit them to the battle field, the victory will be gained, and the work will be very quickly brought to its long-looked-for conclusion.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 983:

We need to study the pouring out of the seventh vial. The powers of evil will not yield up the conflict without a struggle. But Providence has a part to act in the battle of Armageddon. When the earth is lighted with the glory of the angel of *Revelation* eighteen, the religious elements, good and evil, will awake from slumber, and the armies of the living God will take the field.

Thus the work performed by Jeremiah the prophet is highly significant to the true people of the Lord at the present time. His was the type; theirs is the antitype. Accordingly, they need to have a clear picture in their minds of the essential nature of the work, of its commanding urgency, of its finality, of the Source of its power, and of the principles and procedures by which the work will be completed.

One would expect that the saints of the Most High would be studying the great messages of present truth with intensity at

such a time as this, and while there are foolish virgins among us, we are encouraged to believe that many are diligently studying the message at the present time. At the same time as can be expected, the powers of darkness are becoming more and more possessed by the spirit which controls them. Never were the words of the following prophecy more true than now:

Special Testimonies, Series A, No. 1b:²⁰

Intensity is taking possession of every earthly element; and as a people who have had great light and wonderful knowledge, many of them are represented by the five sleeping virgins with their lamps, but no oil in their vessels; cold, senseless, with a feeble, waning piety.

While a new life is being diffused and is springing up from beneath and taking fast hold of all Satan's agencies, preparatory to the last great conflict and struggle, a new light and life and power is descending from on high, and taking possession of God's people who are not dead, as many now are, in trespasses and sins.

The people who will now see what is soon to come upon us by what is being transacted before us, will no longer trust in human inventions, and will feel that the Holy Spirit must be recognized, received, presented before the people, that they may contend for the glory of God, and work everywhere in the byways and highways of life, for the saving of the souls of their fellow-men. The only rock that is sure and steadfast is the Rock of Ages. Those only who build on this Rock are secure.

The Tarrying Time

It is true that the virgins at this time are described as slumbering and sleeping. The virgins have gone forth to meet the Bridegroom, and we are now in the tarrying time when both the wise and the foolish are slumbering. How much longer it will be before the midnight cry,

Matthew 25

⁶ Behold the Bridegroom comes, go out to meet Him,

²⁰ "An Appeal to Our Ministers and Conference Committees," p. 39.

—will sound forth, we do not know, and cannot tell. But we do know that Sister White wrote:

The Review and Herald, August 19, 1890:

I am often referred to the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were wise, and five foolish. This parable has been and will be fulfilled to the very letter, for it has a special application to this time, and, like the third angel's message, has been fulfilled and will continue to be present truth till the close of time.

As surely then that the parable is being fulfilled “to the very letter” this side of 1890, as it was before 1890, just so surely are we in the tarrying time when all the virgins are said to be sleeping. They will continue to do so until the midnight cry rings out. Then it will be seen who has been educated by God through “Jeremiah the prophet” and thus been made ready to conquer the last manifestation of Babylon, which shall be called “Babylon the Great.”

The wise virgins are said to be slumbering during this period; but this does not mean that they are altogether spiritually inactive and unconscious of what is transpiring around them during the tarrying time. Rather they, not finding open access to the needy in the world around them, and not being certain where their next duties will take them, are found most earnestly searching for answers to spiritual and physical questions, and are working at developing the fitness to meet the storm about to burst upon the world.

We can gain an understanding of what the tarrying time actually is by looking at the passing of the believers in 1844 through their tarrying time. Here is an inspired description of that experience:

The Great Controversy, p. 394-395:

Matthew 25

⁵ While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

By the tarrying of the bridegroom is represented the passing of the time when the Lord was expected, the disappointment, and the seeming delay. In this time of uncertainty, the interest of the superficial and halfhearted soon began to waver, and their ef-

forts to relax; but those whose faith was based on a personal knowledge of the Bible had a rock beneath their feet, which the waves of disappointment could not wash away. "They all slumbered and slept;" one class in unconcern and abandonment of their faith, the other class patiently waiting till clearer light should be given. Yet in the night of trial the latter seemed to lose, to some extent, their zeal and devotion. The halfhearted and superficial could no longer lean upon the faith of their brethren. Each must stand or fall for himself.

Thus it is that the wise virgins patiently wait until clearer light shall be given. In the meantime they develop the capacity to stand through trial, tribulation, and the pressure to be disbelieving. They also lose to some extent their zeal and devotion.

An Educational Ministry

Before total ruin overtook the southern kingdom, Jeremiah made the most of the opportunities afforded him to establish and consolidate the true believers in the faith. In order to achieve this he spent a lot of time traveling throughout the country visiting the faithful and the loyal, instructing them in the living principles of pure truth, and thus prepared them to stand true to God wherever they might be located after the desolation of Jerusalem had been accomplished.

This critically important work on Jeremiah's part seems to be but little known, yet without it, there would have been no faithful four to carry the banner of righteousness into the heart of the enemy's camp unless God could have found someone to take his place if he had failed to accept his calling. King Nebuchadnezzar would never have openly sung the praises of Christ, his personal Saviour, and thus history would have been written very differently. There would have been so much which would never have happened if Jeremiah had failed to do the work appointed him.

But he was an untiring worker who, knowing he had but little time before the storm broke and swept all away, concentrated all of his energies on fulfilling his commission. In his record of faithful, utterly dedicated ministry, it is written:

Prophets and Kings, p. 428:

As an interpreter of the meaning of the judgments beginning to fall upon Judah, Jeremiah stood nobly in defense of the justice of God and of His merciful designs even in the severest chastisements. Untiringly the prophet labored. Desirous of reaching all classes, he extended the sphere of his influence beyond Jerusalem to the surrounding districts by frequent visits to various parts of the kingdom.

It was a wonderful ministry performed, as was appropriate, for both the apostate as well as for the loyal and true. While the one rejected it, the other welcomed the messages both of reproof and of promise. In the midst of the terrible pronouncements warning of the rapidly approaching ruin, were mingled assurances that the ultimate triumph was with God's children.

Prophets and Kings, p. 426-427:

The children of Judah were numbered among those of whom God had declared,

Exodus 19

⁶ You shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.

Never did Jeremiah in his ministry lose sight of the vital importance of heart holiness in the varied relationships of life, and especially in the service of the most high God. Plainly he foresaw the downfall of the kingdom and a scattering of the inhabitants of Judah among the nations; but with the eye of faith he looked beyond all this to the times of restoration. Ringing in his ears was the divine promise:

Jeremiah 23

³ I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds...

⁵ Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

⁶ In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Thus prophecies of oncoming judgment were mingled with promises of final and glorious deliverance. Those who should choose to make their peace with God and live holy lives amid

the prevailing apostasy, would receive strength for every trial and be enabled to witness for Him with mighty power. And in the ages to come the deliverance wrought in their behalf would exceed in fame that wrought for the children of Israel at the time of the exodus. The days were coming, the Lord declared through His prophet, when...

Jeremiah 23

⁷ ...they shall no more say, The Lord lives, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

⁸ But, The Lord lives, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

Such were the wonderful prophecies uttered by Jeremiah during the closing years of the history of the kingdom of Judah, when the Babylonians were coming unto universal rule, and were even then bringing their besieging armies against the walls of Zion.

Without a doubt Daniel's family together with those of his three friends were among those who welcomed the fairly frequent visits of the zealous Jeremiah whose Holy Spirit charged presence and instructions had a stirring effect on those from whom the spirit of rebellion and apostasy had been removed.

Prophets and Kings, p. 427:

Like sweetest music these promises of deliverance fell upon the ears of those who were steadfast in their worship of Jehovah. In the homes of the high and the lowly, where the counsels of a covenant-keeping God were still held in reverence, the words of the prophet were repeated again and again. Even the children were mightily stirred, and upon their young and receptive minds lasting impressions were made.

What a man, mighty in the awesome power of the Holy Spirit, Jeremiah must have been! How totally fitted he was to fearlessly stand on the one hand before priests and potentates thirsting for his blood, while on the other he so powerfully presented the living gospel of Jesus Christ that even the little children were mightily stirred.

When one considers the strength of the opposition facing this man of God, it is obvious that he needed the fullness of the extraordinary endowment of power which the Lord had invested in him. We can thereby have some appreciation of Jeremiah's total separation from sin. His is one of those few lives against which there is no record of sin.

Not only had he separated himself from sin, but also exhibited a fearless courage which both saved his life and his message, and won the respect of the princes in one encounter at least. Here is the record of that occasion when Jeremiah successfully withstood some of the most powerful men of the realm.

Prophets and Kings, p. 418:

Had the prophet been intimidated by the threatening attitude of those high in authority, his message would have been without effect, and he would have lost his life; but the courage with which he delivered the solemn warning commanded the respect of the people and turned the princes of Israel in his favor. They reasoned with the priests and false prophets, showing them how unwise would be the extreme measures they advocated, and their words produced a reaction in the minds of the people. Thus God raised up defenders for His servant.

The selfsame qualities must be acquired and become built into the life of everyone committed to God's cause if success is to be achieved in effecting the total and final destruction of Babylon the Great. We will have to be charged as he was with faith, courage, integrity, righteousness, and the spirit of obedience, these being the blessings which come in the train of the Holy Spirit. The strictest temperance will mark our ministry, and will assist in the maintenance of our immunity from all diseases as promised in *Psalms* 91.

Child Salvation

How was it then that Jeremiah came to be endowed with such strength of character, possessed such dedication to God's interest, was filled with such indomitable courage, and was divested of all interest in the pleasures of sin?

We need to know the answers to these questions, for, in order to successfully terminate Babylon the Great, we must receive through the present day “Jeremiah” ministry all that Daniel and his three friends received through Jeremiah’s ministry back then. Otherwise we will most certainly fail.

It all began with Jeremiah’s being born again from his conception or very soon thereafter. How do we know this? We know it because the Bible tells us that it is so. God announced this to him at the time when He called him to the prophetic ministry. Here then is the wording of that revelation and attendant commission:

Jeremiah 1

⁴ Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying:

⁵ Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.

⁶ Then said I: Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.

⁷ But the Lord said to me: Do not say, I am a youth, for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.

⁸ Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.

⁹ Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.

¹⁰ See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.

The key sentence in this passage is *Jeremiah 1:5*, which reads:

⁵ Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you.

To be sanctified is to be made holy or righteous by the creative power of the living God. It can be achieved only by being born again and made to be a child of God. It breaks the power of the sin-master by his being eradicated from within the person. From that glorious moment when through saving grace the presence of sinfulness is removed from the believer, there is the ending of sin’s eroding forces, for, wherever sin is present, it is a destroyer.

Most people who are born again receive this wonderful gift many years after they have been conceived, little realizing that their spiritual, mental, and moral faculties have been seriously impaired during all those years when sinfulness, as a state of being, occupied their soul temples. We come up to the point of deliverance robbed and spoiled.

The earlier that a person is sanctified by becoming born again, the less is the damage done, and, if the person is filled with the Holy Spirit and really cultivates a close communion with Him, the more powerful that person will be in his ministry for God's cause.

There is convincing evidence in the Scriptures as outlined in my book, *Child Salvation*, to support the truth that, through the faith of the praying parents, a person can be sanctified by being born again from his or her earliest moments of life while still in the mother's womb. The message on child salvation must be thoroughly studied in order to really understand and appreciate the reasons why Jeremiah was blessed with the character he had, the fearlessness with which he carried out His heavenly Father's will no matter how fierce and deadly the opposition, and the terrible anguish of soul endured by him as he was forced to witness the incredible flood tide of iniquity engulfing the southern kingdom.

I do not know the details revealing by whose faith Jeremiah came to respond to...

John 1

⁹ ...the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

It is encouraging though to see that at that time there was an understanding of the truth that salvation was and still is available to children from their earliest moments, and that those who are thus delivered from impaired faculties have a far greater capability for service than those who have suffered damage to their faculties.

It is clear then that Jeremiah was a product of the message on child salvation, and that, having caught a vision of the potential resident in the application of this great light, he proceeded to teach it to all those who were prepared to listen and, hopefully, put this message into practice.

It must also be true that, among others, Jeremiah taught this light to the parents of Daniel and his three friends. The natural outworking of spiritual law would assure that this is so because:

The Great Controversy, p. 70:

The spirit of Christ is a missionary spirit. The very first impulse of the renewed heart is to bring others also to the Saviour.

We can be positively assured then that one of Jeremiah's favorite themes when addressing and instructing believers was the salvation of their children. He understood in his own experience the power of the gospel to deliver the freshly conceived babes from indwelling sin and its dreadful capacity for impairment. With a glad heart he would have imparted this light to the loyal and true who in turn were eager to learn and apply it.

Further proof that this wonderful beginning of life free from indwelling sinfulness was experienced by the powerful, faithful four, is provided in their incredible achievements in the university of Babylon. When examined by the king himself, they were found to be scholastically ten times better than their fellow students who obviously had not firstly been instructed by the Lord through Jeremiah. If there had been but one who had attained to such heights, it might be said that he was a child prodigy, but when there were four from four different families, all at the same time, and all being instructed in the principles of child salvation by the same teacher who had himself been born again from his conception, then the "child prodigy" theory cannot be sustained.

Those who as completely overcome Babylon the Great when she appears in all her trappings of power in the future, as Daniel and his friends overcame Babylon in the past, must be blessed with unimpaired spiritual, mental, moral, and physical powers

such as are usually found only in those who have been born again from their conception or very soon thereafter.

Jeremiah was such a person, and he in turn imparted the instructions to the parents of the four by which means they understood the way in which they could have their infants born again from their earliest moments. They welcomed such wonderful light and obviously applied it to their individual situations. The results were truly as wonderful as they were essential to the victory gained over Babylon back then.

Once again, the same essential work of preparation is needed in order to gain the final victory over Babylon the Great in the closing up of the great controversy.

14. Restoration of All That Was Lost

Messenger and News Review, December 1994

Joel 1 & 2

WE LEARNED earlier in this series of studies that Daniel and his friends were especially protected by the Lord from the terrors of their time by being taken to Babylon ahead of the majority of their countrymen. This arrangement had been made by the master Problem-solver for their own good.

But, as we also learned, it was not for their benefit only. A major purpose was for the preservation of the very small remnant who had maintained their loyalty to God throughout the terrible apostasy and the unutterable ruin which followed. But, and most importantly of all, it was so that God could plant His banner in the heart of the enemy's camp and thus achieve the full and final defeat of Babylon, and eventually of Babylon the Great.

These events which are now historical, are also typical of the way in which the last great struggle is to be reenacted. Once again the actual battle is being preceded by a Jeremiah-type ministry appointed to prepare the Lord's last army for the long awaited victory over Babylon the Great. It will be an exceptionally effective work of preparation and will surely need to be, for all the mightiest forces of darkness, backed by the majority of the world's population, will be arrayed against us. Never, to all appearances, will so many be faced in deadly, mortal combat by so few.

Furthermore, the battle cannot be said to be over and won until every one of those billions shall have received the mark and number of the beast and his image, or alternatively, have the seal of the living God. Not until every person living at that time has made his or her irrevocable decision for or against God's government, will the final victory be achieved.

Our faith in God's word assures us that the victory will be certain for God and His truth. There is no need for us to fear on that account, but it will be a cause of concern for some as to whether

we will have the spiritual, mental, and physical capacities needed to withstand the fearful pressures under which we will be subjected during the time of Jacob's trouble. We will make special note of the unimpaired condition of those whom we know were born again from their earliest moments such as were Jeremiah, Daniel, and his three friends, and wish that we could have the equivalent advantages.

The Power of the Latter Rain

But we look back on our conception and mourn because the message on child salvation was unknown where and when we were conceived. Sadly, we wish that at least as parents we had known the message on child salvation and, as such, had taken the utmost advantage of it in the training of our precious little ones. How much better things would have been for our children if only they had been born again from their conception and had been faithfully and skillfully trained thereafter! Thus we reason with regrets.

But there are wonderful tidings for those of us who came into the world before that message was given. There is the glorious promise that, in the time of the latter rain, the Lord will restore unto us that which we have lost through the impairing effect of sin. We shall not enter the final battle as an army of cripples, no matter when or where we were born. Consider the following evidence.

It is in the book of *Joel* among other places in the Old Testament that we read of sin's role as a consumer of all our life's forces and resources. There, it is likened to the consuming locust which devours all before it and, after it has passed through, leaves the country a desolate, empty land. A more appropriate symbol of sin in the capacity and work of robbing us of our spiritual, mental, and physical powers could not be found.

Joel 1

¹ The word of the Lord that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.

² Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land! Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?

³ Tell your children about it, let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.

⁴ What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten; what the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten; and what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.

That is the picture of the human soul after it has been ravaged and desolated by the impairment caused by indwelling sinfulness, and before the restoring power of the gospel of Jesus has begun to take effect. The remainder of the first chapter of *Joel* is lamentation and mourning over the terrible desolations to which the country has been reduced.

This is followed in chapter two by a call to deep repentance, to which God will respond with the most amazing of blessings including the restoration of all that sin has consumed over the years. Then we will be just as if we had been born again from our conception.

Then we shall have the intellectual might of Daniel, the moral strength of John the Baptist, the fearlessly delivered testimony of Jeremiah, the fellowship with God experienced by Moses, the purity of Joseph, the faith of Jesus, and much much more, since these attributes are all collectively embodied in the matchless character of Jesus.

All of God's people, mighty in the Holy Spirit, will be blessed with all of these incredible capacities as they enter upon the battle with the beast and his image. This great and marvelous recovery of all that was stolen from us will be repaid as promised in these words through Joel.

Joel 2

¹⁸ Then the Lord will be zealous for His land, and pity His people.

¹⁹ The Lord will answer and say to His people, Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil, and you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations.

²⁰ But I will remove far from you the northern army, and will drive him away into a barren and desolate land, with his face toward the eastern sea and his back toward the western sea; his stench will come up, and his foul odor will rise, because he has done monstrous things.

²¹ Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the Lord has done marvelous things!

²² Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field; for the open pastures are springing up, and the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their strength.

²³ Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God; for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you—the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.

²⁴ The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.

²⁵ So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, my great army which I sent among you.

²⁶ You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; and my people shall never be put to shame.

²⁷ Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the Lord your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame.

This wondrous prophecy is not primarily referring to the restoration to be accomplished when our Saviour actually returns, great and wonderful as this recovery will be. Instead, it is a promise to be fulfilled during the outpouring of the latter rain.

There are texts and statements to prove this. The first of these is found in explanations of the parable of Joshua and the Angel where the development of certain experiences plainly testify that the believers in Jesus will be given back that of which the “locusts” have robbed them. Here is one statement:

Prophets and Kings, p. 590 [Italics supplied]:

In the time of the end the people of God will sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. With tears they will warn the wicked of their danger in trampling upon the divine law, and

with unutterable sorrow they will humble themselves before the Lord in penitence. The wicked will mock their sorrow and ridicule their solemn appeals. *But the anguish and humiliation of God's people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin.* It is because they are drawing nearer to Christ, because their eyes are fixed on His perfect purity, that they discern so clearly the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Meekness and lowliness are the conditions of success and victory. A crown of glory awaits those who bow at the foot of the cross.

One of the most important things we have lost in consequence of the reign of iniquity in us, is an awareness of the sinfulness of sin. Unlike our Saviour and those who have been born again at a very early age, we have not loved righteousness and hated iniquity as we should have done. Sin has been all too attractive to us. I am not saying that this is true in the ultimate sense, for if it were, we would be beyond salvation.

But, as the various ministries of restoration accomplish their work, we shall see the strength and nobility of character of which sinfulness has robbed us, being restored to us. And when these various ministries are complete, then we shall truly love righteousness and hate iniquity just as much as if we had been born again from our conceptions. We will no longer be impaired or deprived.

All of those who in the past lived without the impairment caused by indwelling sinfulness, were extraordinary people,

Zechariah 3

⁸ ...men wondered at.

Jesus was the finest example of all these. His spiritual powers were such that sin could not have the victory over Him. At the age of twelve, His spiritual understanding of the scriptures far exceeded that possessed by the most learned men of Israel. Later, during His public ministry, all the elements of nature obeyed His commands. Disease and demons fled from before Him. There were none who could argue against Him. Those who were sent to

arrest Him, returned without Him, exclaiming in awed tones that no man ever spoke as He did.

Daniel, Joseph, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Moses, and others are among those who were “men wondered at” and what tremendous achievements marked their lives, but what far greater number of exploits will be wondered at in the last days when every believer in Jesus will have the unimpaired power of men and women of whom God shall be able to say:

Prophets and Kings, p. 592:

Now is reached the complete fulfillment of the words of the Angel:

Zechariah 3

⁸ Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you, and your fellows that sit before you: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my Servant the Branch.

Christ is revealed as the Redeemer and Deliverer of His people. Now indeed are the remnant “men wondered at,” as the tears and humiliation of their pilgrimage give place to joy and honor in the presence of God and the Lamb.

Isaiah 4

² In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

³ And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remains in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem.

It will be during the outpouring of the latter rain that the restoration of that which has been taken from us will be finally completed. It is said that the believers in Jesus arrive there by growing up into the fullness of Christ.

The Signs of the Times, November 27, 1879:

At the transfiguration, Jesus was glorified by His Father. From His lips came these words:

John 13

³¹ Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.

Before His betrayal and crucifixion He was strengthened for His last dreadful sufferings. As the members of Christ’s body ap-

proach the period of their final conflict they will grow up into Him, and will possess symmetrical characters. As the message of the third angel swells to a loud cry, great power and glory will attend the closing work. It is the latter rain, which revives and strengthens the people of God to pass through the time of Jacob's trouble referred to by the prophets. The glory of that light which attends the third angel will be reflected upon them. God will preserve His people through that time of peril.

Growing up into Christ is a steady procedure by which a daily, divine endowment of transforming power is provided to bring us to the place where we would have been had we been born again from conception. It is our sacred responsibility to keep pace with the advancing light and be strictly obedient to every new ray as fast as it is unveiled, so that the "ministry of Jeremiah" shall be completed.

As we review God's attempts to sanctify His people, we see them being brought to quite a few points of high expectation for the ending of the great controversy, but still the conflict continues without our knowing for how much longer.

A High Point Reached in 1844

Consider, for instance, the high point to which the believers were brought when they expected Christ to come in His and His Father's glory in the autumn of 1844. There was a high state of expectancy, a strong feature of which was deep heart searching and putting away of sin in favor of the establishment of righteousness in their hearts and in their lives. The spiritual standard reached and manifested was so impressive that one would consider them fit for immediate translation. That too was how they viewed their situation as revealed in this statement:

Early Writings, p. 239:

A spirit of solemn and earnest prayer was everywhere felt by the saints. A holy solemnity was resting upon them. Angels were watching with the deepest interest the effect of the message, and were elevating those who received it, and drawing them from earthly things to obtain large supplies from salvation's fountain. God's people were then accepted of Him. Jesus looked upon

them with pleasure, for His image was reflected in them. They had made a full sacrifice, an entire consecration, and expected to be changed to immortality.

But they were destined again to be sadly disappointed. The time to which they looked, expecting deliverance, passed; they were still upon the earth, and the effects of the curse never seemed more visible. They had placed their affections on heaven, and in sweet anticipation had tasted immortal deliverance; but their hopes were not realized.

And why were their hopes not realized? What could God require more than that to which they had attained in spiritual excellence and total dedication of all they had received to God's cause and service?

The Great Controversy, p. 424-425:

But the people were not yet ready to meet their Lord. There was still a work of preparation to be accomplished for them. Light was to be given, directing their minds to the temple of God in heaven; and as they should by faith follow their High Priest in His ministration there, new duties would be revealed. Another message of warning and instruction was to be given to the church.

Further Light Needed

Note that the additional work of preparation to be accomplished for them would come in the form of additional light which would do a work in them and fit them to undertake the great final battle against Babylon the Great. Thus the work would begin with the revelation of more and brighter light, which it did. That great and glorious outshining of living truth centered on the final ministration of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary. It was a work designed to bring forth a people blessed with spotless perfection, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Malachi 3

² But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderer's soap.

³ He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.

It is not literal gold and silver which is to be purified but the believers in Jesus. They are the ones who receive this final step into ultimate perfection as symbolically taught by the refining process through which gold and silver are finally readied for service.

When gold and silver are dug out of the earth, the precious metals are mixed with virtually valueless waste. To separate them, the ore is placed in a crucible where it is subjected to great heat. Soon the gold and silver melt and the dross, being lighter than the heavier precious metals, floats to the surface. Without losing so much as a particle of the gold or silver, the refiner skims off the worthless waste, and casts it away.

He repeats this process periodically and, each time, the particles of dross become smaller and his reflection can be seen with greater and greater clarity on the molten surface, but he will not be satisfied until his likeness is flawlessly mirrored, unmarred by even the slightest imperfection. Only when this state of absolute purity has been achieved, will the process of refinement be deemed complete. When it is complete, we shall be ready for the final victory in the battle with Babylon the Great.

This will call for the final ministry of “Jeremiah” by whom the Almighty One will prepare His army for the coming terrible conflict. This will involve a special work of purification from sin as we follow our blessed Saviour through His ministry in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary as it is written:

The Great Controversy, p. 425:

Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary,

there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of *Revelation* 14.

This is an exceedingly high level of living righteously which is upheld before us here, it being nothing short of sinless perfection. Such a state of purity is always accompanied by great spiritual, mental, and physical power.

A Constant Dependence

There is a very definite relationship here as confirmed by Moses' hands being upheld during the clash with the Amalekites. When his hands were upraised, it was observed that the power resided with the warriors of Israel, but let them be lowered, and the power moved to the other side.

Here is a never-to-be-forgotten truth. When we likewise trust God and build His kingdom, His way, the enemy has no hope of defeating us, but when our connection with God is broken and we become disconnected from His power, then we actually become weaker than our enemies and are not to be surprised when we are defeated by them. This sobering truth is stated for us in the context of the battle against the Amalekites which took place between the Red Sea and Mount Sinai.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 299 [Italics supplied]:

As Aaron and Hur supported the hands of Moses, they showed the people their duty to sustain him in his arduous work while he should receive the word from God to speak to them. And the act of Moses also was significant, showing that God held their destiny in His hands; while they made Him their trust, He would fight for them and subdue their enemies; but when they should let go their hold upon Him, and trust in their own power, *they would be even weaker than those who had not the knowledge of God*, and their foes would prevail against them.

Reaching the Highest Standard

In the final battle against Babylon the Great, there will be neither room nor time for a mixture of victories and defeats. As in the cases of the four young Hebrews when every confrontation be-

tween them and Babylon ended in a convincing and decisive victory for the Lord, so it must happen again.

I was greatly impressed by statements made by men returning from the second world war as they discussed their high level of physical fitness attained through constant and very arduous training. Very obviously their officers understood the need for the maximum possible development of all their powers, for that was a necessary factor in gaining the final victory.

So successful was this training, that by contrast the demands of work in a civilian environment seemed to be very light indeed. They stated to me that they felt so fit, so strong, that they hardly knew how to cope with such uncommon strength.

Before they were inducted into the army and were still employed in civilian work, they had no idea of how great would be the demands made upon their physical resources, and in consequence failed to value the great severity to which they were subjected once their training began. But, when they arrived at the battle front, and their real testing commenced, they better understood the value and necessity of their training and wished that they had been even better prepared than they were.

So it must also be in the spiritual preparation for the last great battle when the saints of the Lord meet and totally overcome Babylon the Great; when the results of the ministry of the anti-typical Jeremiah will prove how necessary that training was.

Paul understood the vital need for those of God's children living in the last days to gain the utmost advantage of the time remaining before becoming locked in the warfare which will terminate all such confrontations. He pointed to the lengths to which men will go in developing every fiber of their beings to the highest possible levels of strength and excellence, so that they can be winners in athletic competitions. Then he makes the point that if men are prepared to impose on themselves such strict and painful discipline in order to win a perishable earthly crown, how much more earnestly should we strive to acquire the crown which endures throughout all eternity!

1 Corinthians 9

²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.

²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

It is strongly recommended that the whole of *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 309-322, be studied as a commentary on these verses from *1 Corinthians*, even though some of the paragraphs will be quoted in this chapter.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 309:

In the hope of impressing vividly upon the minds of the Corinthian believers the importance of firm self-control, strict temperance, and unflagging zeal in the service of Christ, Paul in his letter to them made a striking comparison between the Christian warfare and the celebrated foot races held at stated intervals near Corinth. Of all the games instituted among the Greeks and the Romans, the foot races were the most ancient and the most highly esteemed. They were witnessed by kings, nobles, and statesmen. Young men of rank and wealth took part in them and shrank from no effort or discipline necessary to obtain the prize.

Paul of course was not interested in these contests beyond seeing in them an illustration of the high level of spiritual and physical power needed to triumph over their foes, and the sternness of the unrelenting discipline needed to achieve this.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 311:

In referring to these races as a figure of the Christian warfare, Paul emphasized the preparation necessary to the success of the contestants in the race—the preliminary discipline, the abstemious diet, the necessity for temperance.

1 Corinthians 9

²⁵ Every man that strives for the mastery [he declared,] is temperate in all things.

The runners put aside every indulgence that would tend to weaken the physical powers, and by severe and continuous discipline trained their muscles to strength and endurance, that when the day of the contest should arrive, they might put the heaviest tax upon their powers.

How much more important that the Christian, whose eternal interests are at stake, bring appetite and passion under subjection to reason and the will of God! Never must he allow his attention to be diverted by amusements, luxuries, or ease. All his habits and passions must be brought under the strictest discipline. Reason, enlightened by the teachings of God's word and guided by His Spirit, must hold the reins of control.

Without a doubt, that is a taxing standard requiring among other things, the strictest discipline. But all this may seem too much to endure, until we look again and see that it is but the foundation on which are to be built the qualities needed to conquer the Babylonian colossus, for we read on to find these words:

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 311 [*Italics supplied*]:

And after this has been done, the Christian must put forth the utmost exertion in order to gain the victory. In the Corinthian games the last few strides of the contestants in the race were made with agonizing effort to keep up undiminished speed. So the Christian, as he nears the goal, will press onward with even more zeal and determination than at the first of his course.

The ministry of "Jeremiah" is vital to the success of the last terrible confrontation against Babylon the great. It will be a struggle which will test every believer to the uttermost, and will be much more severe than we expect.

The Great Controversy, p. 622-623:

The "time of trouble, such as never was" is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess and which many are too indolent to obtain. It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presenta-

tion cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal. In that time of trial, every soul must stand for himself before God.

Ezekiel 14

²⁰ Though Noah, Daniel, and Job. were in the land, as I live, says the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.

We should read those words slowly after having asked the Lord to open our eyes to really see something of the reality of what is soon to burst upon an unsuspecting world, and God's children. They were written for our benefit, and if we attempt much, we can expect much. Remember that if there had been sin in Daniel and his companions during any one of the crises through which they passed, they would have lost divine protection, and eventually death would have overtaken them.

Steps to Completion

So then, what can be done to bring about the completion of "Jeremiah's" ministry so that God will have a battle-ready army, a "Gideon's three hundred" to commit to the defense of the divine honor and integrity?

The first step would be to eliminate from our homes and lives everything which is not directly and strictly necessary for our living purposes. If we are thorough in the process of elimination, we shall be surprised at how much less money and time will be required for our daily needs, and how much more time and energy can then be devoted to prayer and study.

The second step is to pray, study, and work as never before that the messages God has given to us will fill us with purity, power, righteousness, and readiness for the approaching storm. Be assured that the Lord will answer those prayers and efforts with the result that we shall be mightily stirred. Our apathy will disappear, and our concern truly awakened. What a powerful and beautiful Church she will then be!

The Great Controversy, p. 425:

When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing.

Malachi 3

⁴ Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

Then the church which our Lord at His coming is to receive to himself will be a...

Ephesians 5

²⁷ ...glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Then she will look...

Song of Solomon 6

¹⁰ ...forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.

Zechariah 12

⁸ In that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the Lord before them.

Without the ministry of Jeremiah, there could never have been the triumphs of Daniel over Babylon, and likewise today, without the preparatory work God is achieving through the present ministry of "Jeremiah," there will be no victory over Babylon the Great.

15. Rising and Falling Nations

Messenger and News Review, January 1995

Daniel 1:1-2

Moves and Counter-Moves

Daniel 1

¹ In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

² And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.

KING Jehoiakim was the third last king of Judah and reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem according to *2 Kings* 23:36. He was succeeded by Jehoiachin, his son, who reigned for three months before surrendering to the Babylonians after they had laid siege to the city of Jerusalem.²¹ The final king of Judah was the weak and rebellious King Zedekiah who also reigned for eleven years.²²

It was in the third year of King Jehoiakim, the first of the last three kings of Judah, that Daniel, his three companions, and others were carried captive into Babylon. They continued living in Babylon during the remaining eight years of King Jehoiakim's vassal rulership under Nebuchadnezzar, during the brief reign of Jehoiachin, and during the whole of Zedekiah's reign at the end of which, Jerusalem, together with the magnificent temple built during King Solomon's reign, was burned to the ground.

We have no information as to how long after the destruction of Jerusalem, Meshack, Shadrach, and Abednego continued living in Babylon, for, after their passing the test of worshiping the great golden image, we have no further scriptural records of them. We are of course quite confident that throughout the remainder of their lives they continued to worship and serve the true God as

²¹ See *2 Kings* 24:8-12.

²² See *2 Kings* 24:18.

faultlessly as they had done at the golden image or over the temperance issue.

In *Daniel* 1:21 we read that Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus, and in *Daniel* 10:1 we find the last record which says that in the third year of Cyrus, Daniel had a vision. Considering that Daniel was already eighteen years of age when he was taken captive, he must have been about ninety years of age when he received his last recorded vision under King Cyrus.

There are several factors which would have contributed to such a long life. The first factor in reaping an extended life span is the continual, close communion with the Source of life. The promise to God's people of long life is found in:

Psalm 91

¹⁶ With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.

A second factor in his reaping an extended life span would be his strict temperance habits.

Prophets and Kings, p. 482:

Daniel and his associates had been trained by their parents to habits of strict temperance. They had been taught that God would hold them accountable for their capabilities, and that they must never dwarf or enfeeble their powers.

Thirdly, God protected Daniel in all the life-threatening situations such as his refusal to eat and drink the king's special provisions, the orders to slay all the wise men of the kingdom, the collapse of nations, and his being cast into the lions' den. Holy angels constantly attended and guarded him.

A careful study of the events in the lives of these noble men shows that Daniel and his three close, personal companions were in Babylon for approximately nineteen years before the final desolation of Jerusalem and the temple took place, that is, from the third year of King Jehoiakim's sovereignty until the end of King Zedekiah's reign in Jerusalem. During these nineteen years there were several successful sieges of the city which were conducted by the Babylonians.

As mentioned earlier, the first took place in the third year of King Jehoiakim when King Nebuchadnezzar made him his vassal for three years. Afterwards King Jehoiakim threw off the Babylonian yoke and was succeeded upon his death by King Jehoiachin, his wicked son, who continued his father's insubordination against his Babylonian overlord.²³

King Jehoiachin's rebellion generated a vigorous response from King Nebuchadnezzar who besieged Jerusalem, but the youthful king of Judah wisely saw the futility of resistance to the mighty new king from the north and voluntarily surrendered to the superior power of his enemy.²⁴

2 Kings 24

¹³ And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house, and he cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said.

¹⁴ Also he carried into captivity all Jerusalem: all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land.

¹⁵ And he carried Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. The king's mother, the king's wives, his officers, and the mighty of the land he carried into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.

¹⁶ All the valiant men, seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths, one thousand, all who were strong and fit for war, these the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

Then followed the reign of the last king of Judah, King Zedekiah, who was chosen and appointed by King Nebuchadnezzar himself. His real name was Mattaniah, and he was the uncle of Jehoiachin, but King Nebuchadnezzar changed his name to Zedekiah. At the time of his coronation, King Zedekiah was twenty-one years of age. We know this because it is written:

²³ See *2 Kings* 24:1-8.

²⁴ See verses 10-12.

2 Kings 24

¹⁷ Then the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

¹⁸ Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

Therefore we know that Daniel was twenty-six at the time that Zedekiah was appointed king of Judah. The reasoning supporting this assertion is as follows:

1. Daniel was eighteen when he arrived in Babylon in the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim. Here is the evidence supporting that fact:

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, p. 570:

Daniel was but eighteen years old when brought into a heathen court in service to the king of Babylon...

2. The fact that he arrived in Babylon in the third year of King Jehoiakim is attested to in *Daniel* 1:1.
3. When he began his service in King Nebuchadnezzar's court, there remained eight years of Jehoiakim's reign, and three month's of King Jehoiachin's at the end of which Zedekiah ascended the throne of Judah in Jerusalem, and Daniel was twenty-six.
4. Eleven years later, the final destruction of the city of Jerusalem and of the temple built by King Solomon took place, King Zedekiah perished miserably, and Daniel turned thirty-seven years of age.

Babylon had reached the zenith of her power and glory and felt safe and secure in the awesome might of her armies, the unbreachable density of her fortified walls, and her inability to discern any rivals rising from below the distant horizon. She saw nothing as yet of the Medo-Persian power which would destroy her as she had destroyed others. Likewise yet to arise to world dominion were Greece, Rome, and other powers right down to the end of human history.

Despite their determination to the contrary, each would prove, as all others since have done, that all those who rise to power by wielding weapons of destruction would in turn perish by the same means. This is true no matter how securely the ruling forces might hold the world or part of it under absolute control, and as yet no rival be discerned lurking in the shadows awaiting its day of opportunity to dethrone the existing monarchy and rule over the kingdoms of this earth instead.

These then are some of the moves and counter-moves which were being played out in the ancient world of Daniel and his companions, and which were to have measureless results for good or evil.

General Observations on the Book of Daniel

So then, the time has come for us to learn at least some of the great messages for our time which are contained in the book of *Daniel*. However, before we begin, I shall make some general observations in regard to this book which will make it easier to understand.

This book of history and prophecy may be divided into two sections:

1. The record of the confrontations between sin and righteousness on a relatively small scale—four faithful young men with the all-conquering power of righteousness within, against several kings and the sinful system that supported them.
2. The magnified view of the same principles of operation in millions of lives covering thousands of years.

Whether on a large or small scale, the outworking will always be the same—total ruin for the disobedient; blessed prosperity for the obedient.

On the one side, it will be found that apostasy is always followed by ruin, no matter whether it be in the individual, the nation, or the world. It may require a little time to arrive, but except

for the interposition of sincere and genuine repentance, no eventuality is more certain.

On the other side, evil may appear to be the pathway to prosperity, but as time passes, its true character will become apparent. It must always be remembered that we can seldom judge the worth of an operating principle by the immediate results. The length of time required to reveal the true nature of the evil or the good will vary from situation to situation.

For instance, Daniel only asked for ten day's trial to prove his claim for a vegetarian diet and, under the circumstances, that was enough. But, for the outworking of Satan's character to fully reveal its iniquity, it is taking at least six thousand years.²⁵

Never was a study of these principles more necessary than now as we face the final events of human history. All the elements of evil which have been spawned by the master of lies, the devil, are intensely busy striving for the supremacy. But they are no different from the forces of evil which contended for the same control of the world in Daniel's time, and are reported for what they are in the book which bears his name.

The Babylonian storm which broke on the world in the past, is soon to burst upon the world of today with a destructive violence which will by far exceed that which has been. Only those who have made the necessary preparation for it will survive. For this reason, a deep, searching study of *Daniel* is essential at this time.

The Review and Herald, August 31, 1897:

We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Many of the prophecies are about to be fulfilled in quick succession. Every element of power is about to be set to work. Past history will be repeated; old controversies will arouse to new life, and peril will beset God's people on every side.

Intensity is taking possession of the human family. It is permeating everything upon the earth. And for what? Games, plays, amusements; men are rushing and crowding, and contending for the mastery. That which is common and perishable is absorbing

²⁵ See our publication, *The Seven Angels*, for further light on this point.

their attention, so that things of eternal interest are scarcely thought of.

Human beings, possessed with energy, zeal, and perseverance, will place all their God-given powers in co-operation with Satan's despotism to make void the law of God. Impostors of every caste and grade will claim to be worthy and true, and there will be a magnifying of the common and impure against the true and the holy. Thus the spurious is accepted, and the true standard of holiness is discarded, as the word of God was discarded by Adam and Eve for the lie of Satan.

It is now time to examine the messages contained in the historical records of the book of *Daniel* before following through to the prophetic revelations in the same book. The first may be listed as follows:

1. The temperance issue;
2. The superior scholastic achievement of the four Hebrews;
3. The King's dream of the image and its interpretation;
4. The fiery furnace;
5. The King's dream of the great tree and its interpretation;
6. The lions' den.

The second list:

1. The prophetic outlines of Chapters 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, & 12.

Apostasy in Assyria Leads to Ruin

King Nebuchadnezzar and the lordly Chaldeans were calling for all mankind to acknowledge that the methods and procedures by which they had come to power were truly superior to all others—especially those of Israel. They were well aware that there was the mighty nation of Israel before whom no power on earth had been able to stand until Babylon had risen to world dominion. Even the dreaded Assyrians had been compelled by Israel's God to return home with losses so great as to break their power forever.

2 Kings 19

³⁵ And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead.

³⁶ So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh.

³⁷ Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

This had been the fate of the Assyrian conquerors who had boasted of their supremacy over the nations even as Babylon was then doing. Note how proudly, contemptuously, blasphemously, and insultingly Sennacherib challenged the God who was, and is, and ever shall be...

Revelation 19

¹⁶ ...KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Here in part are his words:

2 Kings 18

³² ...But do not listen to Hezekiah, lest he persuade you, saying, The Lord will deliver us.

³³ Have any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria?

³⁴ Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim and Hena and Ivah? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand?

³⁵ Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?

Such was the depth of defiance, anger, and apostasy manifested in the Assyrians which led to the death of one hundred and eighty-five thousand of them in a single night.

It would appear from the text that God had personally destroyed them, but we have learned that God does not use His infinite personal power to wipe out His enemies. The destruction of

the wicked is the natural outworking of causes which come into operation when the unrepentant become totally apostate and thus leave the Almighty with no choice but to withdraw His protective power.

I do not know of the natural cause which, when unrestrained, killed those soldiers, but whatever it was, the slaughter was not an “act of God.”²⁶ To start your thinking in the right direction, I will quote a single statement to this effect:

The Great Controversy, p. 36:

We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. It is the restraining power of God that prevents mankind from passing fully under the control of Satan. The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God’s mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one. But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejecters of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest.

The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan. The destruction of Jerusalem is a fearful and solemn warning to all who are trifling with the offers of divine grace and resisting the pleadings of divine mercy. Never was there given a more decisive testimony to God’s hatred of sin and to the certain punishment that will fall upon the guilty.

So, after this fateful event we read:

Prophets and Kings, p. 361:

Tidings of this terrible judgment upon the army that had been sent to take Jerusalem, soon reached Sennacherib, who was still

²⁶ See the book, *Behold Your God*, for the evidences proving that God does not destroy.

guarding the approach to Judea from Egypt. Stricken with fear, the Assyrian king hastened to depart and...

2 Chronicles 32

²¹ ...returned with shame of face to his own land.

But he had not long to reign. In harmony with the prophecy that had been uttered concerning his sudden end, he was assassinated by those of his own home,

Isaiah 37

³⁸ ...and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

For Sennacherib, total apostasy certainly meant total ruin. One would think that King Nebuchadnezzar, intelligent student that he was, would be afraid to sally forth against the supernatural power of the Almighty, particularly in view of his knowledge of that not very distant lesson in history. But when he did and was brilliantly successful in all of his military campaigns against them, both he and the Babylonians were filled with boastful pride because not even Israel could withstand their military genius and might.

Prophets and Kings, p. 479-480:

The fact that these men, worshipers of Jehovah, were captives in Babylon, and that the vessels of God's house had been placed in the Temple of the Babylonish gods, was boastfully cited by the victors as evidence that their religion and customs were superior to the religion and customs of the Hebrews. Yet through the very humiliations that Israel's departure from Him had invited, God gave Babylon evidence of His supremacy, of the holiness of His requirements, and of the sure results of obedience. And this testimony He gave, as alone it could be given, through those who were loyal to Him.

Apostasy in Israel Leads to Ruin

But King Nebuchadnezzar failed to perceive that Israel's defeat was due to her apostasies, not his strength. Only when Israel walked with God was she to be feared. At all other times she was weaker than her enemies even if they were idol worshipers. This knowledge led Jeremiah to point out how truly impotent Israel

was toward the end of her great apostasy when her evil ways had fully matured.

At that time the Chaldeans were besieging Jerusalem until news came through that the Egyptian army was approaching from the south. Then the Chaldeans turned in that direction to crush the Egyptian threat. King Jehoiakim and the apostate inhabitants of Jerusalem hailed this as the assurance of their deliverance, but Jeremiah declared that the Chaldeans would deliver themselves from this threat and would resume to its successful conclusion the investment of the doomed city.

Jeremiah 37

⁵ Then Pharaoh's army came up from Egypt; and when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news of them, they departed from Jerusalem.

⁶ Then the word of the Lord came to the prophet Jeremiah, saying,

⁷ Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, Thus you shall say to the king of Judah, who sent you to me to inquire of me: Behold, Pharaoh's army which has come up to help you will return to Egypt, to their own land.

⁸ And the Chaldeans shall come back and fight against this city, and take it and burn it with fire.

⁹ Thus says the Lord: Do not deceive yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans will surely depart from us, for they will not depart.

¹⁰ For though you had defeated the whole army of the Chaldeans who fight against you, and there remained only wounded men among them, they would rise up, every man in his tent, and burn the city with fire.

Those words are true even though they may sound extreme, for this is precisely what would have happened, so desperately weakened had the armies of Israel become. This outcome is true of all time and in all places. Sin in a worldly person or organization brings great weakness to that body, but sin in the Church and its members brings even greater weakness.

Matthew 6

²³ But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

Those who once walked in the light but now walk in apostasy and its attendant darkness, are in a far worse state than if they had never known the truth in the first case.

The Review and Herald, August 31, 1886:

The Spirit, wisdom, and goodness of God, revealed in His word, are to be exemplified through the disciples of Christ, and will condemn the world. God requires of his people according to the grace and truth given them. All His righteous demands must be fully met. Accountable beings must walk in the light that shines upon them. If they fail to do this, their light becomes darkness, and their darkness is great according to the degree that their light was abundant. Accumulated light has shone upon God's people. Many have neglected to follow the light, and for this reason are in a state of great spiritual weakness.

The Cure for Apostasy

On the other hand a priceless experience can be acquired when you begin by obtaining a personal understanding of how weak you are in spiritual power. This can be gained by prayerful study of the life of Christ, and, as you do so, keep comparing His mighty power with your weakness until the contrast becomes very distinct in your eyes.

This was Elijah's approach as he sought the power of God whereby he might accomplish the deliverance of Israel from drought. The more clearly he saw God's almighty power, the more plainly he saw his own great need.

The Review and Herald, May 26, 1891:

The servant watched while Elijah prayed. Six times he returned from the watch, saying, "There is nothing, no cloud, no sign of rain." But the prophet did not give up in discouragement. He kept reviewing his life, to see where he had failed to honor God, he confessed his sins, and thus continued to afflict his soul before God, while watching for a token that his prayer was an-

swered. As he searched his heart, he seemed to be less and less, both in his own estimation and in the sight of God. It seemed to him that he was nothing, and that God was everything; and when he reached the point of renouncing self, while he clung to the Saviour as his only strength and righteousness, the answer came. The servant appeared, and said, "Behold, there arises a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand."

Once you have permitted the Holy Spirit to reveal your true state, then begin the ruthless eradication of sin from your life with special emphasis on the evil spirit within you rather than your actions. Watch for any activity on the part of hatred, pride, envy, lust, and so forth, and, as soon as any such is detected, repair in haste to the sanctuary where you must make an acceptable confession by which both what you are and what you have done are taken care of.

After that comes the work of living continuously free from sin. I have found tremendous help in a procedure adopted by Christ when on earth. It is written that:

The Desire of Ages, p. 123:

Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us.

If the evil thought is eliminated the moment it appears, it dies a sudden, natural death which prevents it from developing into sinful actions.

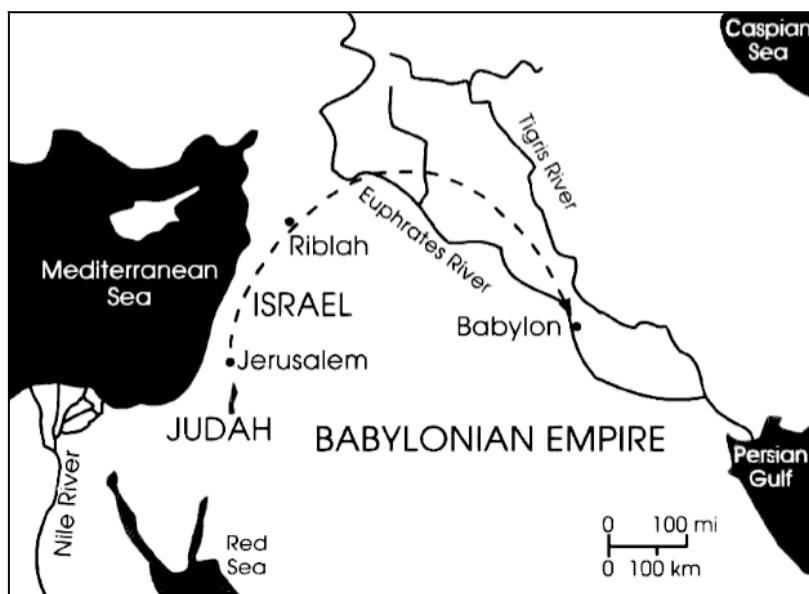
Then we can expect the power of God to come upon us in ever-increasing measure. Then the light which is in us will become greater light and apostasy and its attendant ruin will find no place in us.

16. From Jerusalem to Babylon

Messenger and News Review, February 1995

SUBSEQUENT to the defeat of Jehoiakim in the third year of his reign, Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, were marched from Jerusalem to Babylon. Of the conditions endured by them in that terrible transplantation, we are told nothing though our knowledge of the route they had to follow and the character of their captors provides some idea of what they must have suffered even though they were special captives receiving better-than-usual treatment.

The distance between Jerusalem and Babylon is approximately a thousand kilometers. This is because there is no direct route connecting the two, due to the Arabian desert between. To avoid this sandy obstruction, firstly the journey lies to the north for close to half of the entire trip, then it turns southeast to follow the great River Euphrates until it reaches Babylon.



Depending on the distance covered day by day, the journey could have occupied one to three months or even longer. But it is

not necessary for us to know the exact distance between the two cities, nor the time it took to accomplish the journey. It is enough for us to realize that the travelers would have been very footsore and weary by the time they reached the walled, fortress city of Babylon.

That vast army and its following of a large number of captives would have required tons of food to keep them all going, and one wonders from where it all came. As much as possible they would have lived off the land through which they were passing. While the main army marched steadily forward each day, a proportion of the soldiery would have been appointed to superintend the number of captives which would have been required to gather sufficient food to feed them all.

Food gatherers would strip trees of their ripening fruit, harvest grain crops and vegetables, and slaughter available livestock, such as cattle, sheep, goat and hogs. Dates would have grown in abundance in that part of the world and would have been a valuable source of nourishment.

One would expect that the general of the army, concerned that the physical fitness of his troops was maintained, would see to it that feeding them was accorded top priority after his and his commanding officers' needs were well satisfied. The poor captives were at the bottom end of the food supply with little choice other than to accept whatever was available after the rest were satisfied.

However, that option was not all bad in the case of those who were vegetarians. For them there was a greater supply of fruits, nuts, grains, and vegetables due to less demand for such on the part of the soldiery and the captives generally. We can be sure that Daniel and his three companions who were unquestionably vegetarians found an adequate food supply among those provisions which were less preferred by the remainder of the marchers. God, who marked the faithfulness of these four and for whom He had assigned a special work, would have commissioned His angels to take especial care of them.

The Character of the Babylonians

For Daniel and his three companions, the march to their new home as captives of the king of Babylon provided them with excellent opportunities for learning more about the character of their enemy. They certainly were aware of marked differences between the peaceful fellowship with true believers back in their Judean homes as they had once enjoyed it, and the heartless disregard for human rights manifested by the Babylonian soldiery. Their hearts were drawn out in sympathy and tender regard for all the suffering they witnessed on that unforgettable journey.

Unregenerate men in every age of human history emerge as wanton destroyers who regard the earth and its peoples merely as instruments serving their ambitions. They care not how many must be sacrificed in order to satisfy their unholy desires. Such was the spirit and work of old Babylon which became all too well known to those of God's true people who personally witnessed the workings of that mighty power on the death march between Jerusalem and Babylon.

In the near future, as impressively foretold by Joel, the Old Testament prophet, this same devastating power will reduce the entire earth to a physical, material, and spiritual wasteland. Here are his descriptive, prophetic words:

Joel 2

¹ Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord is coming, for it is at hand:

² A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any such after them, even for many successive generations.

³ A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns; the land is like the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; surely nothing shall escape them.

⁴ Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; and like swift steeds, so they run.

⁵ With a noise like chariots over mountaintops they leap, like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, like a strong people set in battle array.

⁶ Before them the people writhe in pain; all faces are drained of color.

⁷ They run like mighty men, they climb the wall like men of war; every one marches in formation, and they do not break ranks.

⁸ They do not push one another; every one marches in his own column. Though they lunge between the weapons, they are not cut down.

⁹ They run to and fro in the city, they run on the wall; they climb into the houses, they enter at the windows like a thief.

¹⁰ The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness.

What a picture of the terrible desolater at his work, and of the end results of his rampaging through the length and breadth of the earth.

Joel 2

³ ...the land is like the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; surely nothing shall escape them.

While it is true that there has been an increasing proportion of the earth's population who have recognized the need to conserve the planet's natural resources, the efforts to do so will only appear to succeed for a short while. Wars rage on with their terrible wastage of people and materials, destructive weather conditions due to the deepening apostasy reduce arable lands to ever lower productivity, and great fires wipe out forests and buildings. These devastations are less however than the worst, for the greatest damage is done in the bodies and souls of men. They have become spiritual and moral desert waste lands in which utterly heartless cruelties are carried out with savage abandon.

Despite the confidence which is being developed in an improved future, conditions will only worsen, for God through His prophets has said they will. Joel is not the only messenger through whom God has communicated such predictions of total ruin. Hear His voice through Isaiah:

Isaiah 24

⁴ The earth mourns and fades away, the world languishes and fades away; the haughty people of the earth languish.

⁵ The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

Here, the actual cause and effect are clearly stated in relation to one another. The transgression of God's laws, the changing of the ordinances, and the breaking of the everlasting covenant directly and eventually result in a terrible devastation of the earth and its people. We are yet to see terrible things transpire before this state of affairs is reached.

Jeremiah was another spokesman for the Almighty through whom God warned of coming desolations of the earth. So fearful will these devastations be that no man will be seen, and all the cities will be broken down. Here is his graphic description of these conditions:

Jeremiah 4

²³ I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void; and the heavens, they had no light.

²⁴ I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, and all the hills moved back and forth.

²⁵ I beheld, and indeed there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens had fled.

²⁶ I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, and all its cities were broken down at the presence of the Lord, by His fierce anger.

Daniel and his three companions in the faith of Jesus were well acquainted with these prophecies and understood that they applied to the approaching destruction of the city and the temple, still, as we have seen, a short nineteen years away.

As was stated earlier, during their long and arduous journey from Jerusalem to Babylon, Daniel and his friends had the opportunity to learn a great deal more about the character of the Babylonians as revealed in their close, daily, enforced association with them. From their experience, so do we.

This is more necessary for us than for them, for on us have come the ends of the earth when it will soon be too late to buy oil for our lamps. Now is the time to become prepared. Babylon does not change. Therefore, the better her character, tactics, and operational procedures are understood on the one hand, and the more of God's power and wisdom are gained to meet those evils on the other, the sooner the end will come.

The Resolve of the Faithful

Just as our knowledge of future events and of Babylon's role in those events gives us a clear understanding of what to expect in the future, so Daniel and his friends were far from being ignorant of what to expect in general upon their arrival in that great city. They knew they would suffer bitter persecution both from the Babylonians and from other Hebrews. They understood that there was a strong possibility of martyrdom, which in effect did happen to them. By remaining steadfast when thrown into the fiery furnace or to the lions, it was counted by heaven as if they had actually paid for their faith with their lives. What more does a martyr give that they did not give?

But among other things, they did not know in advance of their elevation to high positions in the government subsequent to their successfully satisfying the king's determination to know the mystery dream of the great image and its interpretation. They did not know that they would be confronted by the king's demand to bow to the image or be cast into the fiery furnace. They faced a very uncertain future in respect to many things, but not in everything. One thing was sure. They did not enter the city as apostates, for they understood and faithfully respected the abiding principle that:

Prophets and Kings, p. 83:

Only obedience to the requirements of Heaven will keep man from apostasy.

While still living in their Judean homes prior to their being carried to Babylon, they had led lives of the strictest obedience to

God's laws, and this, as it always will, had preserved them from apostasy and personal ruin. Of that period when the foundations of their lives were being laid and prepared for testing, and of the power they would later receive in response to their trials and faith-filled prayers, it is written:

Prophets and Kings, p. 428:

It was their conscientious observance of the commands of Holy Scripture, that in the days of Jeremiah's ministry brought to Daniel and his fellows opportunities to exalt the true God before the nations of earth. The instruction these Hebrew children had received in the homes of their parents, made them strong in faith and constant in their service of the living God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

When, early in the reign of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar for the first time besieged and captured Jerusalem, and carried away Daniel and his companions, with others specially chosen for service in the court of Babylon, the faith of the Hebrew captives was tried to the utmost. But those who had learned to place their trust in the promises of God found these all-sufficient in every experience through which they were called to pass during their sojourn in a strange land. The Scriptures proved to them a guide and a stay.

Their situation and response to it was very much like that of Joseph when his cruel brothers made him a captive to Midianite traders on their way down to Egypt. As he recovered from the initial disbelief that this was really happening to him who had done nothing to deserve such a fate, he determined nevertheless to remain free from apostasy no matter what the cost to himself. It was with Joseph as with Daniel and his three friends that victory began with a knowledge of God's character as expressed in His holy law. At first, both would have been distressed at their fate of being helpless slaves, for:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 211:

To become a slave was a fate more to be feared than death.

But their faith rose above the fearful future which faced them as their thoughts turned to their fathers' God. In the case of Joseph we read,

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 214:

His soul thrilled with the high resolve to prove himself true to God—under all circumstances to act as became a subject of the King of heaven. He would serve the Lord with undivided heart; he would meet the trials of his lot with fortitude and perform every duty with fidelity.

The souls of Daniel and his three companions would most certainly have thrilled with the same high resolve to prove themselves true to God—under all circumstances to act as became subjects of the King of heaven. They “would serve the Lord with undivided heart;” they “would meet the trials of their lot with fortitude and perform every duty with fidelity.”

Soon we shall find ourselves facing the imminent approach of the Babylonian colossus, in response to which we too must make the same resolve, not of occasional obedience, nor with divided heart, but with unshakable faithfulness. The making of such a clear cut, positive resolution before the struggle actually begins is essential to standing with unwavering firmness once the battle has been joined.

Ministry to the Suffering

It needs to be seen that their freedom from disobedience and apostasy was not merely their refraining from unhealthful foods either on the journey or upon their arrival at their destination. That was involved of course and was probably the most obvious manifestation of obedience, but the righteousness of those young men reached beyond this area of their lives. Every day the faithful four had before them a mission field of suffering humanity needing the services that only heaven-born, disinterested love could provide, and Daniel and the faithful three had the spiritual power and experience needed to adequately fit them for such a ministry.

No doubt there were those who were struggling with deep discouragement as they found no answers to the cruel hand of fate

which had dispossessed them of all that they had ever owned. Others were probably battling with illness, or found the rigors of the journey too much for them to handle. Still others would have been lame from wounds suffered in the attack on Jerusalem.

On that long, long walk to Nebuchadnezzar's capital, the four lovingly ministered to the suffering as best they could. For this, they needed to find some favor in the eyes of their captors, and I am sure that their sweet, gracious, loving, obedient spirit so utterly free from apostasy, truly won the respect and admiration of the soldiers in command of them, especially as they ministered to both friend and enemy with equal impartiality. Truth and love had begun to be the prevailing power.

Power Through Communion

The life of Jesus confirms that when a Christian is charged with the spirit of loving obedience and is therefore free from apostasy, he becomes an irresistible power for blessing mankind. Although prior to the commencement of His public ministry He worked in a quiet, unobtrusive manner, there was still great power in His life.

The Desire of Ages, p. 92:

Jesus was the healer of the body as well as of the soul. He was interested in every phase of suffering that came under His notice, and to every sufferer He brought relief, His kind words having a soothing balm. None could say that He had worked a miracle; but virtue—the healing power of love—went out from Him to the sick and distressed. Thus in an unobtrusive way He worked for the people from His very childhood. And this was why, after His public ministry began, so many heard Him gladly.

What is true of Christ's youthful ministry, is also true of His followers, for the life of Jesus is reproduced in His faithful disciples. An example of this transformation of character can be seen in a later part of the life of the disciple John whose book in the New Testament is the counterpart of Daniel's in the Old Testament.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 559:

Such transformation of character as is seen in the life of John is ever the result of communion with Christ. There may be marked defects in the character of an individual, yet when he becomes a true disciple of Christ, the power of divine grace transforms and sanctifies him. Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, he is changed from glory to glory, until he is like Him whom he adores.

To achieve such a depth, height, and breadth of divine transformation in the life, requires a communion with God through Christ by which the individual literally lays hold of the life of Christ and draws it in flood tides into himself.

The Desire of Ages, p. 363:

In all who are under the training of God is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices; and everyone needs to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us,

Psalms 46

¹⁰ Be still, and know that I am God.

Here alone can true rest be found. And this is the effectual preparation for all who labor for God. Amid the hurrying throng, and the strain of life's intense activities, the soul that is thus refreshed will be surrounded with an atmosphere of light and peace. The life will breathe out fragrance, and will reveal a divine power that will reach men's hearts.

Daniel lived a life of close, consistent communion with God. We know this because He was able to access the throne of grace for the information on the great image, the various prophecies, and the interpretation of the overspreading tree. He was the type of man who prayed three times per day, lions or no lions.

A Promising Sign

In the midst of Daniel's efforts to honor the God of heaven and promote the success of His kingdom, there occurred a seldom-

mentioned incident which was a great reassurance to him that God would yet triumph. The occurrence reads as follows:

2 Kings 25

²⁷ Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, that Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison.

²⁸ He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who were with him in Babylon.

²⁹ So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life.

³⁰ And as for his provisions, there was a regular ration given him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life.

The entire chapter prior to these verses deals with the fall of Judah and the appointment of Gedaliah to the governorship of the people who remained in the land of Judah. Then as a seeming afterthought, for no obvious reason, this information reporting the release of King Jehoiachin is appended. But it was not without very good reason that these details were inserted just where they were. We are to understand that there is nothing surplus or unnecessary in God's communications to His people, though we will not see this in every word spoken by God as yet. The life of Christ reveals this purposefulness as is stated in:

The Desire of Ages, p. 206:

A wise purpose underlay every act of Christ's life on earth.

Evil-Merodach, king of Babylon, the son and successor of King Nebuchadnezzar, sat upon the throne of that great kingdom between the sovereignty of King Nebuchadnezzar and her last ruler, King Belshazzar. It was the time when Babylon had reached the pinnacle of her riches, power, and glory, while Israel was ruined. Satan, it would seem, now had the opportunity to cut off the royal line, that is, the seed of Abraham.

God had committed himself to bless all the families of the earth through the seed of Abraham—Christ, the Saviour. This meant that there had to be an unbroken succession between Abraham

and Jesus. Should that be cut off, God's word would have been broken, Satan would have emerged as the winner in the great controversy, and all would have been lost.

Amid all the destruction, carnage, slaughter, executions, fire, hatred, and death, it would seem that, with Satan doing his best to make the most of the opportunity to break the plan of salvation, there would have been no hope of the seed of Abraham surviving, but, to our astonishment, we look and behold, and we see the King of Babylon himself taking care of the seed of Abraham which at this time was in the captive King Jehoiachin and his sons. This is confirmed by the gospel writer, Matthew, when he traces the lineage of Christ from Abraham down, and names King Jehoiachin as being one in that line.

Matthew 1

¹¹ Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

"Jeconiah" is the New Testament version of the Old Testament "Jehoiachin." What an inspiring comfort and joyful assurance it was for the faithful remnant to know that the Lord's word had not failed, but that the Church would yet triumph gloriously.

The Arrival of the Captives

But let us now return to the arrival of the captives at Babylon, that seemingly impregnable city. The victorious King Nebuchadnezzar would have been acclaimed as the most high ruler of the world. After days, or more likely weeks spent in preparation, there would have been a grand victory-celebration march, climaxing in feasting and drunkenness for days on end. Sometime during this celebration the captives were displayed as trophies from the battlefield and then subjected to slavery.

As yet, Daniel and the faithful three had not acquired any of the power and the glory which was soon to be bestowed upon them. Therefore the period during which these festivities were going on was one in which they endured a great trial of faith as they waited to learn of their fate. They did not however waste the

waiting time in idleness, but labored to inspire faith in as many of their fellow travelers as possible. At the same time they prayerfully reviewed God's dealings with them and His people in the past and greatly strengthened their own faith. Their future fate they rested in God's care.

The battle between Babylon and the Israel whom King Nebuchadnezzar supposed were the true people of God had virtually ended in Babylon's favor when King Jehoiakim was defeated by the Babylonian warlord. Neither side used the prevailing weapons of truth and love in battles where the true Israelites were nothing other than spectators.

That time had now passed. The war between Babylon and the true Israel was about to begin, and truth and love would be the prevailing power, as it will be in the coming, final showdown with Babylon the Great.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 18-19:

To His church, Christ has given ample facilities, that He may receive a large revenue of glory from His redeemed, purchased possession. The church, being endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depository, in which the wealth of His mercy, His love, His grace, is to appear in full and final display.

The declaration in His intercessory prayer, that the Father's love is as great toward us as toward himself, the only-begotten Son, and that we shall be with Him where He is, forever one with Christ and the Father, is a marvel to the heavenly host, and it is their great joy. The gift of His Holy Spirit, rich, full, and abundant, is to be to His church as an encompassing wall of fire, which the powers of hell shall not prevail against.

In their untainted purity and spotless perfection, Christ looks upon His people as the reward of all His suffering, His humiliation, and His love, and the supplement of His glory—Christ, the great center from which radiates all glory.

Revelation 19

⁹ Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

17. In the Heart of the Enemy's Camp

Messenger and News Review, March 1995

Daniel 1:3-9

ONCE the Babylonians had completed their celebrations of the great victory achieved by their conquest of Egypt and Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar was ready to continue satisfying his ambition to build a kingdom of incredible wealth, glory, and power which he hoped would never pass away.

Selected for Special Training

The recent military phase having been completed, it was time to turn his attention to the intellectual and material aspects of the program. Accordingly he instructed Ashpenaz to select outstanding young Hebrews for such special training as would fit them to serve his personal ambitions. Here are those instructions:

Daniel 1

³ Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles,

⁴ Young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans.

None but the very best would serve the purposes of the king. They had to be physically and mentally without blemish, and have the strength of mind and body to adequately bear the heavy responsibility of assisting the ruler in his management of the empire.

It was an exceedingly high position of great honor and opportunity to which Daniel and his three friends and the other young Hebrews were elevated. It was not their lot to be degraded to the level of common slaves which was a fate worse than death. They were to have very special treatment indeed as signified by the king's command that they should eat as sumptuously as he did.

Daniel 1

⁵ And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king.

We are not informed anywhere in the sacred writings as to just how many of these special young people were chosen. We know there were more than the faithful four who were selected by Ashpenaz for special training, as it is written:

⁶ Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

This verse makes it clear that Daniel and his friends were only four among the remainder. The number and names of the rest of them are not recorded, but why not? It was because they took a compromising stand which led them to wrong conclusions and rendered them unfit to serve God in this great hour of extremity.

No matter how many they were, God wishes our attention to be focused primarily on the faithful four and not on the unfaithful remainder. He wants us to behold the witness which He gave through them of the certainty that truth and love will conquer in the final battle with Babylon the Great, as surely as they did in Daniel's day in the battle against Babylon.

The Temptation to Compromise

But though we will mainly consider the faithfulness of the four young men, there is value in spending some time on the question of what would have happened if they, like the other chosen Hebrews, had not been faithful. They could have adopted the following human reasoning:

“Here is an incredible opportunity which is too good to miss. The king is very reasonable and generous, and has placed us in a position where we owe him an immense debt of gratitude. It would be a grave mistake for us to challenge his judgment and authority at this stage in our experience here in the royal court. It is true that the king's diet is extremely unhealthful and intemper-

ate, but this matter of food and drink is one which can be dealt with later.

“Let us give the monarch a convincing demonstration of our willingness to co-operate with him and thus establish his confidence in us. Once we have won his respect for us, then we can lodge a request for a more healthful diet, and should have no difficulty in having our request granted. If this were a big issue, such as bowing before a golden idol, that would be a different matter. Even at the cost of our lives, we would not bow.”

But would it have been possible for them to stand firm when further tests came? If they had managed to finish the king’s university course, they would have turned in final results which would have been no better than those presented by the other students. And when the great golden image was erected and all were required to worship it, they could not have stood for the right. The terrible truth is that only those who overcome in the little things of today, will have the opportunity to stand firm in the greater tests of tomorrow.

Jeremiah 12

⁵ If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, in which you trusted, they wearied you, then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan?

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 187-188:

God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, if they would not be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Said the angel:

“God will bring His work closer and closer to test and prove every one of His people.”

Some are willing to receive one point; but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, because they find that it strikes directly at some cherished

idol. Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. They prize something higher than the truth, and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus.

Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If any will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the charge:

“They are joined to their idols, let them alone,”

—and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels. Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.

If the four young Hebrews had not possessed the prevailing power of truth and love, they would have been soundly defeated in their initial confrontation with the mighty king of Babylon. They could have deceived the king into believing that they were fully in harmony with his dietary arrangements for them. They could have eaten the king’s provisions and could have given the impression that they thoroughly enjoyed the rich foods and intoxicating wines from the king’s table. By these actions, any doubts which he might have had concerning their loyalty to him would have been dismissed from his mind.

But such a prevarication never accomplishes the objective it is designed to achieve. The appropriate time for announcing to the king the real truth concerning their convictions would never have come. Instead they would have been more and more intimidated by Nebuchadnezzar’s arbitrary assertion of his power. To be condemned to death without a cause on the judgment of a single almighty potentate, makes one careful to watch where he treads.

The Word of God conveys a fearful warning against hypocrisy and unjustifiable compromises. While we are not to unadvisedly reveal all things to our enemies, it is critically important that we

do not convey a false impression in regard to where we really stand.

The Signs of the Times, August 31, 1888:

God requires that truthfulness shall mark His people, even in times of peril.

About Daniel and his three friends, we read,

Prophets and Kings, p. 483:

Should they compromise with wrong in this instance by yielding to the pressure of circumstances, their departure from principle would weaken their sense of right and their abhorrence of wrong. The first wrong step would lead to others, until, their connection with Heaven severed, they would be swept away by temptation.

We can be very grateful that Daniel and his three friends took a humble, open, unyielding stand before the king at the very outset of their stay in Babylon. Indeed, their principles were respected and their request granted by the king's officers. Of course this was possible only because they lodged their request with the love of God in their hearts and the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

The Youth's Instructor, November 12, 1907:

Daniel 1

⁹ Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

This officer saw in Daniel good traits of character. He saw that he was striving to be kind and helpful, that his words were respectful and courteous, and his manner possessed the grace of modesty and meekness. It was the good behavior of the youth that gained for him the favor and love of the prince.²⁷

The instruction transmitted to us through this small company of faithful ones is priceless in value as an education in how to respond when face to face with the Babylonian colossus. It shows how to escape the dreadful, consuming plague of apostasy when it seems expedient to compromise. In short, it is a wonderful les-

²⁷ See also *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1167.

son book detailing how to gain a fitness to fight against and completely overcome Babylon the Great.

The Spirit and the Law

When the faithful four were presented with what the king had in mind for them, they, aided by the ministry of the Holy Spirit and guided by their extensive knowledge of the law of God, were able to rightly assess the implications of what all these plans would mean to them. They quickly discerned that they could not obey both God and the king, and resolved not to partake of his delicacies.

The more conversant we are with the commandments of the Lord, the more positively and effectively can the Holy Spirit guide us in the way in which we should go. We cannot expect the Holy Spirit to bring to our remembrance that which has never been stored in our memory banks. He who lays aside the Word of God and relies only on his own impressions, which he calls the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will inevitably become a fanatic.

One of the best examples of this is the wild performance of Thomas Münzer who claimed that his and not Luther's was the true reformation. A strong feature of his stand was that there was no need for the written word. He declared that all that was needed was the infilling of the Holy Spirit, while discarding the sacred writings entirely. Note these points in the following paragraph:

The Great Controversy, p. 191:

Thomas Münzer the most active of the fanatics, was a man of considerable ability, which, rightly directed, would have enabled him to do good; but he had not learned the first principles of true religion.

"He was possessed with a desire of reforming the world, and forgot, as all enthusiasts do, that the reformation should begin with himself." D'Aubigne, b. 9, ch. 8.

He was ambitious to obtain position and influence, and was unwilling to be second, even to Luther. He declared that the Reformers, in substituting the authority of Scripture for that of the

pope, were only establishing a different form of popery. He himself, he claimed, had been divinely commissioned to introduce the true reform.

“He who possesses this spirit,” said Münzer “possesses the true faith, although he should never see the Scriptures in his life.”
D’Aubigne, b. 10, ch. 10.

The casting aside of the divine precepts, whether by reformer, priest, or potentate, will always lead to the total breakdown of law and order, after which comes anarchy and carnage. So it was among those who became caught up in Thomas Münzer’s ideas:

The Great Controversy, p. 191-192:

The fanatical teachers gave themselves up to be governed by impressions, regarding every thought and impulse as the voice of God; consequently they went to great extremes. Some even burned their Bibles, exclaiming: “The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” Münzer’s teaching appealed to men’s desire for the marvelous, while it gratified their pride by virtually placing human ideas and opinions above the word of God. His doctrines were received by thousands. He soon denounced all order in public worship, and declared that to obey princes was to attempt to serve both God and Belial.

The minds of the people, already beginning to throw off the yoke of the papacy, were also becoming impatient under the restraints of civil authority. Münzer’s revolutionary teachings, claiming divine sanction, led them to break away from all control and give the rein to their prejudices and passions. The most terrible scenes of sedition and strife followed, and the fields of Germany were drenched with blood.

The Psalmist understood this principle to perfection as revealed to him by God. He knew that to dispense with the written word meant to be deprived of accurate guidance in all the affairs of life, be they spiritual, mental, material, or moral. The law and the testimony are the reference points by which every proposition must be tested. Here are some typical words of his counsel:

Psalm 119

¹¹ Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!

¹³⁰ The entrance of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

The Meaning of Idolatry

There was more than one aspect of the royal plan which rendered it quite unacceptable to anyone committed to undivided service to the King of the Universe. The food was consecrated to idolatry. In addition, most of it was decidedly unhealthful. The aspect of idol worship will be considered first, while the question of health will be discussed in the next chapter.

Prophets and Kings, p. 481-482:

At the very outset of their career there came to them a decisive test of character. It was provided that they should eat of the food and drink of the wine that came from the king's table. In this the king thought to give them an expression of his favor and of his solicitude for their welfare. But a portion having been offered to idols, the food from the king's table was consecrated to idolatry; and one partaking of it would be regarded as offering homage to the gods of Babylon. In such homage, loyalty to Jehovah forbade Daniel and his companions to join. Even a mere pretense of eating the food or drinking the wine would be a denial of their faith. To do this would be to array themselves with heathenism and to dishonor the principles of the law of God.

To the true child of God, the worship of an idol is a foolish and senseless exercise which it is. However, no one can lightly dismiss this system of religion which permeated every aspect and element of human existence in Old Testament times. Men possessed of giant intellects, of varied skills, and great abilities as statesmen and administrators placed their total confidence in the gods of their own creation. Even the highly intelligent King Nebuchadnezzar and all his wise and mighty men attributed to their idols the victories by which they gained dominion over the entire world.²⁸

²⁸ See *Prophets and Kings*, p. 479-480.

In all Babylon's history, the greatest boost to her confidence was provided by her conquest of those who professed allegiance to the true God—the God of Israel. In these last days of human history the idols of Babylon the Great will be just as present and even more impressive and influential than were the idols of the past. Therefore, we need to recognize their presence and to understand just how they operate in diverting men and women from saving truth to damning error.

In the Babylonian system of idolatry use is often made of graven images. The priests and leaders claim that these images are not in themselves the actual gods of their religious system, but are the visible representations of the gods who remain invisible at all times. Nevertheless they claim the worship of the actual images to be a duty. The reason given is that this aids the believers to an even more effective worship.

Note how this argument was employed before the flood:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 95-96:

The men of that generation were not all, in the fullest acceptance of the term, idolaters. Many professed to be worshipers of God. They claimed that their idols were representations of the Deity, and that through them the people could obtain a clearer conception of the divine Being.

As previously stated in these chapters, Babylon's principles will never change as long as she exists. Therefore, it must be that idol worship is and will be just as much a part of her religion as it ever was in the past. And so it is. There may be no idol form carved from wood or cast in bronze, gold, or silver, but idol worship is presently exerting its baleful influence with an even more deadly effect.

Prophets and Kings, p. 177-178:

History is being repeated. The world today has its Ahabs and its Jezebels. The present age is one of idolatry, as verily as was that in which Elijah lived. No outward shrine may be visible; there may be no image for the eye to rest upon; yet thousands are following after the gods of this world—after riches, fame,

pleasure, and the pleasing fables that permit man to follow the inclinations of the unregenerate heart.

Multitudes have a wrong conception of God and His attributes, and are as truly serving a false god as were the worshipers of Baal. Many even of those who claim to be Christians have allied themselves with influences that are unalterably opposed to God and His truth. Thus they are led to turn away from the divine and to exalt the human.

Understanding as they did that idol worship is the opposite from the worship of the true God and is therefore unbelief, Daniel and his three friends could not, either to please the king or to save their lives, partake of the food from the king's table. Since a representative portion of it had been consecrated to idols, partaking of any of it was a declaration of rejection of the true God and his principles of kingdom building in favor of man's ways.

Idolatry is the exaltation of the human above the divine, of man above God. Isaiah describes this in the following way.

Isaiah 44

¹⁰ Who would form a god or mold an image that profits him nothing?

After this he describes the blacksmith who makes his own tools, and then the craftsman who cuts a tree down and uses the wood in various ways.

¹⁵ Then it shall be for a man to burn, for he will take some of it and warm himself; yes, he kindles it and bakes bread; indeed he makes a god and worships it; he makes it a carved image, and falls down to it.

¹⁶ He burns half of it in the fire; with this half he eats meat; he roasts a roast, and is satisfied. He even warms himself and says, Ah! I am warm, I have seen the fire.

¹⁷ And the rest of it he makes into a god, his carved image. He falls down before it and worships it, prays to it and says, Deliver me, for you are my god!

In this manner, man believes that he elevates himself to the position of god-maker. It is a position which does not exist, for no one in existence has the power or the wisdom to create a god.

But, if it were to exist, which of the two would be the greater, the god, or the god-maker who fashioned it into existence? It is obvious that the god-maker would be the greater. To him is assigned the “highest position” in the entire world by virtue of his “incredible capacity” to sculpture god from a slab of marble or carve him from a chunk of wood and invest him with all the powers needed to supply man with the necessities of daily life.

All god-makers claim to be the greatest and the best, and they continually try to prove this by contesting the claims of all the others. When a mighty king such as King Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptian armies on the battlefield, the monarch and his soldiers attributed the victory to their gods who they claimed were more powerful than those of the Egyptians. To them, that was great glory, but how much greater glory they accorded to themselves as god-makers, when they overcame the Hebrews!

Prophets and Kings, p. 479-480:

The fact that these men, worshipers of Jehovah, were captives in Babylon, and that the vessels of God’s house had been placed in the Temple of the Babylonish gods, was boastfully cited by the victors as evidence that their religion and customs were superior to the religion and customs of the Hebrews. Yet through the very humiliations that Israel’s departure from Him had invited, God gave Babylon evidence of His supremacy, of the holiness of His requirements, and of the sure results of obedience. And this testimony He gave, as alone it could be given, through those who were loyal to Him.

There is no field of human activity in which the god-makers of this earth do not continually compete in their desperate efforts to establish who is the greatest god-maker of them all. When he is discovered, then will have been found the greatest idolater of them all.

Let us consider the statement quoted earlier in which is provided a short list of idols men have erected in place of the exaltation of God as King of kings and Lord of lords. Here is that list:

Prophets and Kings, p. 177-178:

The present age is one of idolatry, as verily as was that in which Elijah lived. No outward shrine may be visible; there may be no image for the eye to rest upon; yet thousands are following after the gods of this world—after riches, fame, pleasure, and the pleasing fables that permit man to follow the inclinations of the unregenerate heart.

Multitudes have a wrong conception of God and His attributes, and are as truly serving a false god as were the worshipers of Baal. Many even of those who claim to be Christians have allied themselves with influences that are unalterably opposed to God and His truth. Thus they are led to turn away from the divine and to exalt the human.

According to the truth laid down in this paragraph, the pursuit of riches, fame, pleasure, pleasing fables, and the placing of confidence in a misconception of the character of God, are all the worship of idols. This means that to physically prostrate one's self before an image of some kind or another does not in itself do the greatest damage to the person who does this. The greatest damage is caused by the concept which is behind the bowing. It is this false concept of God which forms his character and negatively affects his life style.

By claiming to have the power and the ability to make a powerful god from lifeless material, the idol worshiper separates himself from the true God and thus separates himself from life. Lucifer made exactly that claim and was therefore cast out of heaven. From there he is banned until he eventually destroys himself.

Because of the idolatry issue among others, Daniel and his friends could not and did not partake of the king's diet. They understood that to give any place to idolatry was to surrender the forces of light to the powers of darkness and thus give Satan the mastery.

In like manner in these last days, we must for the same reasons totally reject idolatry in all its varied forms knowing that we cannot serve both God and the devil. When we have learned to do

this as faithfully as did those four loyal Hebrews, the total overthrow of Babylon the Great is assured.

18. The Question of Temperance

Messenger and News Review, April 1995

AS STATED in the last chapter, the consecration of the king's food to idolatry was enough reason in itself for the four young Hebrews to unequivocally decide not to eat it.

However, this was not the only consideration which determined their stand. A second reason was that the food served in the royal dining room was decidedly unhealthful. The wine was intoxicating, and swine's flesh and other meats pronounced unclean by the law of Moses, were part of the diet. The Babylonian diet was unrestricted. There was no distinction made between clean and unclean meats as stipulated in the laws of God given through Moses. See *Leviticus* 11 for the animal classifications which could and could not be eaten.

The Original Diet

Even though God permitted certain kinds of meat to be eaten, this does not mean that He intended that plan to remain for all time. It especially does not apply to those expecting to be translated from this earth to heaven.

Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 380-381:

Among those who are waiting for the coming of the Lord, meat eating will eventually be done away; flesh will cease to form a part of their diet.

The counsel in *Leviticus* 11 is really an important stage in the return of God's people from a diet of flesh to the original diet. It is worthy of observation that, while He gave them permission for the time being to eat these "clean" flesh foods, the manna which He personally chose for them had no flesh in it whatsoever. The Lord only supplied the people with meat when they clamored so stridently for it that He permitted them to have what they wanted, but at what a tremendous cost.

One such occasion is recorded in *Numbers* 11:4-34, and happened shortly after Israel left Mt. Sinai on the way to Kadesh-

barnea. They rose up in rebellion against the non-stimulating diet of manna provided by God himself.

Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 377:

In this instance the Lord gave the people that which was not for their best good, because they would have it. They would not submit to receive from the Lord those things which would prove for their good. They gave themselves up to seditious murmurings against Moses, and against the Lord, because they did not receive those things which would prove an injury to them.

Their depraved appetites controlled them, and God gave them flesh meats, as they desired, and He let them suffer the results of gratifying their lustful appetites. Burning fevers cut down very large numbers of the people. Those who had been most guilty in their murmurings were slain as soon as they tasted the meat for which they had lusted.

If they had submitted to have the Lord select their food for them, and had been thankful and satisfied for food which they could eat freely of without injury, they would not have lost the favor of God, and then been punished for their rebellious murmurings by great numbers of them being slain.

The original diet furnished by God in the Garden of Eden was totally free from flesh foods.

Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 373:

God gave our first parents the food He designed that the race should eat. It was contrary to His plan to have the life of any creature taken. There was to be no death in Eden. The fruit of the trees in the garden, was the food man's wants required. God gave man no permission to eat animal food until after the flood. Everything had been destroyed upon which man could subsist, and therefore the Lord in their necessity gave Noah permission to eat of the clean animals which he had taken with him into the ark. But animal food was not the most healthful article of food for man.

After the flood, the permission given by God to eat flesh was a restricted one. For instance, they must take great care to ensure that all the blood was drained out.

Genesis 9

⁴ But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.

From that low point in the history of God's people, God intended to lead them back to the original diet. The final achievement of that work will be accomplished under the power of the fourth angel.

The Flesh Pots of Egypt

This work of total return to true temperance was retarded during the years of Israel's Egyptian bondage. The diet of the Israelites during that long period of slavery did not measure up to the divine standards, for it contained stimulating foods. Flesh cooked in the flesh pots of Egypt was the food they delighted to eat, for it is evident that particular dish was what they missed the most once they left Egypt. They declared most emphatically that they would rather die than give up flesh foods. So great was their foolishness and rebellious spirit that thousands did die.

Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 148:

When the God of Israel brought His people out of Egypt, He withheld flesh meats from them in a great measure, but gave them bread from heaven, and water from the flinty rock. With this they were not satisfied. They loathed the food given them, and wished themselves back in Egypt, where they could sit by the fleshpots. They preferred to endure slavery, and even death, rather than to be deprived of flesh. God granted their desire, giving them flesh, and leaving them to eat till their gluttony produced a plague, from which many of them died.

If the Israelites had realized the physical, mental, and spiritual powers which would have been developed within them had they been truly temperate in all things, they might at least have been less vehement in their protestations against being deprived of a diet of meat. What those results would have been are listed in this paragraph:

Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 378:

Had they been willing to deny appetite in obedience to His restrictions, feebleness and disease would have been unknown

among them. Their descendants would have possessed physical and mental strength. They would have had clear perceptions of truth and duty, keen discrimination, and sound judgment.

But they were unwilling to submit to God's requirements, and they failed to reach the standard He had set for them, and to receive the blessings that might have been theirs. They murmured at God's restrictions, and lusted after the fleshpots of Egypt. God let them have flesh, but it proved a curse to them.

What a wonderful life they would have led as each passing generation contributed the legacy of its own gains; what lovely children they would have born; what radiant health would have been theirs; and what a glorious Christian witness and influence would have shone forth from within them! Instead, they preferred to sit by the flesh pots of Egypt and forfeit the incredible blessings awaiting them.

By the time they reached the Promised Land, better dietary habits apparently had been established among them, for it is written that the permission was operative only for a short time.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 311 [Emphasis added]:

It was only because of their discontent and their murmuring for the fleshpots of Egypt that animal food was granted them, *and this only for a short time*. Its use brought disease and death to thousands.

Once they were settled in Canaan, God's plan was for them to take the gospel to the entire world and prepare all who were willing for His coming. That was God's purpose in establishing them in the Promised Land.

Prophets and Kings, p. 70-71:

In the days of Solomon the kingdom of Israel extended from Hamath on the north to Egypt on the south, and from the Mediterranean Sea to the river Euphrates. Through this territory ran many natural highways of the world's commerce, and caravans from distant lands were constantly passing to and fro. Thus there was given to Solomon and his people opportunity to reveal to men of all nations the character of the King of kings, and to teach them to reverence and obey Him. To all the world this

knowledge was to be given. Through the teaching of the sacrificial offerings, Christ was to be uplifted before the nations, that all who would might live.

Prophets and Kings, p. 19:

All who, like Rahab the Canaanite and Ruth the Moabitess, turned from idolatry to the worship of the true God were to unite themselves with His chosen people. As the numbers of Israel increased, they were to enlarge their borders until their kingdom should embrace the world.

But apostasy took the place of the witness of righteousness, and with it the return to flesh foods.

God's Temperance vs. Babylon's Intemperance

In the midst of this apostasy, God was preparing His witnesses for confrontation with Babylon. Preparation means reformation, and a part of reformation involves moving back to the original diet. Daniel and his friends brought their lives into line with the light on temperance which God had given. Thus, when confronted with the king's requirements, the food which the faithful four chose was pulse, a product totally vegetarian in origin. Healthful food composed their diet in the past, and they determined that it would continue to do so in the future.

The Youth's Instructor, August 18, 1898:

As Daniel and his fellows were brought to the test, they placed themselves fully on the side of righteousness and truth. They did not move capriciously, but intelligently. They decided that as flesh meat had not composed their diet in the past, it should not come into their diet in the future, and as wine had been prohibited to all who should engage in the service of God, they determined that they would not partake of it.

The fate of the sons of Aaron had been presented before them, and they knew that the use of wine would confuse their senses, that the indulgence of appetite would becloud their powers of discernment. These particulars were placed on record in the history of the children of Israel as a warning to every youth to avoid all customs and practises and indulgences that would in any way dishonor God.

Daniel and his companions knew not what would be the result of their decision; they knew not but that it would cost them their lives; but they determined to keep the straight path of strict temperance even when in the courts of licentious Babylon.

Daniel 1

¹⁵ And at the end of the ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

¹⁶ Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and of the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

The Youth's Instructor, November 12, 1907:

The simple pulse and water, which they at first requested, was thereafter the food of Daniel and his companions.

Once in the court where the situation demanded positive decision from them, the faithful four resolved not to obey the king's orders on the basis that obedience meant joining with the Babylonians in their idolatrous practices. Furthermore, to obey the king was to disobey all they had ever been taught of temperance principles.

Upon their arrival in Babylon, they realized more than ever that their protection from being overcome by the Babylonian superpower depended in part on their strength of intellect. This was an essential factor in discerning the enemy in his many clever disguises. It was a situation in which they apparently could not afford to be overcome, for it seems that there would never again be a second opportunity. Preliminary to winning the final battle against sinfulness in King Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel and his friends had to win all that went before. Some of those struggles were life and death matters where neither side could afford to compromise.

The book of *Daniel* is a book of prophecies. Its stories will all be repeated, not in material detail, but in principle. As intemperance and idolatry dwarfed the minds and souls of men back then, so it is today and will be through out the final battle. As Daniel and his friends could not afford even one failure in their encounter with Babylon, so the people of God who meet the final Babylon must

emerge victorious from every battle. It will be a very solemn time. Ours is the task of finishing what the protestant reformers began.

The Reformation sprang to life as a result of John Wycliffe's ministry in England in the fourteenth century. This was followed by the work of Huss and Jerome in the fifteenth, and of Martin Luther in the sixteenth century. Then came the ministry of John Wesley in the eighteenth century and of the first and second angel's messages in the nineteenth.

Through the first angel's message God had directed the minds of His people to the prophecies of *Daniel* 8 and 9, but said nothing about dietary reform. It was not until after the great disappointment that God directed His people to the subject of temperance as a part of their preparation for the second advent. A very great work is here envisaged as the world rapidly sinks lower and still lower in physical, mental, and spiritual corruption.

The power of the gospel as resident in Daniel and his three friends was so great that they literally changed the history of the world. So it must be again. This will be no simple task. Satan knows that there is hardly anything more important for us to learn than the control of the appetites and passions. Through intemperance he works to destroy man's ability and desire to detect his wiles and resist them.

The Desire of Ages, p. 122:

Of all the lessons to be learned from our Lord's first great temptation none is more important than that bearing upon the control of the appetites and passions. In all ages, temptations appealing to the physical nature have been most effectual in corrupting and degrading mankind. Through intemperance, Satan works to destroy the mental and moral powers that God gave to man as a priceless endowment. Thus it becomes impossible for men to appreciate things of eternal worth. Through sensual indulgence, Satan seeks to blot from the soul every trace of likeness to God.

The uncontrolled indulgence and consequent disease and degradation that existed at Christ's first advent will again exist, with intensity of evil, before His second coming. Christ declares

that the condition of the world will be as in the days before the Flood, and as in Sodom and Gomorrah. Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart will be evil continually. Upon the very verge of that fearful time we are now living, and to us should come home the lesson of the Saviour's fast. Only by the inexpressible anguish which Christ endured can we estimate the evil of unrestrained indulgence. His example declares that our only hope of eternal life is through bringing the appetites and passions into subjection to the will of God.

The Example of John the Baptist

John the Baptist is another prophet who reveals the place that temperance must play in fitting a people for the second advent of Christ. His life was consistent with his words. We know this because no person can successfully call men to forsake the indulgence of the appetites and passions unless he himself is truly delivered from like excesses. This is a field where hypocrisy will bring guaranteed failure.

The witness of Daniel's approach testifies to the truth of this principle. He made an open, honest, and factual approach to the officers in charge of him. He practiced no deceit. In return he was met on his own terms—without hypocrisy. This was something those officers could not do with the treacherous rulers and other officials. Charmed by his manifest integrity and honesty, they felt that they could safely negotiate any contract with the faithful four.

Let us now consider certain aspects of John the Baptist's work as the herald of Christ's first advent and compare these with the work to be accomplished by the people who shall herald Christ's second coming. One aspect is holiness. In order to attain to this high spiritual state, one must be strictly temperate in all things all the time.

The Desire of Ages, p. 100:

John was to go forth as Jehovah's messenger, to bring to men the light of God. He must give a new direction to their thoughts. He must impress them with the holiness of God's requirements, and their need of His perfect righteousness. Such a messenger

must be holy. He must be a temple for the indwelling Spirit of God. In order to fulfill his mission, he must have a sound physical constitution, and mental and spiritual strength. Therefore it would be necessary for him to control the appetites and passions. He must be able so to control all his powers that he could stand among men as unmoved by surrounding circumstances as the rocks and mountains of the wilderness.

Note the list of qualifications required:

- He must be holy.
- He must be filled with God's Holy Spirit.
- He must have a sound physical constitution.
- He must possess mental and spiritual strength.

The result of possessing these abilities was the power to stand as unmoved as the mountains surrounding him.

But there is no man who has been born nor ever will be, who can attain to these levels of excellence without leading a life of strict temperance. They are men like Daniel, his three companions, John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ. They were able to do the work appointed them because they measured up to these high standards. Their lives give an incontrovertible witness to the truth that the work of God in this sinful, intemperate world, will be accomplished by those alone who have the complete mastery over themselves.

The True Foundation of High Achievement

This truth was strongly challenged by the Babylonians who opposed and rejected the relationship between strict temperance and high achievement. They argued that the intemperate Babylonians were the world-conquering achievers, whereas Israel had been conquered. It is true that the Babylonians had conquered the world, but that proved nothing so far as flesh foods or intemperance in general were concerned. As we have seen, Israel had moved away from the principles of temperance. Thus a truthful conclusion could only be drawn from a contest between the faithful four and Babylon.

The popular notion prevailing from then unto this day is that “red meat” is the food for the strong and the healthy; the quick and the intelligent. That was the concept cherished in the minds of the Babylonians. When Daniel proposed that they be furnished with pulse and water instead of meat and wine, the steward expressed his conviction that they would look so poorly that the king would surely notice the difference. On learning that the reason for their pallor was the unthinkable assignment of pulse and water in the land of red meat and wine, the king would most likely have had the officer executed. The steward regarded the risk too great to challenge the long-cherished prejudices of the establishment.

But Daniel had absolute faith in God’s word. This faith was confirmed by the results of applying those truths to his own life. He was prepared to meet any challenge that might be mounted against that word. So it was that he and the other three came to the speedy conclusion that they could not and would not partake of the king’s provisions.

Daniel 1

⁸ But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

With that positive decision began the battle in the court of King Nebuchadnezzar between the true Israel and Babylon-between the truths of God and the lies of the devil. There were two Israels with whom Babylon was involved although she discerned only one. The one which Babylon knew as Israel was the collection of twelve utterly apostate tribes who could trace their physical descent back to Abraham. They knew nothing of righteousness and were scattered far and wide. The king did not understand what constituted the real Israel. He did not know that once the people of God have gone into total apostasy, they have in reality renounced the name of Israel and taken the name of Babylon.

To all appearances, God's was a lost cause. Israel no longer possessed an army nor the ability to equip one. Her lands were emptied of people. All her precious treasures had been securely locked away under Babylonian control. Israel was utterly powerless. There was nothing she could do to re-establish herself as an effective force to do God's will.

But all was far from lost. Instead, this was the kind of situation which gave God the opportunity to reveal himself as the perfect and complete Problem-solver, Plan-maker, and Burden-bearer. This is the kind of revelation needed by His people right down to the end to tell them just how He will deal with the man of sin, and how He will gain the ultimate victory over all the forces of evil. From the seemingly insignificant issue of meat and wine back then, we are able to learn one aspect of how this will be accomplished.

19. The Victory is the Lord's

Messenger and News Review, May 1995

Daniel 1:8-20

WE HAVE now arrived at that point in the study of Daniel the prophet where the first confrontation between the mighty forces of darkness and the mightier forces of God's true people was about to take place.

A Conquered Foe

Although Daniel and his three friends could not as yet see how it would all come to pass, before them stretched a series of uninterrupted victories as it is promised:

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, p. 307:

And while much of the fruit of their labor is not apparent in this life, God's workers have His sure promise of ultimate success. As the world's Redeemer, Christ was constantly confronted with apparent failure. He seemed to do little of the work which He longed to do in uplifting and saving. Satanic agencies were constantly working to obstruct His way. But He would not be discouraged. Ever before Him He saw the result of His mission. He knew that truth would finally triumph in the contest with evil, and to His disciples He said:

John 16

³³ These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

The life of Christ's disciples is to be like His, a series of uninterrupted victories, not seen to be such here, but recognized as such in the great hereafter.

So it was that as Daniel and his three companions faced the first issue to be contested, they had the unseen but all powerful forces of righteousness with which to meet and overcome the powers of darkness. They did not enter into the conflict hoping that they might gain the victory, but knowing that it was already gained. They knew it was so because God's truth is invincible. They also understood and believed that the coming Redeemer

would ratify the victory on their behalf. This victory was already really theirs by faith, for Satan was even then a conquered foe.

This knowledge on the part of those four young men was crucial to their success when confronting Babylon, that great counterfeit system of religion. They had to know just who Babylon was and that she had already been conquered. This same principle must be understood by those who shall confront and overcome the beast and his image. It is essential that they be able to accurately discern the presence of the great final antichrist. This will require the ability to penetrate his disguises, to recognize the wolf under the sheep's clothing.

They must enter that fearful confrontation knowing that the victory was won for them on Calvary and given to them as a free gift. Satan does not and will not acknowledge this, but fights on as if everything were going his way entirely. It is a blessed assurance to us that the great controversy is between Christ and Satan, not between us and Satan, and that Christ has already defeated our great enemy.

The Desire of Ages, p. 490:

Henceforward Christ's followers were to look upon Satan as a conquered foe. Upon the cross, Jesus was to gain the victory for them; that victory He desired them to accept as their own.

Luke 10

¹⁹ Behold, [He said,] I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Why is it so important to know that the victory is already the Lord's and that we do not have to gain it?

In order to give the answer to this question, we must understand that there are two ways of struggling to gain your objectives. One way belongs to Satan's kingdom. The principles of operation employed by him and his followers in gaining their ends are force, deception, extortion, demanding instead of requesting, fighting for one's own rights at the cost of others, and so on. Those who belong to Satan's kingdom use these weapons in their

warfare against God's people. In addition they use these tactics in their wars against each other. Always remember that Satan's kingdom is a divided one. Therefore you cannot expect the sweet unity there which is found only in Christ.

There is another kind of struggle fought by the children of God's kingdom. The weapons used in this struggle are the opposite from those used in the kingdom of Satan. The main component of the divine weaponry is the prevailing power of truth and love.

The factor that leads people to fight the struggle of the kingdom of darkness is their fear of what they will lose if they do not fight in this way. Fear always leads us to fight according to Satan's procedures. If we want to be delivered from that kind of struggle, we need the love of God.

1 John 4

¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear...

The Desire of Ages, p. 353:

Those who are brought in controversy with the enemies of truth have to meet, not only men, but Satan and his agents. Let them remember the Saviour's words,

Luke 10

³ Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

Let them rest in the love of God, and the spirit will be kept calm, even under personal abuse. The Lord will clothe them with a divine panoply. His Holy Spirit will influence the mind and heart, so that their voices shall not catch the notes of the baying of the wolves.

Those who know that the Lord has already gotten the victory have no need to fight as Satan does. They rest assured that the victory is theirs, and for this reason they can afford to use nothing but the weapons of love and truth. They can afford to be polite and ask for a favor instead of demanding that they be treated "as they deserve to be."

Note carefully how Daniel approached the problem with the king's meat and wine.

Daniel 1

⁸ But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Daniel could have demanded that his stand be respected, but instead of demanding, he kindly requested a favorable consideration of his principles. Daniel used the same language when later he talked with the steward Melzar.

¹² Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink.

Fully accepting the role of a servant as Jesus did, Daniel was nevertheless master of the situation, for he knew that he was free not to eat the king's meat nor drink his wine.

2 Corinthians 3

¹⁷ ...where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

For his part, King Nebuchadnezzar had very little awareness of the significance of what was happening in his court, in the very heart of his domain. He did not know there were two Israels, the apostate one which he had conquered, and the true Israel which was still unconquered in the very midst of Babylon. He did not know that the Lord of hosts rode forth at the head of this army.

But he could not know because at that point of time he had not yet been enlightened in regard to the truth of these matters. It required much loving ministry on God's part through Daniel before the eyes of his understanding were opened to the point where he correctly evaluated the events of his life and the lives of the conquerors who had gone before him.

On the other hand he largely misread history and saw things mostly other than they really were. Therefore, it was a relatively small matter to him to take up the weapons of warfare against the King of kings, but a matter of very great consequence in God's eyes.

A Lesson From Egypt

Let us take a little time to consider one of the lessons history had to offer at this time. The rebellion of Egypt against God and the disastrous consequences which followed is an example of the out-working of cause and effect in kingdom building. Egypt's losses as well as the complete failure of many powerful nations, provided God with a lesson book for would-be world conquerors. This message from history is too plain to be misunderstood, yet it is misunderstood. Some people even go so far as to charge God with being arbitrarily unjust in His dealings with the ruling Pharaoh of Moses' time. Thus the warning goes unheeded.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul reveals the true interpretation of God's dealings with the rebellious monarch. Here are his explanatory statements in regard to how the Omnipotent One dealt with Pharaoh:

Romans 9

¹⁴ What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!

¹⁵ For He says to Moses, I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.

¹⁶ So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show my power in you, and that my name may be declared in all the earth.

¹⁸ Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

¹⁹ You will say to me then, Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?

²⁰ But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, Why have you made me like this?

²¹ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

²² What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,

²³ And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory.

In God's dealings with Pharaoh and in His use of this case to vindicate His perfect character of love, it was critically essential that He be what He has eternally been—righteous in all His ways. More than that, He must be seen to be such.

Unfortunately for the King of Egypt, darkness covered his mind despite God's great efforts to reveal himself as the God of truth. The response of the haughty monarch was to stubbornly remain where he was. Tragically for him, mercy could no longer be found in that place. God is a God of mercy, but He cannot forgive those who will not repent. He will...

Exodus 34

⁷ ...by no means clear the guilty.

While God's mercy itself does not actually end, it can be received only by those who fulfill the divinely stated conditions. God alone is capable of assessing who has satisfactorily fulfilled the required conditions and can receive His mercy and compassion. Man is too selfish and shortsighted to make judgments in matters which are as important as another individual's personal salvation.

The King of Egypt was an exceptionally rebellious monarch. King Nebuchadnezzar likewise prided himself on being a tough, invincible leader. He was one who yielded to no one, least of all to an invisible God. Yet the time came when he was truly converted as Pharaoh might have been.

To some, Paul's explanation makes it appear that Pharaoh was deprived of his personal choice in the whole matter, but this is not so. He was completely free to choose whether he would serve God or reject him. We can be sure of that, otherwise the Bible must be changed to read:

John 3

¹⁶ For God so loved the world [except for Pharaoh, King of Egypt] that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Before Pharaoh was the choice of accepting the gospel or rejecting it. Whichever he chose, God's power would be shown. When he chose to reject God's messages of love, there was nothing to hold back the awesome power of nature not under God's direct control which manifested itself in ten destructive scourges. Even though this power of nature was not under God's control at that time, it is still called the "power of God" because it originated in God for the purpose of blessing.

On the other hand, Pharaoh could have chosen to repent in which case the power of God would have been mightily shown in his conversion and righteous works thereafter. The choice was Pharaoh's, not God's.²⁹

When God's actions in relation to Pharaoh are correctly understood, it will be clearly seen that He had actually shown mercy to the Egyptian potentate. Time after time He removed the plague which was destroying the nation just so soon as a measure of repentance was exhibited, even though the promise of a change to obedience was short-lived.

In the case of the plague of hail, God described the nature of the scourge beforehand and warned them to put themselves and their livestock under cover.³⁰ Thus God sought to minimize rather than maximize the effects of the destruction.

The Darkness of Deception

How sad it is that men have misread the lesson book of history which reveals God's character of love and mercy. Satan knows that he will swiftly lose his followers when they see God as He really is. Therefore, he depends on keeping them thoroughly de-

²⁹ For a further explanation of this, see the book, *Behold Your God*, in the chapter entitled "Rods and Serpents."

³⁰ See *Exodus* 9:13-35.

ceived. Satan is identified as he who deceives the entire world, a work he has undertaken with great success.

Revelation 12

⁹ So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Except for extreme cases of demon possession, Satan can control his followers only by persuasion and deception. Many of them are powerful, strong willed, highly educated, and disciplined people who are not interested in Satan's cause but in their own. Their personal pursuits sometimes do great damage to Satan's ambitious interests though they are not aware of this.

So far as the devil is concerned, nothing less than world domination is his objective, and nothing other than that will satisfy him. But various other potentates have risen up during human history each having the same goal. King Nebuchadnezzar was one of them. He was strong, intelligent, and ambitious. His intelligence is shown by his personal examination of the students at the end of the course. He was able to assess the proficiency of each of them and determined which positions they should have in the administration of the kingdom. So it is written:

Daniel 1

¹⁹ Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king.

²⁰ And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm.

That he was highly ambitious is revealed by his conquest of the nations of his time, followed by his iron-fisted authority over them. An example of this is provided in his passing a stern edict for every nation on earth to obey God subsequent to the deliverance of Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace.

Daniel 3

²⁹ Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.

Despite the fact that King Nebuchadnezzar possessed ability to rule, he was operating under mistaken ideas and wrong principles. His decisions as a world conqueror and nation builder were made in the darkness of misread history. Therefore, while initial success would come upon his cause, total failure would inevitably follow.

The Confrontation Begins

Let us return now to the four Hebrew youth. As the battle plan opened, they had firm convictions. They knew what they believed, they knew it was the truth, and they were determined, even at the cost of life itself, not to yield up the truth. They understood that, in and of themselves, they had no hope of maintaining their stand. Feeling their utter helplessness, they had, by a life of communion with God, developed within themselves considerable power. In this they were a copy of what Christ likewise was when He was on earth:

The Desire of Ages, p. 363:

In Christ the cry of humanity reached the Father of infinite pity. As a man He supplicated the throne of God till His humanity was charged with a heavenly current that should connect humanity with divinity. Through continual communion He received life from God, that He might impart life to the world. His experience is to be ours.

As we enter upon our conflict with Babylon the Great, we need to understand the principle revealed in this statement. It pictures within ourselves the residence of power which has become a part of us and by which we can conquer every force confronting us. Jesus, whose experience is to be ours, provides us with example

after example of this principle in operation. Here are some of them:

On the shores of the Gadarenes two madmen rushed at Christ and His disciples with the intention of doing them grievous bodily harm. The disciples fled for their lives leaving Jesus to face the demon-possessed men alone. By the living power which was within himself, and which had been acquired through many night hours of communion with God, He raised His hand and halted these men in their tracks. Not only did Jesus free them mentally, but He brought them spiritual deliverance as well.³¹

Then there was the occasion when Christ alone emptied the temple courts of the greedy buyers and sellers. He did this by the power that was within himself, but which He had acquired from His Father.³²

On the night of His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, He firstly permitted himself to be bound, after which He just as easily released himself in order to heal the servant's ear.³³

Then there are examples of powerful confrontations between men of God and the powers of darkness. An outstanding example of this was Moses' and Aaron's encounters with Pharaoh. They came in and went out from his presence, and the haughty monarch had no power to stop them. It was a case of two men with the power of God, standing face to face against the mightiest armed forces on earth at that time. Against that power the mighty king of Egypt had no defense.

Such an invincible defense as this is available to those who have put away all known sin and spent the necessary time in deep, personal communion with God. Then God can successfully use them in countering the agencies of darkness.

It was because they were so mightily filled with God's power, that Daniel and his friends could so confidently and successfully

³¹ See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 337-341.

³² See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 154-166.

³³ See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 696.

meet the king of Babylon. They went forth armed with truth and love. That was all they needed. When God goes forth to make war in righteousness, those are the weapons with which He conquers all His foes.

So, what are the pure and powerful truths which were the prevailing factors in giving the victory to God and His people?

1. Only the true God has power to conquer eternally. There is no lasting power to conquer in idol worship, as the king supposed there was.
2. The foods originally made for man are the best, not flesh foods and intoxicating drinks.

On these issues the first great battle was fought between God and the Babylonian colossus.

As the crisis hour approached, Daniel and the faithful three had already surrendered the critical problem to the Lord. God responded with a plan which convincingly won this first battle. They began the confrontation from the vantage point of being blessed with the favor and good will of the chief of the eunuchs, as it is written,

Daniel 1

⁹ Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and good will of the chief of the eunuchs.

It was not a case of the prince making a personal favorite of Daniel. On the contrary, their good relationship was the fruit of Daniel's genial spirit and behavior. His was a life of constant and close communion with God. Such a life is surrounded with an atmosphere of light and peace. The life of Daniel breathed out fragrance and revealed a divine power which reached men's hearts.³⁴ The prince of the eunuchs was being drawn toward God by this holy influence. We are not informed as to how far he came, but we hope that he was thoroughly converted.

³⁴ See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 363.

When Daniel and his three friends requested that they be allowed to eat as vegetarians, the prince of the eunuchs expressed his alarm that the result would place him in jeopardy.

Daniel 1

¹⁰ And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and drink. For why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who are your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king.

That was a direct invitation to test the truthfulness or otherwise of the belief that meat and wine were fit for human consumption. Daniel immediately proposed that the matter be subjected to a ten day trial.

¹¹ So Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

¹² Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink.

¹³ Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants.

¹⁴ So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days.

The results were quite conclusive. The vegetarians were in markedly better condition than were the consumers of flesh foods and intoxicating drinks. In addition, all had endured a terrible march from Jerusalem to Babylon the effects of which would have been felt much more by the flesh eaters than by the vegetarians.

Daniel 1

¹⁵ And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies.

¹⁶ Thus the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

It was a triumph for the faithful four gained by the simplest means, but having consequences as far-reaching as the throne of God is above the earth.

In this seemingly simple narrative is a marvelous lesson book rich with divine counsels for those who, few in number, will be called upon as those young men were to bring to nought the mighty power of Babylon. Let our learning of these lessons be so effective that we shall be as invincible as the four young Hebrews were.

20. Never Man Spoke Like This Man

Messenger and News Review, June 1995

THE acceptance of pure truth is often very difficult and especially so for men occupying positions of absolute, unchallengeable power. So, what were the factors which enabled one such as King Nebuchadnezzar to manifest some respect for the truth that spoke against his cherished idols and against the food offered to them, while other powerful men in history cast the truth aside with disdain?

The truths which were demonstrated by four mere youths from the despised Jewish race, showed the misleading and deceptive nature of Babylon's pride and confidence. This revelation was quite the opposite from that which the king and his court wished to hear, and it should have been more than enough to stir the king's temper into untamable fury and ignite his prejudices into life-threatening activity.

Then why did King Nebuchadnezzar not do so? One must stand back and wonder at this king's response to the successful experiment which had been conducted so close to his own person, in the very heart of his kingdom. This experiment was not merely an interesting one but one which challenged some of Babylon's most cherished positions. The mighty king would not have ignored the challenge.

Truth and Love

The reason why the powers that are in command consider present truth to be so dangerous, is because that is just what it is to the strongholds of error. Babylon was built on certain principles of operation which its founders believed would abide forever. The four Hebrew youths were installed by God in Babylon to shatter confidence in those beliefs as a first step toward the overthrow of physical Babylon and in turn of spiritual Babylon. Satan knows that once the first step is taken, his kingdom is being undermined and his future threatened. So he goes to war with the Church of

God to protect his interests by destroying those who stand in his pathway.

Thus Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego were placed in a position of great peril right in the very forefront of God's army where only the bravest stand and fight.

The question remains however as to what is the factor in addition to truth which causes a person to choose to be loyal to God rather than to support the prince of darkness? The answer is contained in the following statement:

The Desire of Ages, p. 759:

God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.

When Daniel and his three friends stood before the steward who had been appointed to care for them, and also later, when they were examined by the king, they were filled with the awesome, saving power of divine love acquired by long, intensive hours of communion with the powers of heaven. From that time spent in communion with God, they were filled with truth and love which flooded every part of their beings.³⁵

This meant that they were likewise filled with the sweet graces of genuine humility. There is nothing aggressive, threatening, dangerous, or hostile in a truly humble person, whereas the proud are aggressive, threatening, dangerous, and hostile.

With pride, the king was very familiar, but of true humility as possessed by those alone who have been truly born again, he knew little or nothing because Babylon was the very epitome of pride and was ignorant of the saving, humbling power of the gospel. Most likely Nebuchadnezzar had never met a humble person. He had no contact with the poorer classes where a humble person was more likely to be found than among the rich.

In a kingdom such as Babylon it is quite normal to have a great gulf fixed between the rich and the poor. But even among the poor there are not necessarily humble people to be found. Poor

³⁵ See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 363.

circumstances do not automatically constitute true humility. Instead rebellion is often waiting in the hearts of the suppressed for an opportunity to break out in riots. The bursting forth of the French Revolution is an excellent example of this.

King Nebuchadnezzar knew how to deal with the proud with whom he had to cope every day, but with these four young men, he encountered people the like of whom he had never met before. Apparently, he dared not touch them. Why not?

Centuries later, the same situation arose when certain officers returned empty-handed from a mission to arrest Jesus. These men were so moved by the truth and love they found emanating from Jesus, that they could not touch Him.

John 7

⁴⁴ Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

⁴⁵ Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, Why have you not brought Him?

⁴⁶ The officers answered, No man ever spoke like this Man!

Understanding how these men came to admit the truth will help us to understand why Nebuchadnezzar could acknowledge the truth that Daniel and his friends were wiser than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm.

The Desire of Ages, p. 458-460:

God does not compel men to give up their unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which they will accept. The human mind is endowed with power to discriminate between right and wrong. God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but from weight of evidence, carefully comparing scripture with scripture. Had the Jews laid by their prejudice and compared written prophecy with the facts characterizing the life of Jesus, they would have perceived a beautiful harmony between the prophecies and their fulfillment in the life and ministry of the lowly Galilean....

On the last day of the feast, the officers sent out by the priests and rulers to arrest Jesus, returned without Him. They were angrily questioned,

John 7

⁴⁵ Why have you not brought Him?

With solemn countenance they answered,

⁴⁶ Never man spoke like this Man.

Hardened as were their hearts, they were melted by His words. While He was speaking in the temple court, they had lingered near, to catch something that might be turned against Him. But as they listened, the purpose for which they had been sent was forgotten. They stood as men entranced. Christ revealed himself to their souls. They saw that which priests and rulers would not see,—humanity flooded with the glory of divinity. They returned, so filled with this thought, so impressed by His words, that to the inquiry, “Why have you not brought Him?” they could only reply, “Never man spoke like this Man.”

The priests and rulers, on first coming into the presence of Christ, had felt the same conviction. Their hearts were deeply moved, and the thought was forced upon them, “Never man spoke like this Man.” But they had stifled the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Now, enraged that even the instruments of the law should be influenced by the hated Galilean, they cried,

John 7

⁴⁷ Are you also deceived?

⁴⁸ Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?

⁴⁹ But this people who know not the law are cursed.

Those to whom the message of truth is spoken seldom ask, “Is it true?” but, “By whom is it advocated?” Multitudes estimate it by the numbers who accept it; and the question is still asked, “Have any of the learned men or religious leaders believed?” Men are no more favorable to real godliness now than in the days of Christ. They are just as intently seeking earthly good, to the neglect of eternal riches; and it is not an argument against the truth, that large numbers are not ready to accept it, or that it is not received by the world’s great men, or even by the religious leaders.

Early Writings, p. 160-161:

Satan and his angels blinded the eyes and darkened the understanding of the Jews, and stirred up the chief of the people and the rulers to take the Saviour’s life. Others were sent to bring Jesus unto them; but as they came near where He was they were

greatly amazed. They saw Him filled with sympathy and compassion, as He witnessed human woe. They heard Him in love and tenderness speak encouragingly to the weak and afflicted. They also heard Him, in a voice of authority, rebuke the power of Satan and bid his captives go free. They listened to the words of wisdom that fell from His lips, and they were captivated; they could not lay hands on Him. They returned to the priests and elders without Jesus. When asked,

John 7

⁴⁵ Why have you not brought Him?

—they related what they had witnessed of His miracles, and the holy words of wisdom, love, and knowledge which they had heard, and ended with saying,

⁴⁶ Never man spoke like this man.

The chief priests accused them of being also deceived, and some of the officers were ashamed that they had not taken Him. The priests inquired in a scornful manner if any of the rulers had believed on Him. I saw that many of the magistrates and elders did believe on Jesus; but Satan kept them from acknowledging it; they feared the reproach of the people more than they feared God.

What was it that melted those hardened men who had been sent to arrest Christ, but who returned without Him? The answer is written in these words:

“...they were melted by His words...”

—and,

“They saw Him filled with sympathy and compassion, as He witnessed human woe.”

Compassion is an expression of love. Therefore, in this incident is revealed the principle that truth and love prevail over sin. Those who have never experienced this extraordinary, prevailing power may find it difficult to understand how truth and love can exert such an influence as to melt into forgetfulness of their duty, officers who were supposed to arrest the Saviour. This was a remarkable demonstration of the effectiveness of that power by which Christ was preserved from arrest on that notable day.

Those who have learned by experience that truth and love are the prevailing power, will have no difficulty in understanding how Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego were able to gain complete exemption from giving an expression of loyalty to idol worship by eating of the king's food at his table.

It would be safe to say that King Nebuchadnezzar was melted by their words of truth and love when he examined them. It was a new experience for him and would have been a refreshing change from the tense atmosphere of court life.

Daniel and his friends were experiencing the fulfillment of the Lord's promise of protection which is recorded among other places in these words:

Psalm 34

⁷ The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.

Without recourse to the use of force, God is well able to surround His people with perfect protection from the deadliest and most powerful of foes. There are many instances recorded in Bible history of these providential deliverances, but one of the most amazing is that connected with the Jews' attendance at the annual feasts, of which we read:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 537:

The people were surrounded by fierce, warlike tribes, that were eager to seize upon their lands; yet three times every year all the able-bodied men and all the people who could make the journey were directed to leave their homes and repair to the place of assembly, near the center of the land. What was to hinder their enemies from sweeping down upon those unprotected households, to lay them waste with fire and sword? What was to prevent an invasion of the land, that would bring Israel into captivity to some foreign foe? God had promised to be the protector of His people.

Psalm 34

⁷ The angel of Jehovah encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them.

While the Israelites went up to worship, divine power would place a restraint upon their enemies. God's promise was,

Exodus 34

²⁴ I will cast out the nations before you, and enlarge your borders: neither shall any man desire your land, when you shall go up to appear before the Lord your God thrice in the year.

Not all the Godless respond to the prevailing power of truth and love as did those sent to arrest Christ, or as King Nebuchadnezzar did. There are those who have become so hardened by their repeated rejections of truth and love that there is nothing left in them to answer to the call of the Holy Spirit. Nero was one who came to this hopeless condition.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 462-463:

Nowhere could there exist an atmosphere more uncongenial to Christianity than in the Roman court. Nero seemed to have obliterated from his soul the last trace of the divine, and even of the human, and to bear the impress of Satan. His attendants and courtiers were in general of the same character as himself—fierce, debased, and corrupt. To all appearance it would be impossible for Christianity to gain a foothold in the court and palace of Nero.

Limited Communion = Limited Power

Every believer in Jesus possesses a measure of truth and love and therefore of prevailing power, but laments that there is so little manifestation of the power and glory experienced by the great men of Bible history. Limited results are due to limited power, and limited power bespeaks limited communion with God.

An excellent lesson teaching this truth emerges from the shadows gathered round the base of the Mount of Transfiguration. With Peter, James, and John, Jesus had climbed upward until far into the night. When He had reached a certain point, He devoted the remainder of the night to deep earnest communion with His Father. There was a special purpose for His devoting this time to prayer. It was due to His realization that:

The Desire of Ages, p. 420:

He must himself gain a fresh hold on Omnipotence, for only thus can He contemplate the future.

Powerful and wonderful as had been the victories gained through the power of truth and love during His battles against the devil up to this point in time, without a fresh hold on divine power, He could not even contemplate the terrible future which awaited Him. Taking a fresh hold on Omnipotence meant taking hold of a fresh charge of the prevailing power of truth and love. Without this endowment, He could not face the future equipped with the faith and courage which were essential to certain victory.

Let it not be forgotten that truth and love are not an optional prevailing power, but are the prevailing power. There are no alternatives. Therefore, we need to cultivate and strengthen this power until our wills become omnipotent. To some it may seem too much to speak of the human will as being omnipotent, but Inspiration does speak in these terms as follows:

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 333:

As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings.

When Christ returned from His night on the mountain, the remaining nine disciples were waiting for Him. These were in that sad state of defeat which declared that truth and love were lacking. These spiritual gifts were not present as the prevailing power to conquer evil and to defeat its author. This was a simple case needing only the forces of truth and love to prevail over the unclean spirit no matter how powerful that evil one might have been.

The Desire of Ages, p. 427:

While they were waiting at the foot of the mountain, a father had brought to them his son, to be delivered from a dumb spirit that tormented him. Authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, had been conferred on the disciples when Jesus sent out the

twelve to preach through Galilee. As they went forth strong in faith, the evil spirits had obeyed their word.

Now in the name of Christ they commanded the torturing spirit to leave his victim; but the demon only mocked them by a fresh display of his power. The disciples, unable to account for their defeat, felt that they were bringing dishonor upon themselves and their Master. And in the crowd there were scribes who made the most of this opportunity to humiliate them. Pressing around the disciples, they plied them with questions, seeking to prove that they and their Master were deceivers.

“Here,” the rabbis triumphantly declared, was an evil spirit that neither the disciples nor Christ himself could conquer.”

The people were inclined to side with the scribes, and a feeling of contempt and scorn pervaded the crowd.

To Christ, triumphing over the demon was no problem, for, after the night of prayer, He was charged with the prevailing power of truth and love and was thus well able to be in total command of the situation. But to Christ’s disciples the strange absence of prevailing power which they had previously known so well was a mystery.

The rabbis scornfully attributed the defeat to their claim that here was an extraordinarily powerful evil spirit which was too strong even for Christ to defeat. The people were inclined to side with the rabbis. The disciples did not know what to think. The rabbis and the people generally were quite mistaken in their conclusions, nor could the disciples of Christ find a satisfactory solution to their problem.

When the father brought the son to Jesus upon His arrival at the base of the mountain, the demon turned on an incredible performance, as described in these words:

The Desire of Ages, p. 428-429:

The boy was brought, and as the Saviour’s eyes fell upon him, the evil spirit cast him to the ground in convulsions of agony. He lay wallowing and foaming, rending the air with unearthly shrieks....For a moment, Jesus permitted the evil spirit to display

his power, that the beholders might comprehend the deliverance about to be wrought....

Jesus turns to the suffering one, and says,

Mark 9

²⁵ You dumb and deaf spirit, I charge you, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

There is a cry, an agonized struggle. The demon, in passing, seems about to rend the life from his victim. Then the boy lies motionless, and apparently lifeless. The multitude whisper,

²⁶ He is dead.

But Jesus takes him by the hand, and lifting him up, presents him, in perfect soundness of mind and body, to his father. Father and son praise the name of their Deliverer. The multitude are “amazed at the mighty power of God,”³⁶ while the scribes, defeated and crestfallen, turn sullenly away.

Such is the prevailing power of truth and love, such was the victory it gained that day, and this example explains how Daniel and his friends were able to choose what they ate and drank against the will of the mightiest king on the earth at that time, without losing their lives in the attempt.

But for the disciples, it was no day of praise to God, at least initially, but one of misery and defeat. However, after the first shock was over and in love the Master had explained to them the truth in regard to their failure to win the victory, their hearts were warmed and cheered by the prevailing ministry of truth and love which Jesus then administered to them that day. Then they became wiser and happier men.

The instruction Christ gave His disciples in response to their question as to why they could not handle the situation is very applicable today. Here is that part of the story:

The Desire of Ages, p. 429-431:

The nine disciples were yet pondering upon the bitter fact of their own failure; and when Jesus was once more alone with them, they questioned,

³⁶ *Luke 9:43.*

Matthew 17

¹⁹ Why could not we cast him out?

Jesus answered them,

²⁰ Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

²¹ Howbeit this kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting.

Their unbelief, that shut them out from deeper sympathy with Christ, and the carelessness with which they regarded the sacred work committed to them, had caused their failure in the conflict with the powers of darkness.

The words of Christ pointing to His death had brought sadness and doubt. And the selection of the three disciples to accompany Jesus to the mountain had excited the jealousy of the nine. Instead of strengthening their faith by prayer and meditation on the words of Christ, they had been dwelling on their discouragements and personal grievances. In this state of darkness they had undertaken the conflict with Satan.

In order to succeed in such a conflict they must come to the work in a different spirit. Their faith must be strengthened by fervent prayer and fasting, and humiliation of heart. They must be emptied of self, and be filled with the Spirit and power of God. Earnest, persevering supplication to God in faith—faith that leads to entire dependence upon God, and unreserved consecration to His work—can alone avail to bring men the Holy Spirit's aid in the battle against principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and wicked spirits in high places.

Matthew 17

²⁰ If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, [said Jesus,] you shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove.

Though the grain of mustard seed is so small, it contains that same mysterious life principle which produces growth in the loftiest tree. When the mustard seed is cast into the ground, the tiny germ lays hold of every element that God has provided for its nutriment, and it speedily develops a sturdy growth.

If you have faith like this, you will lay hold upon God's word, and upon all the helpful agencies He has appointed. Thus your faith will strengthen, and will bring to your aid the power of

heaven. The obstacles that are piled by Satan across your path, though apparently as insurmountable as the eternal hills, shall disappear before the demand of faith.

Matthew 17

²⁰ Nothing shall be impossible unto you.

This glorious promise is for those who possess and apply the prevailing power of truth and love. Therefore it was for Daniel and his fellows. When we carefully consider their achievement, we find it to be one of incredible magnitude and one by which we can be inspired to strive to succeed as they did. In the light of their inflexible faithfulness and the assertion of their right to serve God according to the authority of His word, the prevailing power of truth and love takes on a new and refreshing meaning.

A Strong Beginning

The matter of what they were to eat and drink was settled at the very beginning of their concentrated course of study in King Nebuchadnezzar's University. The beginning is usually the only place where such questions can be settled. Generally speaking it is not safe to proceed with anything while knowingly obeying wrong policies with the idea of waiting for a more favorable opportunity to obey the truth. The better day on which to announce your real position fails to arrive, and you find yourself the prisoner of circumstances.

The promptness with which the four young men addressed the question of what they should eat and drink was a major factor in their winning the consent of the prince of the eunuchs to eat vegetarian food. These four men knew that they could not touch flesh foods, especially those which had been offered to idols. Knowing and believing this truth was the first vital step on the way to victory, and the second step was to take an irrevocable stand in support of that truth.

Finally, they very courteously and respectfully explained their principles to those in command and requested and obtained exemption. The young men of God, by following these steps, did not know whether their noble, unflinching stand would be taken at

the cost of their lives or not, but they did not permit that to affect their attitude in the least.

Prophets and Kings, p. 482-483:

Had Daniel so desired, he might have found in his surroundings a plausible excuse for departing from strictly temperate habits. He might have argued that, dependent as he was on the king's favor and subject to his power, there was no other course for him to pursue than to eat of the king's food and drink of his wine; for should he adhere to the divine teaching, he would offend the king and probably lose his position and his life. Should he disregard the commandment of the Lord, he would retain the favor of the king and secure for himself intellectual advantages and flattering worldly prospects.

But Daniel did not hesitate. The approval of God was dearer to him than the favor of the most powerful earthly potentate—dearer than life itself. He determined to stand firm in his integrity, let the result be what it might.

Daniel 1

⁸ [He] purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank.

And in this resolve he was supported by his three companions.

The result was that the way was cleared for God to bless them mightily with physical, mental, and spiritual powers of extraordinary excellence, as we read:

Daniel 1

¹⁷ As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

God did not give them knowledge and skill as direct handouts with no effort being expended on their part. On the contrary, they had to work with the greatest diligence in order to achieve the results that they did. But they were disposed to work very hard with never a profitless, wasted moment. They did not waste the priceless hours of time in the pursuit of pointless pleasures of one kind or another, but put them to the best possible use.

The foundation on which mental and spiritual excellence can be built is the physical nature. A sound mind in a sound body is what is needed. An impure bloodstream produces dulled senses, limited reasoning powers, a faulty memory, a slowing down of responses to questions requiring immediate attention, and in all, a susceptibility to disease and a steady lowering of efficiency.

The faithful four could not afford such handicaps in lives grappling with weighty eternal issues, nor can we in these final days of human history when the man of sin will be fully and finally defeated, never to rise again.

21. Daniel, the Student Prophet

Messenger and News Review, July 1995

Daniel 1:17-21

THE total, uncompromising abstinence from all flesh foods continued to be the stand taken by Daniel and his three companions in the truth. There was no further debate over the question at the official level. The convincing physical, mental, social, and spiritual evidences of their superior way of life attended them every day. When the great examination day came, there were none like them to be found in the entire world. Of that day it is written:

Prophets and Kings, p. 485:

At the court of Babylon were gathered representatives from all lands, men of the highest talent, men the most richly endowed with natural gifts, and possessed of the broadest culture that the world could bestow; yet among them all, the Hebrew youth were without a peer. In physical strength and beauty, in mental vigor and literary attainment, they stood unrivaled. The erect form, the firm, elastic step, the fair countenance, the undimmed senses, the untainted breath—all were so many certificates of good habits, insignia of the nobility with which nature honors those who are obedient to her laws.

Daniel is one of the greatest of the prophets which is evident when we study the great prophetic outlines gathered together under his name in the Old Testament Scriptures and match them with the revelations given to John in the New Testament. In the study of the book of *Daniel*, the prophecy of the great image is often regarded as marking the beginning of his career as a prophet.

Growing in Grace and Knowledge

However, this special endowment of power began to be conferred on him during the period of his secular education in Babylon. Of this we read:

Daniel 1

¹⁷ As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

The reference to Daniel's having understanding in all visions and dreams, refers to his being endowed with the gift of prophecy during the time leading up to the great examination day.

Prophets and Kings, p. 484:

The Lord regarded with approval the firmness and self-denial of the Hebrew youth, and their purity of motive; and His blessing attended them.

Daniel 1

¹⁷ [He] gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

The promise was fulfilled,

1 Samuel 2

³⁰ Them that honor me I will honor.

As Daniel clung to God with unwavering trust, the spirit of prophetic power came upon him. While receiving instruction from man in the duties of court life, he was being taught by God to read the mysteries of the future and to record for coming generations, through figures and symbols, events covering the history of this world till the close of time.

The understanding of visions and dreams referred to in verse seventeen is the result of being trained by God. For a period of time Daniel was a student prophet. This is revealed in the quotation above where it says that he was being taught to read the mysteries of the future and to record future events.

During this time he did not fully understand what would come to pass, but his understanding and skill steadily improved. He was becoming a better and better prophet. While still a student in Nebuchadnezzar's school, Daniel was also a student of the Kings of kings and eventually graduated from being a student prophet to becoming a full-fledged prophet.

In learning to understand the rise and fall of nations and of the individuals who led them, it is safe to say that Daniel's mind was

directed by his divine Teacher to the beginning of the great controversy where he clearly saw the characters and objectives of the two leaders, Christ and Satan. From that time forward he would have seen how the issues of the great controversy were contested over and over again and how faithfulness makes one invincible, while apostasy always ends in death.

Thus he did not share with King Nebuchadnezzar his temporal visions of glory and grandeur for Babylon. Though this kingdom was powerful and rich with mighty armies and a heavily fortified city, Daniel saw the certainty of its being overthrown. All the self-destructive elements were in place. Unless she should repent to the uttermost depths, it was only a matter of time for terrible retribution to overtake her.

With ever increasing clarity this view of the future of that great nation exercised his mind. Therefore, he quite correctly laid no foundations for his faith in that kingdom with its golden metropolis so soon to pass away. He perceived that, furthermore, the same fate would overtake any and every nation which followed her. Nothing was more certain. Only the kingdom built by God could and would endure forever.

We too must become highly educated students of history, well able to correctly understand the principles which declare the termination of one nation and rise of another. In this light, consider the following statement:

Education, p. 190:

The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonis-

tic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found.

Well would it be for us and our children and youth, if we too would walk so closely and so faithfully with God that we could receive light directly from heaven as Daniel and his companions did!

The Review and Herald, November 6, 1883:

Daniel's companions, also, resolutely denied selfish desires, and put away hurtful gratifications. As a result, their minds became strong and vigorous. They chose the real, the true, and the useful, rather than the momentary indulgence of appetite and pride. They did all in their power to place themselves in right relation to God, and the Lord was not unmindful of their firm, persevering, earnest effort. The Scriptures declare of Daniel and his fellows:

Daniel 1

¹⁷ As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

These youth had placed themselves in connection with the Source of all wisdom. They learned of Christ, the world's greatest teacher. While improving their opportunities to obtain a knowledge of the sciences, they were obtaining, also, the highest education which it is possible for mortals to receive. They received light directly from the throne of Heaven, and read the mysteries of God for future ages.

As it was later spoken of Jesus that He increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man,³⁷ so it must have been with the faithful four. Certain it was that they were highly favored by their heavenly Father. In turn, they were greatly favored by the king of the world, King Nebuchadnezzar.

Persecution

But it is sure that they were not received with gladness by every one, for it is an inescapable truth that:

³⁷ *Luke 2:52.*

2 Timothy 3

¹² All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

In one comment on this statement it is written:

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 29:

He who came to redeem the lost world was opposed by the united forces of the adversaries of God and man. In an un pitying confederacy, evil men and evil angels arrayed themselves against the Prince of Peace. Though His every word and act breathed of divine compassion, His unlikeness to the world provoked the bitterest hostility. Because He would give no license for the exercise of the evil passions of our nature, He aroused the fiercest opposition and enmity.

So it is with all who will live godly in Christ Jesus. Between righteousness and sin, love and hatred, truth and falsehood, there is an irrepressible conflict. When one presents the love of Christ and the beauty of holiness, he is drawing away the subjects of Satan's kingdom, and the prince of evil is aroused to resist it. Persecution and reproach await all who are imbued with the Spirit of Christ. The character of the persecution changes with the times, but the principle—the spirit that underlies it—is the same that has slain the chosen of the Lord ever since the days of Abel.

Nothing by way of persecution of the faithful four during their period of special training is mentioned in the Bible, but we can be certain that, in the light of the principle spelled out in the paragraph quoted above, there were many among their associates who made their way as difficult as possible. Because their enemies had to be exceedingly careful how they behaved, in view of the all-powerful presence and authority of the king, it must be expected that most of the persecution was subtle, difficult to detect, and hard to control. But it would have been there, for they lived truly godly lives such as would stir up the enmity of those steeped in the ways of Babylon.

The principle that all those who would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, knows no exceptions save one. Only in a society in which every member is himself successfully living

a godly life, is there no persecution. True believers in Jesus never persecute other believers in Jesus. For that matter they do not persecute anyone at any time or under any circumstances! On the contrary, persecution is an identifying mark of the man of sin, so much so, that wherever it appears, we can know the antichrist is already present. And if it is present, it will seek to establish its presence and purposes by whatever cruel and heartless measures it may have at its command.

The question now arises as to why it is that people resort to persecution in order to gain their objectives? In the first case, persecution is not the first resort to which Babylon turns in a religious conflict. That is verified in the following statement:

The Signs of the Times, May 6, 1897:

Trial and persecution will come to all who, in obedience to the Word of God, refuse to worship this false sabbath. Force is the last resort of every false religion. At first it tries attraction, as the king of Babylon tried the power of music and outward show. If these attractions, invented by men inspired by Satan, failed to make men worship the image, the hungry flames of the furnace were ready to consume them.

So it will be now. The papacy has exercised her power to compel men to obey her, and she will continue to do so. We need the same spirit that was manifested by God's servants in the conflict with paganism.

It is during the earlier stages of a developing apostasy that the spirit of the persecutor begins to assert itself. As a world-loving church starts to build God's kingdom, man's way, they view this way with ever increasing favor. Expediency takes the place of principle, and nothing is permitted to stop this new movement. God does not abandon His faithful ones who protest these changes, but commissions them to send messages of warning and reproof. As time passes, a mounting hostility is directed against these servants.

In the same manner Cain exercised hostility against Abel when he discovered that the Lord would not accept his way of kingdom building. He had come with the offering of his own choosing in-

stead of the required sacrifice as specified in the plan of salvation. Now the poor man, Cain, had a very real problem, the solution to which was to repent of his self-sufficiency, abandon his own ways, and return in peace to building God's kingdom, God's way.

But such is the perversity of rebellious, human nature, that Cain decided it was too difficult to submit to God's will. What he did instead was entirely irrational, for it only served to increase the problem, not solve it. His righteous brother, Abel, by his pure and holy life, was a witness to the only way in which God's kingdom could be rebuilt, but in his blind, unreasoning anger, Cain slew his brother, Abel. Thereby he sought to silence the voice of conscience, however, such an act could not do this but only made matters worse.

Cain can be likened to a man who was oppressed by the excessive heat one summer day. He paused to read the thermometer and did not like what it told him. So he took a hammer and smashed it. By this action, nothing was changed. Breaking the glass did not lower the temperature which remained as high as before.

When Cain murdered his brother, he failed to identify the source of the problem which was the spirit of rebellion within himself. While that was there, there was no hope that God would accept his offering, for it was the proposal that God's kingdom should be built according to human principles and methods. It was an unacceptable statement to this effect.

Slaying Abel did not change Cain in the least. He could have responded to God's loving call to truly repent and bring a different, acceptable statement in the form of a slain lamb. To have done that would have attacked the problem at its roots. Then, instead of the persecutor seeking to kill the righteous whom he imagined was the cause of his calamities, he would have concentrated his efforts on discovering what it was within himself that was the true source of the threat to his continued existence. If all men understood and practiced this principle, persecution would be as entirely non-existent as it is in heaven.

In the cases of the faithful four young Hebrews they would have experienced persecution in various forms. In addition to ridicule and false accusation they might have even suffered physical violence. Whatever persecution was directed against the Hebrew youth, it was a great blessing to them, for it enabled them to understand through personal experience and close observation the real character and operational procedures of the greatest persecuting body Satan has ever produced so far—the papacy of the Middle Ages.

Later, after Daniel had left his student days behind him and had received the light contained in chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, he was able by the ministry of the Holy Spirit to discern why the divine Teacher had laid the foundations of truth on this subject deeply and strongly. He was able to recognize the wisdom of his heavenly Tutor in placing side by side with the education being provided by the Babylonians, the light sent to him direct from heaven.

Thus he was able to understand the mystery of iniquity to the point where he could clearly see that it is an abomination of desolation so corrupt and so destructive, as to be self-terminating. By this means he came to understand that the only way in which the evil can be exposed at its unlovely worst, is when it is placed side by side with righteousness at its radiant, beautiful best.

Toward this objective all the agencies in heavenly places are working in harmonious partnership and devote their combined energies in the certain knowledge that when this purpose is attained, the end will surely come.

Of course, Satan will do all in his power to frustrate God's purposes, and in this he will seemingly be successful time after time. His major weapon in attempting to destroy God's people is deception. This is iterated and reiterated in one prophetic revelation after another. Here is a typical scripture witnessing to this truth:

2 Thessalonians 2

⁹ The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

¹⁰ And with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

His second weapon is the use of force, the possession of which enables our great enemy to put every kind of pressure upon us. Thus the people of the Lord will find themselves robbed of houses, lands, money, freedom, friends, and, in many cases, of life itself. Millions have been martyred in the past, and many more are yet to follow.

Selected Messages, vol. 3, p. 397:

The two armies will stand distinct and separate, and this distinction will be so marked that many who shall be convinced of the truth will come on the side of God's commandment-keeping people. When this grand work is to take place in the battle, prior to the last closing conflict, many will be imprisoned, many will flee for their lives from cities and towns, and many will be martyrs for Christ's sake in standing in defense of the truth....You will not be tempted above what you are able to bear. Jesus bore all this and far more.

No matter what form it takes, persecution is a painful experience. Human beings can be unbelievably cruel to their fellowmen when it comes to using torture continued over a lengthy period of time. From such terrible treatment the humanity of God's people naturally recoils. We much prefer a quiet life free from being deprived, reviled, hated, and finally murdered. But Jesus said that those who are persecuted are blessed. Here are His words to this effect:

Matthew 5

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake.

¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

If we cannot find a blessing in being persecuted, then there is cause for the gravest concern. We must realize that our personal religious experience is in need of genuine restoration.

One blessing which comes to the people of God by their suffering persecution is that the Church of God becomes delivered from unsanctified individuals who are not willing to heed the divine counsels and reproofs, and who therefore are an ongoing source of unrest among the true believers. The mixed multitude who came out of Egypt with the Israelites is an instance of this problem.

The present is a period of marvelous religious liberty in a large part of the earth. It can be said that this is the fruit of the hard fought battles by which Protestantism vanquished the papacy. It certainly has been a different world since those victories were gained. But despite this, the principle is still valid that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.

The Great Controversy, p. 48:

There is another and more important question that should engage the attention of the churches of today. The apostle Paul declares that:

2 Timothy 3

¹² All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Why is it, then, that persecution seems in a great degree to slumber? The only reason is that the church has conformed to the world's standard and therefore awakens no opposition. The religion which is current in our day is not of the pure and holy character that marked the Christian faith in the days of Christ and His apostles. It is only because of the spirit of compromise with sin, because the great truths of the word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is so little vital godliness in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular with the world. Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled.

This is unequivocal language! It states, not that there are a number of reasons why persecution slumbers, but that there is

only one. There has been a falling away from the pure and holy character which marked the Christianity of Christ and His apostles. That is why modern religion is seemingly so popular with the world. But in reality the truth is no more popular with the world than it was in Christ's days on earth. When God's people completely forsake their love of the world and recover their grasp on the power of living truth, then they shall certainly see a reawakening of the fury of the persecutor.

Educated in the Principles of the Great Controversy

All these things Daniel and his friends came to understand by the light dawning upon them directly from heaven. As they sat by their classmates who were struggling to understand history and how present events were shaping the future, they comprehended, as the others with unenlightened minds could not, just where the great play and counter play of the forces of good and evil were leading them. In the light of heaven's principles of living truth, their education was logical, simple, and comprehensible because, with clear minds worked by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they could and did penetrate the mystery of godliness and of iniquity.

There is revealed in this report of events in the Babylonian palace an incredible gap between the faithful four and any of the other highly educated men throughout the world. The story reminds us of Jesus who, as a boy of twelve, demonstrated an understanding of truth which the best theological minds of His day did not have. A careful comparative study of the training of Jesus and the faithful four would reveal that they all gained their knowledge in the same way.

Daniel 1 closes with what would most likely be regarded as being a relatively pointless statement in view of the context of high drama surrounding the achievement, but there is a powerful message in those few words.

At the beginning of the establishment of Nebuchadnezzar's glorious golden empire, every appearance proclaimed an enduring

permanence of Babylonian world domination. The four faithful Hebrews on the other hand were extremely few in number and power. Anyone who had not the divine education of Daniel and his friends would have scoffed at the idea of Babylon's falling so completely that she could never rise again forever. But soon, very soon she would be nothing more than a memory, while Daniel would remain alive and in command wherever he might be. Babylon died. God's kingdom continued.

Let us then not miss the message in the words:

Daniel 1

²¹ Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.

As surely as he lived beyond the death of Babylon, so certainly does he live today in the light God gave through him, and this light will never pass away.

22. God Makes a Master Plan

Messenger and News Review, August 1995

Daniel 2:1-11

A STUDY of the second chapter of *Daniel* reveals that God had worked out a wonderful plan designed to convert and save the king of Babylon and his city and secure the release of the children of Israel so they could rebuild the city of Jerusalem and re-institute the services in the temple.

Bible history reveals that He was brilliantly successful in most of these objectives. Wherein He was not so successful was due to man's failure, not His.

- Nebuchadnezzar was completely converted;
- The kingdom was preserved from premature destruction; and
- God's people were preserved, released, and permitted to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.

It is true that this last objective was achieved after the fall of Babylon, yet the way was prepared for it before the great city fell.

Not Numbers, but Faith Required

In order for the plan to be successful to the point where at least some of the most important objectives were realized—the release of the children of Israel, the rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem, and the reinstituting of the sacrificial system—God had to have an utterly reliable army who could be counted on never to betray the cause of truth no matter what the cost might be. Numbers would not be the important thing, for the Lord can save by many or by few.

Jonathan, son of the first king of Israel and a young man of great faith, understood this principle and expressed it in these words to his armor bearer who was also a man of considerable faith:

1 Samuel 14

⁶ Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the Lord will work for us. For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few.

We are told that Jonathan was moved by a divine impulse in proposing the attack on the garrison of the Philistines. The idea was God's, not Jonathan's. Understanding that all God's biddings are enablings, he knew that victory was assured. Acting upon this conviction by living faith, he thereby gained the mighty victory which would have been given to his father if the latter had not been rebellious and disobedient:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 623:

God had permitted matters to be thus brought to a crisis that He might rebuke the perversity of Saul and teach His people a lesson of humility and faith. Because of Saul's sin in his presumptuous offering, the Lord would not give him the honor of vanquishing the Philistines. Jonathan, the king's son, a man who feared the Lord, was chosen as the instrument to deliver Israel. Moved by a divine impulse, he proposed to his armor-bearer that they should make a secret attack upon the enemy's camp.

1 Samuel 14

⁶ It may be, [he urged,] that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.

The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1, p. 358-359:

He [God] moved upon the heart of Jonathan, a righteous man, and his armor-bearer, to go over to the garrison of the Philistines. Jonathan believed that God was able to work for them, and to save by many or by few. He did not rush up presumptuously. He asked counsel of God, and then, with a fearless heart, trusting in Him alone, moved forward. Through these two men, the Lord accomplished His work of subduing the Philistines. He sent angels to protect Jonathan and his armor-bearer, and to shield them from the instruments of death in the hands of their enemies.

This may seem to be an extraordinary victory but it was nothing other than a normal outworking of God's promise of how He

will deal with the enemies of His people. Here is one of those promises as made to the obedient, such as the four young Hebrews held captive in Babylon. Most importantly, so far as we are concerned, this promise is especially applicable to those who will be formed into the Daniel's band of the last days. Here is God's assurance to His people at such a time:

Deuteronomy 28

⁷ The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.

The Lord is a Man of War

These words are literally true, and those of God's people who are attacked by their deadly foes are to claim this promise on condition of faith and obedience. We know the promise is true, firstly because it is the faithful word of the Almighty God who is the actual embodiment of the truth and therefore cannot lie, and secondly because the fulfillments recorded in history have been all that the Lord has promised. The enemies of God's people have come against them one way and then have been scattered seven ways.

One of those terrible occasions when the enemies of God's people set out to destroy them was shortly after the martyrdoms of Huss and Jerome. At that time the people of God in Bohemia were threatened with extinction by the combined forces of the papacy and the emperor. It seemed that, for the people of God, everything was lost and that they were left without hope.

The Great Controversy, p. 116-117:

But a deliverer was raised up. Ziska, who soon after the opening of the war became totally blind, yet who was one of the ablest generals of his age, was the leader of the Bohemians. Trusting in the help of God and the righteousness of their cause, that people withstood the mightiest armies that could be brought against them. Again and again the emperor, raising fresh armies, invaded Bohemia, only to be ignominiously repulsed. The Hussites were raised above the fear of death, and nothing could stand against them. A few years after the opening

of the war, the brave Ziska died; but his place was filled by Procopius, who was an equally brave and skillful general, and in some respects a more able leader.

The enemies of the Bohemians, knowing that the blind warrior was dead, deemed the opportunity favorable for recovering all that they had lost. The pope now proclaimed a crusade against the Hussites, and again an immense force was precipitated upon Bohemia, but only to suffer terrible defeat.

Another crusade was proclaimed. In all the papal countries of Europe, men, money, and munitions of war were raised. Multitudes flocked to the papal standard, assured that at last an end would be made of the Hussite heretics. Confident of victory, the vast force entered Bohemia. The people rallied to repel them. The two armies approached each other until only a river lay between them.

“The crusaders were in greatly superior force, but instead of dashing across the stream, and closing in battle with the Hussites whom they had come so far to meet, they stood gazing in silence at those warriors.” (Wylie, b. 3, ch. 17).

Then suddenly a mysterious terror fell upon the host. Without striking a blow, that mighty force broke and scattered as if dispelled by an unseen power. Great numbers were slaughtered by the Hussite army, which pursued the fugitives, and an immense booty fell into the hands of the victors, so that the war, instead of impoverishing, enriched the Bohemians.

A few years later, under a new pope, still another crusade was set on foot. As before, men and means were drawn from all the papal countries of Europe. Great were the inducements held out to those who should engage in this perilous enterprise. Full forgiveness of the most heinous crimes was ensured to every crusader. All who died in the war were promised a rich reward in heaven, and those who survived were to reap honor and riches on the field of battle.

Again a vast army was collected, and, crossing the frontier they entered Bohemia. The Hussite forces fell back before them, thus drawing the invaders farther and farther into the country, and leading them to count the victory already won. At last the army of Procopius made a stand, and turning upon the foe, ad-

vanced to give them battle. The crusaders, now discovering their mistake, lay in their encampment awaiting the onset.

As the sound of the approaching force was heard, even before the Hussites were in sight, a panic again fell upon the crusaders. Princes, generals, and common soldiers, casting away their armor, fled in all directions. In vain the papal legate, who was the leader of the invasion, endeavored to rally his terrified and disorganized forces. Despite his utmost endeavors, he himself was swept along in the tide of fugitives. The rout was complete, and again an immense booty fell into the hands of the victors.

These were certainly occasions when the enemies of God's people came out against them one way, only to flee before them seven ways. These are not the only times when the enemies of God's children thought the time was opportune for an attack, only to have their plans turned upside down.

God's people have not always emerged as unscathed as did Jonathan and his armor-bearer, the Bohemians, and others. There have been times when, though their eternal lives were preserved, they were called upon to sacrifice their physical lives as in the case of Abel. This needs to be kept in mind lest we begin to think that there is no possibility that we will be called upon to die in support of God's cause.

But we can be assured that the people of the last days, though suffering immense anguish, will realize the fulfillment of the promise that their enemies will be scattered. Here is a description of the way in which that promise will be fulfilled:

The Great Controversy, p. 630-631:

Could men see with heavenly vision, they would behold companies of angels that excel in strength stationed about those who have kept the word of Christ's patience. With sympathizing tenderness, angels have witnessed their distress and have heard their prayers. They are waiting the word of their Commander to snatch them from their peril. But they must wait yet a little longer. The people of God must drink of the cup and be baptized with the baptism.

The very delay, so painful to them, is the best answer to their petitions. As they endeavor to wait trustingly for the Lord to

work they are led to exercise faith, hope, and patience, which have been too little exercised during their religious experience. Yet for the elect's sake the time of trouble will be shortened.

Luke 18

⁷ Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him?

⁸ I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.

The end will come more quickly than men expect. The wheat will be gathered and bound in sheaves for the garner of God; the tares will be bound as fagots for the fires of destruction.

The heavenly sentinels, faithful to their trust, continue their watch. Though a general decree has fixed the time when commandment keepers may be put to death, their enemies will in some cases anticipate the decree, and before the time specified, will endeavor to take their lives. But none can pass the mighty guardians stationed about every faithful soul. Some are assailed in their flight from the cities and villages; but the swords raised against them break and fall powerless as a straw. Others are defended by angels in the form of men of war.

When shielded by God against our enemies after the manner described in these two paragraphs, what need do we have for any other protection? Surely this is more than adequate.

Qualifications for God's Army

When God formed a perfect plan for the deliverance of Israel from Babylon, the first stages of which He initiated in Daniel's day, He made it clear that great numbers were not essential for Him to gain the victory. This He demonstrated by working through an army consisting of only four young men—Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

These He pitted against the pitiless might of Babylon then at the height of her glory and standing at the fullness of her power. It was four against all the immense military, religious, economic, and social power available on command by the king and his officers. It seemed to be an unfair imbalance in favor of the Babylonians, whereas the balance of power was infinitely in favor of God and His people.

While numbers power was not a factor, absolute reliability and undeviating steadfastness was and still is. Those four Christian soldiers had to be absolutely steadfast and unyielding in the face of fearful temptation, unbending under the incredible pressures upon them, and committed to lives of perfect obedience. In short they needed to be so dependable that they could be relied upon to stand firm no matter how threatened their lives or their persons might be.

And stand firm they truly did. There is no record of their making a misstep, yielding to temptation, manifesting unbelief, being fearful, compromising with evil, or in any other way sacrificing principle in order to save themselves. Here were men who could be flawlessly relied upon never to betray their Lord even though it might cost them their lives.

At this time in the history of the great controversy God is working to produce a perfect re-enactment of the same spiritual objectives He accomplished back then. To do so, He must find people as trustworthy as were those humble Hebrews. Utter reliability and unbending faithfulness are the requirements.

Education, p. 57:

The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.

Do you wish to qualify for membership in the Lord's last army, the 144,000? Then those are the qualifications.

The Battle Begins

In the land of Babylon, in the court of its mighty king, the battle-field had been chosen by the Lord. The opening move was the presentation of a dream of great significance about which the mighty monarch could remember nothing. In his perplexity he turned to the most intelligent and educated people of his realm,

the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and Chaldeans to explain to him the meaning of his dream.³⁸

According to their claims the king expected them to describe both the dream and its interpretation, and was exceedingly angry when they were forced to admit that they could not do so. Here is the Bible record of that event:

Daniel 2

¹ Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him.

² Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams.

³ So they came and stood before the king. And the king said to them, I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream.

⁴ Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation.

⁵ The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap.

⁶ However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.

They had satisfied the king very well up to this point by providing him with interpretations of his many dreams. This was a safe and simple matter, for once they knew what he had dreamed, they could easily invent an interpretation of it that would be pleasing to his pride and vanity, and strengthen his feeling of security. They also had recourse to spiritualism in which case Satan, who can predict the future to some degree, could give them a plausible interpretation.

³⁸ See *Daniel 2:2*.

But never in the past had they ever encountered such a test as this. They, mere fallible humans, were expected to enter into the secrets of the king's mind and tell him that which he himself did not know. Theirs was a very serious dilemma. They dared not invent a dream, for the king might suddenly recall the real one and, when the two did not match, they would be sure to lose their lives. They could not resort to spiritualism either in this case because Satan himself did not know what the dream was.

They were placed in a position where they were forced to speak the truth. All they could do was to admit and re-admit that they could not tell the dream and that they could interpret it only after its details had been made known to them. While they could supply an interpretation, it was worse than valueless because it was false and misleading. It was Daniel and not they who...

Daniel 1

¹⁷ ...had understanding in all visions and dreams.

The lordly monarch of the then-known world became suspicious that those men in his employment who claimed the power "to reveal the secrets of men" were, for some reason or another, withholding vital information from him. Accordingly he made great promises on the one hand on condition of telling him the dream and correctly interpreting it, and on the other he made the direst threat of total extermination should they refuse.

Prophets and Kings, p. 492:

Dissatisfied with their evasive answer, and suspicious because, despite their pretentious claims to reveal the secrets of men, they nevertheless seemed unwilling to grant him help, the king commanded his wise men, with promises of wealth and honor on the one hand, and threats of death on the other, to tell him not only the interpretation of the dream, but the dream itself.

Daniel 2

⁵ The thing is gone from me, [he said]: if you will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.

⁶ But if you show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, you shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor.

Either one of these was incentive enough to persuade the wise men of the world to provide the required information if they were able to do so. The problem was not that they would not, but that they could not. All that they could do was to truthfully admit that they were totally unable to meet the king's demands.

Babylon Faces Its Limitations

This they did repeatedly, but each remonstrance only served to increase the suspicion and anger of the king. He felt thoroughly betrayed by those in whom he had fully trusted. In the past he had never questioned the interpretations advanced by his wise men nor doubted their loyalty to him. Now by the simple means of giving the king a dream of great significance while withholding the memory of it, God had successfully revealed to the king that the Babylonian system was deficient. There was a limit, a boundary, beyond which it could not go. It was not the all-sufficient power that it had ever claimed to be.

The implications as they now began to open up before the king, were too frightening for him to think about. If it were true, as the king felt forced to admit, that Babylon fell short of being the complete answer to everything, then his kingdom and his beautiful city were doomed to a limited future and would certainly come to an end. As totally unacceptable as this thought was to the royal mind, it was true nonetheless. Babylon would not last forever. She would pass away. Another would take her place!

Thus the emerging message of *Daniel 2* was and forever will be that, great as Babylon might be in the eyes of those who love and serve her, when viewed in the context of the unlimited, boundless Creator and His marvelous created works, she is very limited indeed and far from being boundless.

It was in the Garden of Eden that mankind first permitted his judgment to be perverted into believing that Babylon, though not yet called by that name, was greater than God and would therefore outlive Him. By every means at her disposal she has continued to boastfully proclaim this monstrous lie, and will continue to

do so until her final unmasking and simultaneous utter annihilation. When that awesome moment comes, as it inescapably will, the ministers of the mysteries of modern Babylon will just as frankly and freely admit that Babylon, be she ancient or modern, is a deficient system which fails those who believe in her when their need is greatest.

No Direct Connection With God

So far we have not studied all that King Nebuchadnezzar's wise men had admitted. What now follows brings us to the real heart of the issue:

Daniel 2

¹⁰ The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean.

¹¹ It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

In this statement to the king, the wise men admitted that they had no connection with the omniscient God because their concept of all gods was that they do not dwell with flesh. The Babylonian disconnection from God is much more serious than deprivation of information—it is separation from life itself.

However God the Son came to dwell with us in flesh, even sinful flesh. That is the great difference between the Christian God and the Babylonian gods. Therefore the Christian has access through Jesus Christ to the secrets and powers of the Almighty. This Connection is unto life eternal and is what every true believer has. It was what God was likewise offering to King Nebuchadnezzar.

At this stage in the battle there was confusion in the ranks of the enemy. Suddenly, death hung over the wise men, the king was enraged, his pride wounded, and his mind deeply troubled. All this had been achieved by God without an arrow being shot, a stone being thrown, a cavalry charge being made, or any blood

being shed. The initial objective had been gained of preparing the king's mind to receive the mighty message contained in the dream and its interpretation.

That certainly was no small achievement to say the least. It involved God's capturing the king's attention and challenging his thinking to the point where he wanted nothing so much as an honest, truthful solution to the entire problem. A great danger which God succeeded in averting was a degeneration of the whole affair into a contentious argument between the king and his wise men in which case little if anything would have been achieved.

But the fact that the dream was forgotten made it so demanding of attention that the determined king would not rest until he was sure that he knew both what the dream actually was and its true interpretation. He would not be satisfied with suppositions but had to have positive facts. That is just what God wanted Him to have.

It was a masterpiece of successful plan-making and the execution thereof.

23. Men on Full Alert

Messenger and News Review, September 1995

Daniel 2:14-23

NOT only does God need men of the most solid, undeviating steadfastness as noted in the last chapter, but He also needs men who live in constant readiness to answer a sudden and unexpected call from Him no matter where, when, or what the cost. This state of maximum readiness in modern armies is described as being on full alert.

God found just that kind of troops in Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. While they knew that God had covenanted to restore a faithful remnant to the Promised Land, they did not know the details of each move before He made them. He did not tell them that they were to play key roles in a work designed to convert the Babylonian king. He did not warn them, nor did He need to, for they were constantly ready to serve at a moment's notice even unto death.

We are also admonished to be prepared at any moment, firstly to face the investigative judgment of those who have sent their sins on beforehand to that judgment, and secondly to be constantly ready for service so that no opportunity for furthering God's kingdom may be lost through our failure to be ever and always on full alert.

The encounters between the faithful four and Babylon will in principle be reenacted in the last days. While we have general ideas of what will transpire during those awesome times, we do not know the details of where, when, and how our roles and work will take place. But this much is certain, we cannot afford to make any mistakes during that coming period of time. Instead the lines of communication between us and the heavenly sources must be maintained and kept fully open all the time through living faith, strict obedience, constant prayer, and a spirit of totally dedicated self-sacrifice.

Such was the earthly life of Christ who made no plans for himself, depended on His Father to supply those plans on a daily basis, was therefore never caught by surprise, and always maintained the closest communion with the heavenly Source. Constantly on full spiritual alert, He never missed an opportunity to serve at His Father's direction.

The Desire of Ages, p. 147:

The words, "My hour is not yet come," point to the fact that every act of Christ's life on earth was in fulfillment of the plan that had existed from the days of eternity. Before He came to earth, the plan lay out before Him, perfect in all its details. But as He walked among men, He was guided, step by step, by the Father's will. He did not hesitate to act at the appointed time. With the same submission He waited until the time had come.

Such too was the continual state of Daniel and his three companions.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

So King Nebuchadnezzar had his dream as it is written:

Daniel 2

¹ Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him.

God had initiated the first steps in the drama which was soon to engulf the king's court without the four young Hebrews knowing anything about what was going on. They were also not summoned to the king's presence with the wise men of the realm. Apparently for these dedicated young men, the first intimation of approaching trouble came when they were told that they would be executed. Such a sentence was commonly handed out by enraged despots of those days. Those systems of government were merciless despotisms which maintained law and order by ruthless force. They were not the more merciful democracies with which we are familiar today.

The four young men very quickly assessed the situation and realized the grim truth that death was speedily overtaking them.

There was no time to spare, and under the perfect guidance of the Infallible Plan-maker and Problem-solver, they took the steps necessary to avert the fearful crisis. Daniel made a very calm and respectful reply to the king's representative and executioner, Arioch, who was also captain of the king's guard. There was no panic, no fear, and no attempt at flight on the part of the dedicated four:

Daniel 2

¹⁴ Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon;

¹⁵ He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree from the king so urgent? Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.

There are some interesting points which arise out of the developments considered so far. One of them is that, when the death sentence was pronounced on those unfortunate wise men, Daniel and his three friends were classified among them. For the purpose of the extermination of the astrologers, the magicians, and the Chaldeans, no distinction was made between these deceivers and God's true people. Satan, the ever-watching opportunist, was seeking to destroy the righteous with the wicked, whereas the effect of God's work through His faithful servants was to save the guilty with the innocent.

No doubt Satan was as taken by surprise as were the Hebrews, for God did not announce to him or anyone else that He was about to give the king a dream, but proceeded to do so as if the devil did not even exist. But our enemy does not sleep, and he became very speedily aware that events detrimental to his schemes were developing. He saw the confusion in the palace, the fury of the king, and, knowing a great deal about the living power resident in the four young men, he feared that his kingdom was about to sustain a significant defeat. Therefore he saw that he must counter-attack before God could claim the victory no matter

how many Chaldeans or others who had served him, had to pay with their lives.

This is a revelation of God's and Satan's characters viewed side by side. Thus compared, it is clear that God is the Saviour who is perpetually seeking the salvation of even His worst enemies, whereas Satan destroys his most faithful, dedicated followers when such actions best serve his designs. If he were granted total control over the human family which he claims is his by right, it would not be long before not one human being would remain alive, be he good or evil. Consider the truth of this as expressed in the following paragraph:

The Great Controversy, p. 36:

We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. It is the restraining power of God that prevents mankind from passing fully under the control of Satan. The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God's mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one.

But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejecters of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest. The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan.

The destruction of Jerusalem is a fearful and solemn warning to all who are trifling with the offers of divine grace and resisting the pleadings of divine mercy. Never was there given a more decisive testimony to God's hatred of sin and to the certain punishment that will fall upon the guilty.

But why had Daniel and the faithful three not been called in the first case when the king demanded an answer from his wise men? The king knew them very well indeed, for had he not personally

examined them and found them to be ten times better than the best in His realm? Had he not placed them in positions of service to himself? Had they not served the king with flawless faithfulness, had they not proved themselves free from plots against the throne, was it not true that God caused all that they did to prosper, and was not Daniel specially blessed with visions and dreams and their meanings? In the light of these considerations, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah should have been the first and only ones consulted!

The most likely cause for these omissions was prejudice which weighed heavily against anyone who was an Israelite even though King Nebuchadnezzar had been forced to admit the facts in regard to his educational program. It was clear that the four Hebrews were superior to all the other students from every other land. But they were such a small sampling that the king no doubt felt that he could discount them as factors not to be taken too seriously.

It was to Babylon that the haughty monarch desired all power and glory to be ascribed, and increasingly his mind turned away from the evidences in favor of truth, to his cherished wishes as the erection of an image made entirely of gold testified. To this we shall turn our attention in due time. For now we will continue our study of the conflict from where Daniel learned the reason for the king's decree.

The Spirit Reveals the Dream to Daniel

Daniel 2

¹⁶ So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation.

This constituted an amazing development in the drama—Daniel calmly asking the king to give him time so that he could come to understand both the dream and its interpretation. Previously the enraged king had accused the Chaldeans and their associates of employing delaying tactics in order to gain time. The monarch, convinced that he discerned the perfidy of the men who professed

to have the power to interpret dreams and visions, flatly refused to grant them time. Instead he decreed that they reveal the dream or suffer death. There would be no mercy granted. Such were the expressions of disappointment and rage which seethed in the king on that fateful day.

When Arioch came to Daniel and announced his grim mission, Daniel might have cowered under the sudden pressure. But the Lord's servant did not hesitate for a moment. Shielded by the same power which had enabled Moses to freely walk in and out of Pharaoh's presence without the powerful king being able to stop him, Daniel walked boldly though humbly and respectfully into King Nebuchadnezzar's presence and simply asked for time to learn the secret of the dream and its interpretation.

And the mighty king gave Daniel the time for which he asked. What a deliverance that was, what a triumph for the cause of truth! But this would never have been possible if Daniel had not been blessed as he was with great spiritual purity and power. At the same time it must not lead us to conclude that the Lord will always work in the same powerful manner, even though we have perfection, purity, and incredible power. The great apostles of Jesus Christ, Peter and Paul, who were blessed with the awesome power of the Holy Spirit so much so that they could raise the dead, each died a martyr's death.

There are situations which develop from time to time when the cause of truth is better advanced by the death of a child of God than by his life being preserved. For instance, after John the Baptist's understanding had been enlightened in regard to the true nature of Christ's kingdom, the following is written of him.

The Desire of Ages, p. 218:

Understanding more clearly now the nature of Christ's mission, he yielded himself to God for life or for death, as should best serve the interests of the cause He loved.

What is needed so that the Lord can work as effectively as he did for Daniel, is an agent as spotless and as filled with the power of the Holy Spirit as Daniel was. God was not caught by surprise

by any of these events, but, knowing the heart of King Nebuchadnezzar and how he would react, He could predict with the greatest accuracy what the king would do step by step through the whole drama. Therefore we know that the plan formed by God would succeed provided that His people on earth were faithful in doing their part.

This experience of Daniel's, when the king, without voicing any objections, freely granted him time, is a witness to us of how men who rank high in worldly position and power, can be moved to make decisions which protect and advance the cause of God to an amazing extent. Marvelous are the wonders to be displayed on earth before the end shall finally come.

On being granted time, Daniel wasted none of it speculating about what the dream might have been, but immediately returned to his house where he advised his companions that the king had granted them time. They knew that their everlasting Father was the sole Source of both the king's dream and its interpretation, and they gathered together to ask Him to reveal the secret to them.

Prophets and Kings, p. 494:

And they did not plead in vain. The God whom they had honored, now honored them. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon them, and to Daniel, "in a night vision," was revealed the king's dream and its meaning.

Although it was urgent that the information be presented before the king, Daniel would not do so until he had firstly thanked God for revealing the secret. In this prayer of deep gratitude and sincere, earnest thanksgiving, Daniel certainly demonstrated his understanding of gospel order and showed his deep love for that beautiful system in which God is the almighty Source, Jesus Christ is the great Connector, and we humans are the utterly dependent receivers. Here are his expressions of praise to His Maker:

Daniel 2

¹⁹ Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

²⁰ Daniel answered and said: Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His.

²¹ And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.

²² He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him.

²³ I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of You, for You have made known to us the king's demand.

It was with great certainty that Daniel accepted the revelation as coming from God. He knew it was nothing but the truth. No expressions of unbelief darkened his mind; no doubt tormented him with uncertainty.

Today we look back over 2,500 years of accurate fulfillment of this prophecy. Time has proven the absolutely flawless accuracy of these predictions. Long ago faith has given way to sight, but it was not so in Daniel's day. At that time the future appeared to be locked in obscurity, and none but those who loved, trusted, and received light from God, were able to receive any knowledge of coming events.

The Chaldeans, having no access to the mind of the Infinite, could not provide their king with the slightest beam of reliable light on the future. They sought for answers in the changing positions of the planets, in the speculations of their wise men, and in visions and dreams which could be used to say whatever a clever mind wanted to make them say. In the midst of all this Chaldean confusion, a clear voice rang out and proclaimed that the darkness had been swept aside, and the future, no longer shrouded in obscurity, stood illuminated.

Testing the Truth

But how could Daniel know, beyond the slightest shadow of a doubt, that the message he had for the king was the truth? He knew in exactly the same way that we today are to understand and accurately identify truth as distinct from error. Fresh revelations claiming to be truth must agree with that which God has already given. New truths are to be tested and verified by old, established, proven truths which have endured the testing of time.

Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve in Eden, there has been a progression of developing truth which has been communicated to His people by God through His prophets. The first of these was revealed by Jesus Christ to Adam and Eve in a statement which declared that there would be warfare between the forces of light and darkness clear down to the close of time. The Saviour declared:

Genesis 3

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.

Not only is this the earliest prediction of the on-going struggle between righteousness and evil, but it is one of the most concise statements ever made of the great controversy. To really understand this prophecy, the student of God's word must be blessed with spiritual discernment so that he can quickly identify the forces of evil as they operate against the government and authority of the Most High. He must see the actual nature of the darkness on the one side, and the nature of the light on the other.

This, Daniel was well able to do, for his unclouded and educated mind enabled him to see beneath the pleasing exterior to the real Babylon beneath. So familiar had he become with the true nature of the man of sin, that wherever he saw it, whether in the past, present, or future, his recognition of it was sure. Thus when the Lord revealed the dream of the future risings and fallings of the great powers of the earth, he was quick to see that each was but a rerun of what had gone before with no changes in

principle. He comprehended too that Babylon is an expiring force whose energies are rapidly becoming expended. Soon it will have exhausted what reserves are left and leave nothing but a sea of finely ground, wind-driven dust, as pictured in the final fate of the great image.

Thus it was that Daniel, by comparing the nature of the evil powers which had gone before, with the forces symbolized by the various parts of the image, was able to identify the latter. Those kingdoms of the past and the ones to come were one in spirit and character. The dream given to King Nebuchadnezzar did not speak a different message from all the revelations given through the prophets of the past.

How God Removes Kings

Not only did Daniel match history and prophecy to make absolutely certain that the prophecies were of God, but he also saw that God is in control of human events. Here again is his pronouncement to this effect:

Daniel 2

²¹ And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.

In stating that God removes and sets up kings, Daniel demonstrated a clear understanding of the character of God and how He fills His role in the rise and fall of nations great and small.

God's actions in this regard can only be correctly understood when viewed in the light of His perfect character. Then it will be known in what sense it is that He removes kings and raises up kings.

The seemingly obvious though incorrect understanding of these actions, is that God personally and arbitrarily manipulates history to the point where He chooses who shall be ruler, over whom he shall rule, and for how long. If this were true, it would mean that God and Satan both rule by the exercise of force, whereas in fact, compelling power is found only under Satan's government.

The Desire of Ages, p. 759:

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.

In what sense then does God remove kings while raising others up? With strict impartiality God imparts His blessings to all men. These may be classified as powers within and without. The powers within are health, strength, mental capacities, etc., while those without are the powers in nature, including raw materials, from which the kingdom is built up.

Men take all of these blessings and build mighty kingdoms which quite often are cruel, despotic empires which bring incredible suffering upon others. God never intended that His gifts should be thus diverted to fill such purposes. Instead He planned that the wealth of the people should be for the blessing of mankind.

Because God is the provider of all the means by which a kingdom is built, He is said to be the One who raises it up. This is true, but at the same time, it must be remembered that God never intended that His gifts be employed, as they so frequently have been, to build kingdoms of enslaved people.

Furthermore He is aware of man's proneness to misuse His gifts and turn them into a blighting curse. Therefore He has spelled out in the clearest way that safety is found only in strict obedience to His holy law. When it is respected and faithfully obeyed, great prosperity is the natural outworking:

Proverbs 14

³⁴ Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

During the period when a kingdom is being built, the energies of the kingdom builders are largely devoted to the great task confronting them, but when the work has reached a certain point of stability and accomplishment, the population settles back to enjoy the fruits of their labors. It is during this period of time that the people relax and devote their energies to the gratification of every selfish, lustful desire. This is especially true of the wealthy.

A century or more passes during which time the liberal misuse of all God's blessings weakens the people who then become a relatively easy prey of the next great kingdom rising to power.

So, it is the serious misuse of God's gifts which brings about the downfall of a nation. It would never have happened had the people used God's gifts in the way and for the purpose He had designed. God simply recognizes this downfall and works out His plan in accordance with that recognition. In this sense it is written that God removes a king and his kingdom and sets another in its place. It is done without using arbitrary, compelling power.

It was during the night vision when the Lord revealed the image and the interpretation thereof, that these principles were opened to Daniel's understanding. Upon coming out of the vision, he was filled with praise for the perfection of beauty resident in all God's works and government. He was enraptured by the glory of it all as King Nebuchadnezzar was to be shortly thereafter.

The whole drama beginning with the unremembered dream and lasting until the awe-stricken king prostrated himself on the floor before Daniel, has to be one of the truly great moments in all of the history of the plan of salvation.

24. Faith Begets Faith

Messenger and News Review, October 1995

Daniel 2:24-30

AT THIS point in the developing controversy between light and darkness when Daniel was about to deliver a report of the dream to the king, there is afforded us a further revelation of the great spiritual power resident in Daniel and his three friends. It is found in the faith which begets faith.

Other than Arioch there were only a few who knew how furious the king was and how perilous it was to incur any more of his anger. Therefore we would expect Arioch to have been careful to announce Daniel as the one who only claimed to know and interpret the dream, and not as one who actually had the sure and certain solution to the problem. Instead, with strong, positive confidence, he presented Daniel to the King as the one who would most certainly solve the king's pressing problem.

Think of the risk which Arioch took. If, after making this bold assertion, Daniel had not been able to provide the information the king required, the anger of his majesty would have been boundless, and Arioch would certainly have lost his life.

How then could Arioch be so certain that Daniel knew what the dream was, together with its interpretation? He knew because he sensed the great light and power flowing forth from Daniel, which begat in him something of the same faith that filled Daniel. Though received by the Babylonian to a lesser degree, it was there nevertheless and was strong enough to fill him with undimmed confidence in Daniel's word.

At this point we will benefit by taking a closer look at faith's influence upon others. Everyone of God's people who will have a part in finishing His work must realize the necessity of a high level of faith in order to experience the same results as Daniel did.

At the Pool of Bethesda

Let us consider the case of the man at the pool of Bethesda—the poor sufferer who had lived in an atmosphere of darkness and unbelief for thirty-eight years.³⁹ Again and again he had pinned his hopes on being first in the pool when the water was stirred, but what little faith he had was misplaced which only lowered him into the darkness of deeper despair. Then one Sabbath day, wholly unannounced, Jesus appeared in his presence and asked the simple question:

John 5

⁶ Do you wish to be made whole?

The poor man replied that his repeated attempts at obtaining deliverance had always failed. In response to this Jesus simply said to him:

⁸ Arise, take up your bed and walk!

Instantly the man stood up on his feet, totally healed.

- How did he stand up so suddenly?

He did it by faith in the word of Christ.

- By whose faith did he achieve this restoration to health and strength? Was it by Christ's faith, or was it by his own personal faith?

It was by his own personal faith.

- But from where and how did he so suddenly acquire this faith which was so powerful that by it he was able to experience the rebuilding of his entire body?

He acquired it from Christ.

- But how?

By being brought into the atmosphere of virtue, the healing power of love immediately surrounding the Saviour.

For a few power-charged moments he found himself immersed in the atmosphere around the Mighty Healer, and it was enough

³⁹ See *John* 5:1-15.

to generate living faith in him sufficient to reach out and grasp the offered gift.

Likewise Arioch made his statement to the king in response to his being immersed in the healing power of love surrounding Daniel. This explains how true medical missionary work can alone be accomplished. It tells how the messengers of Jesus are to generate living faith in the sick both physically and spiritually. Such high levels of power springing up from faith-charged lives can only be found after much deep communion with God. In this, Christ is the example.

So that He might forever have the power with which to infuse men and women with the faith needed to receive all of heaven's glorious deliverances and build God's kingdom on earth, Jesus maintained a constant communion with His heavenly Father as it is written:

The Desire of Ages, p. 363:

In Christ the cry of humanity reached the Father of infinite pity. As a man He supplicated the throne of God till His humanity was charged with a heavenly current that should connect humanity with divinity. Through continual communion He received life from God, that He might impart life to the world. His experience is to be ours.

Men of very great spiritual, mental, and physical power are absolutely needed by God before He can finish His work and take us home. Therefore those who will become qualified to be God's truly proficient instruments in the successful completion of this final and finishing ministry will learn how to be flooded with divine energy so that they will break through the barriers which shut out the Saviour.

Such a condition of being thus charged is attainable only through deep, consistent fellowship with God. That it can be gained and maintained is proven by the great spiritual attainments of Daniel, Jesus, and others.

Arioch Influenced by Daniel's Faith

Here is the statement in which Arioch unhesitatingly testified to the truth that Daniel knew both the dream and its wonderful interpretation.

Daniel 2

²⁴ Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation.

²⁵ Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation.

The awesome power of love did not end with its ministry through Daniel, but extended on through Arioch to encircle the angry king. However, at that time, neither the king nor Arioch were actually converted by these manifestations of divine power. In the case of king Nebuchadnezzar, that was to come later as we know.

Though we do not know what happened to Arioch in the end, it appears at this point that the Babylonian spirit of self-glorification still asserted itself in him, for he claimed that he was the one who had searched for and found the man who could reveal the dream and its interpretation. This was not true.

Arioch's first contact with Daniel was when the latter asked him with skill and tact why this command went out from the king, in response to which he related the details.⁴⁰ Thereafter Arioch and his king simply waited until Daniel had returned with the light gained from God. Then it was that Arioch presented Daniel as his own discovery, whereas he should have recognized that all the glory belonged to the Lord.

⁴⁰ See *Daniel* 2:14-15.

Glorifying God

Daniel certainly did give all the glory to God. As the youthful man stood before the king after having been announced by Arioch, the king asked:

Daniel 2

²⁶ Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?

This was a splendid opportunity for Daniel to exalt himself before the king, but he possessed within himself not the slightest disposition to do so. It was fortunate that this was the case, for had he taken the honor to himself, he would have shown the disposition to place himself in the Lord's position. Doing this would have meant bearing the mark and spirit of antichrist, being a follower of Satan, and being the enemy of God and man.

As the youthful prophet stood before the king, he knew that he bore a most unpopular message. He was not there to tell the Babylonians what they wanted to hear, but instead, to tell the truth which he knew they did not want to hear. Therefore Daniel, by obeying God, had placed his and his three friends' lives in jeopardy by daring to speak the truth God had commissioned him to declare. It would have been a great tragedy for Daniel to have failed at this point after having come so far in the execution of the divine plan. How happy we are that he was steadfast unto the end.

Daniel began his message to the king by directing his attention to the utter failure of the king's men to reveal the unknown:

²⁷ Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king.

That was the unassailable truth. All the wise men were not able to unravel the great secret, nor did Daniel claim that he or his three friends could either. Then who could? At this point Daniel introduced the God of heaven whom he declared to be well able

to reveal the dream and its interpretation to the king. So Daniel continued:

Daniel 2

²⁸ But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these:

What a powerful statement that was! To say that you believe there is a God in heaven when walking in the flood-tide of His power or resting in the sunshine of His great love, is one thing, but to say this when the standing of the Church of God is very low, requires a powerful, living faith.

In Daniel's day such an exceedingly low point had arrived. Both the northern and the southern kingdoms had been defeated, utterly ruined, and scattered among the nations. The city of Jerusalem and the temple had been destroyed, and the proud, boastful Babylonians were triumphant. They claimed that their gods had overcome the God of Israel, and so it appeared to be. Jehovah stood exposed in the Babylonian eyes as a weak God. They thought that even if in the past He had done some great things for His people, His strength was now spent, and, like an old battle-weary warrior, He had lain down to sleep.

It was in such a context as this that the voice of Daniel rang out:

²⁸ There is a God in heaven!

There was no hesitation, no fear, and no lack of confidence. The youthful man of God knew with the greatest certainty that the true God sat in heaven upon His throne of power and authority, that He had not lost control of His kingdom, that He was the faithful Deliverer of His tried and trusting people, and that He had the power to read the future.

Such a thrilling testimony was in direct opposition to the message of Babylon. It was a teaching that would never be expressed by a Chaldean, nor, under normal circumstances, accepted by the

proud monarch. Any person then or now who advances such concepts is usually met by scorn and ridicule followed by contempt. If he continues expressing his beliefs, severe persecution results and possibly death.

But this was not a normal set of circumstances. It was not some bold, fanatical reformer but a living messenger of the Most High who stood before King Nebuchadnezzar at that momentous point of time. He spoke as no ordinary man spoke, and the king was powerless to stop him. Nor did the king wish to terminate Daniel's report at this point of time, for he was obviously gripped by what he heard. Unknown to the king, the Holy Spirit had been preparing him for the revelations of truth now being given to him.

In the work of preaching the gospel, we have found that, unless the Holy Spirit prepares a person in advance, the gospel worker will accomplish little if anything. But, if the Holy Spirit is able to generate an interest in the soul's needs before the arrival of the human agent, this agent's efforts will have a far greater possibility of success. This was one reason why the planning of missionary contacts is a work which only the Holy Spirit can do.

Unveiling the Future

The prophet of God next stated that the dream was an unraveling of the future, a feat for which Babylon had no capacity whatsoever. This foretelling began from the point of time when the vision was given and extended into the eternal future, for the kingdom symbolized by the great stone would never pass away.

Daniel 2

²⁸ But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.

²⁹ Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be.

It is to be noted that Daniel was thoroughly careful to divert away from himself any credit for this marvelous revelation of truth. Instead, as the natural expression of the spirit of humility which was in him, he repeatedly directed all credit to God. That was important, for it justified the king's judgment that the dream contained a very serious message which had to become known and accurately interpreted. Confirmation that the Source of the dream was God himself and not simply the result of a disturbed sleep, served to heighten the king's determination to understand the truth contained therein.

Daniel's final disclaimer is recorded in verse thirty:

Daniel 2 [NIV]

³⁰ As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than other living men, but so that you, O king, may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

All of God's children everywhere are those for whose sakes this revelation is given. It was most appropriately given when the Church appeared to have fallen. It seemed that apart from the four young men, there were few of its true representatives left. It appeared that most of the rest had been overcome, and that they must soon follow, for what uncompromising child of God could survive for long in an environment as hostile as that of the very court of Babylon?

That question was answered by Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, and this same accomplishment can be perfectly reached today, provided that those who are called upon to do this work are as filled with the Holy Spirit and are as loyal and true to Jehovah as those four Hebrews were. It is worth remembering that Joseph achieved the same excellent record in Egypt in the same uncompromising way as did the loyal four in Babylon.

The Mustard Seed

Behold and see what a picture is here portrayed of an insignificant group of believers making up the visible Church of Daniel's

day, but thereafter growing as did the mustard seed until it became a great movement numbering millions upon millions of souls who will be saved at last. Jesus directs us to the sturdy growth of the mustard plant as an illustration of this impressive development.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 77-78:

As Jesus spoke this parable, the mustard plant could be seen far and near, lifting itself above the grass and grain, and waving its branches lightly in the air. Birds flitted from twig to twig, and sang amid the leafy foliage. Yet the seed from which sprang this giant plant was among the least of all seeds. At first it sent up a tender shoot, but it was of strong vitality, and grew and flourished until it reached its present great size.

So the kingdom of Christ in its beginning seemed humble and insignificant. Compared with earthly kingdoms it appeared to be the least of all. By the rulers of this world Christ's claim to be a king was ridiculed. Yet in the mighty truths committed to His followers the kingdom of the gospel possessed a divine life.

And how rapid was its growth, how widespread its influence! When Christ spoke this parable, there were only a few Galilean peasants to represent the new kingdom. Their poverty, the fewness of their numbers, were urged over and over again as a reason why men should not connect themselves with these simple-minded fishermen who followed Jesus.

But the mustard seed was to grow and spread forth its branches throughout the world. When the earthly kingdoms whose glory then filled the hearts of men should perish, the kingdom of Christ would remain, a mighty and far-reaching power.

The Signs of the Times, April 15, 1897:

God did not design that his wonderful plan to redeem man should achieve only insignificant results. What could be greater and more costly than the plan of redemption? The whole heavenly force is enlisted in the great work of elevating, refining, and sanctifying the human soul. Divine power is exercised to save rather than to destroy the work of God's hands. All this stupendous machinery is set in motion to save men from Satan's army,

from the slavery of sin, and to lead them to enlist in the work of salvation.

God did not design that the plan of salvation would achieve only insignificant results, and it will not. While the visible church down through history has so often been seen as a tiny remnant, enfeebled and ready to perish, the picture will be very different when the numbers saved are fully and finally made up. Then it will be found that millions upon millions will have been saved from the Dark Ages alone.

Consider the following heart-warming statement assuring us that a great harvest of redeemed souls will be gathered in. It is a comment on the prophetic utterances made by Christ as, on the Mount of Olives, He taught His disciples of coming events. Included in these were to be well over a thousand years of the bitterest persecution during which the slaughter of God's people would be so great as to almost destroy the Church altogether.

The Desire of Ages, p. 631:

For more than a thousand years such persecution as the world had never before known was to come upon Christ's followers. Millions upon millions of His faithful witnesses were to be slain. Had not God's hand been stretched out to preserve His people, all would have perished.

Matthew 24

²² But for the elect's sake, [He said,] those days shall be shortened.

This statement says not that "millions upon millions were to be slain," but that "millions upon millions of His faithful witnesses were to be slain." Down through history wars have taken the lives of millions upon uncounted millions of people, but very, very few of them were God's faithful witnesses. These died to no purpose so far as their eternal lives were concerned, but we know that those who died as God's faithful witnesses will certainly be saved. Of them there were "millions upon millions." That alone was a significant harvest.

At the same time we must not overlook the fact that there were periods in history when, numerically speaking, the harvest was very small. The first such period was when the great flood of Noah's time destroyed all but eight people. Jesus warned:

Matthew 7

¹³ Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

¹⁴ Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Likewise, during the Laodicean period, the gospel will again appear to have produced very little results as the following statement reveals:

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, p. 401-402:

The Lord is proving and testing His people. Angels of God are watching the development of character and weighing moral worth. Probation is almost ended, and you are unready. Oh, that the word of warning might burn into your souls! Get ready! get ready! Work while the day lasts, for the night comes when no man can work.

The mandate will go forth: He that is holy, let him be holy still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still. The destiny of all will be decided. A few, yes, only a few, of the vast number who people the earth will be saved unto life eternal, while the masses who have not perfected their souls in obeying the truth will be appointed to the second death. O Saviour, save the purchase of your blood! is the cry of my anguished heart.

At times the apostasies ran so deep and strong as to endanger the existence of the Church. When those conditions prevailed, it was exceedingly difficult to find a true believer. Such was the condition of things when Elijah believed himself to be the only one left, when actually there were seven thousand faithful ones in Israel of whom he knew nothing.

The number making up the great multitude will not be known until the sleeping saints are raised to join the risen ones on the great resurrection day. Then it will be seen that a very significant

result has been achieved through the gospel of Jesus Christ. What a day of rejoicing that will be as pictured by the pen of Inspiration!

The Great Controversy, p. 644:

Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints. He looks upon the graves of the righteous, then, raising His hands to heaven, He cries:

“Awake, awake, awake, you that sleep in the dust, and arise!”

Throughout the length and breadth of the earth the dead shall hear that voice, and they that hear shall live. And the whole earth shall ring with the tread of the exceeding great army of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. From the prison house of death they come, clothed with immortal glory, crying:

1 Corinthians 15

⁵⁵ O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?

And the living righteous and the risen saints unite their voices in a long, glad shout of victory.

It might appear that there is a contradiction between statements heralding a large number making up the redeemed on the one hand, and other statements stipulating that few, only very few will be saved. However there are no real contradictions in the scriptures. When the scriptures speak of only a few being saved, they do so in the relative sense. So vast have been the human numbers in earth’s history—5.4 billion at the present time alone—that millions upon millions are but few in comparison.

But, while the numbers in the end will be large enough to be very significant, there is another factor which must be considered when studying the question as to what constitutes a significant result from God’s point of view in the great controversy. It will be the successful settlement of God’s claims versus those introduced by the devil for the purpose of destroying the divine kingdom of love. For almost six thousand years the struggle has continued without a true resolution being reached. But no matter how many souls will be lost or saved, the ultimate conclusion to the matter

must wait until every possible question has been answered forever.

As Daniel, guided by the Holy Spirit, stood before King Nebuchadnezzar, he saw the rise and fall of mighty nations, and Satan's repeated, determined efforts to destroy the Church. He witnessed God's special protection over His people, the growth of the movement, and the ultimate victory of the Lord's people despite their being, during every manifestation of divine power, the objects of Babylonian hatred.

By faith he grasped the certain fact that the cause of God could not fail, but would, as symbolized by the great stone in the vision, become the kingdom which would fill the whole earth and last forever. All this it was Daniel's divinely appointed mission to relay to the king.

25. The Dream Unfolded

Messenger and News Review, November 1995

Daniel 2:31-49

AFTER Daniel received from God a knowledge of the dream and its interpretation, he was ready to relate it all to the king. Calmly, with no fear lingering within him, he commenced his explanation of the dream and the meaning of its symbols.

Firstly he described the dream itself, and later he explained the symbols. This is the pattern and orderly system of unfolding the various prophecies throughout the book of *Daniel*—first the description of the symbols, then their interpretation.

This is well worth carefully noting, for in certain later chapters it will help to clarify some important points in the prophecies. Every symbol has its own interpretation, and there are no interpretations without a matching symbol.

The Symbols

In the great symbolic prophetic outline of *Daniel 2*, the symbols are all grouped in verses 31-35 which read as follows:

Daniel 2

³¹ You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome.

³² This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,

³³ Its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

³⁴ You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Having completed an explicit, comprehensive statement of what the dream contained, Daniel said:

Daniel 2

³⁶ This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king.

One can imagine with what intense interest the king listened to the narration, and while he did so, how he remembered the dream when it was given to him. So perfect was the match between what the king saw in the dream and Daniel's description of it, that there was no doubt whatsoever about Daniel's claim that he knew the dream.

The Youth's Instructor, September 1, 1903:

Listening with solemn attention as every particular was reproduced, the king recognized this as the dream over which he had been so troubled; and he was prepared to receive with favor the interpretation.

For this reason the king could not dispute Daniel's description of the dream, and no Chaldean, astrologer, or any other of the wise men dared to challenge Daniel's description of what the king saw in that wonderful dream. It was with continued fear for their lives that those Chaldeans viewed the developing events.

The Interpretation

So began the interpretation:

Daniel 2

³⁷ You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory;

³⁸ And wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold.

The symbols and their interpretation are so simple, straight-forward, and explicit, that one cannot fail to understand them. Daniel proceeds to describe an extremely powerful and prosperous world empire which at that time dominated the whole earth. It was called, Babylon, and was symbolized by the golden head of the great image in the dream. To the mighty king he said:

Daniel 2

³⁸ ...you are this head of gold.

To have been thus recognized as the undisputed king of the whole world by a servant of the Most High God, a God whom the king, through the loving ministry of Daniel, was learning to respect, must have been a proud moment for King Nebuchadnezzar. But Daniel proceeded with unfaltering courage to announce that Babylon and her glory were but temporary fixtures in the annals of coming history. Another kingdom symbolized by the breast and arms of silver was to arise as Babylon was falling and would replace her.

This development in human events was definitely contrary to the expectations and hopes of the proud King Nebuchadnezzar. The nation and city of Babylon would in his view never pass away. The city itself was well supplied with water, the mighty River Euphrates, which flowed reliably through it. And it appears that there was sufficient food grown inside to guarantee her capacity to withstand any siege indefinitely.

But, despite the firm placement of all these factors, Cyrus, in command of the Medo-Persian army, overthrew the city in one fateful night in 539 BC, Babylon fell, never to rise again. Daniel was to live long enough to see the termination of Babylon, but King Nebuchadnezzar was not. He died when the great city was still in the glory of her power. He reigned from 605-562 BC.

At a time when Babylon seemed most secure, the Medo-Persian kingdom mounted the throne of world dominion. But she too was succeeded by another kingdom, this time symbolized by the belly and thighs of bronze. The moral quality of those kingdoms decreased as silver is less valuable than gold and bronze is still less than silver.

The next kingdom to assume the mantle of world dominion was Greece under the leadership of Alexander the Great. He conclusively defeated the Persians at the battle of Arbela in 331 BC, and went on to fill the role of world leader for the remainder of his short life. He died in 323 BC at the age of 33. After his death

Greece continued her domination of the nations until the great iron kingdom, the Romans, usurped the power and the position of world leader by conquering the Greeks at the Battle of Pydna in 168 BC.

Of all the four powers occupying the throne of world dominion in turn, the fourth, the Romans, held it for the longest time of any. They began their period of supremacy in the year 168 BC, but were finally deprived of power when in 476 AD, a German General named Odoacer deposed the last of the Roman emperors. When that day of reckoning finally arrived, Rome had ruled for six hundred and forty-four years.

It was during this long period of rule by the Roman power that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, escaped to Egypt, returned to spend His boyhood and youth in Nazareth, established Christianity among the Jews, died on the cross, ascended to heaven, and promised His followers a speedy return.

The believers were savagely persecuted by the Romans and the apostate Jews especially after the crucifixion when the power of the Holy Spirit was given to the Church. There were thousands upon thousands of martyrs, two among them being Peter and Paul. The notorious Emperor Nero was the despot who sentenced them to death.

Mighty as Rome was, she still felt threatened by the Christians, who were holy, harmless, and unarmed, and as such a threat to nobody. What the Christians were a threat to was the sinfulness of the Romans who practiced a host of evils which could only destroy the peace, prosperity, and happiness of mankind. Of this great kingdom it is stated that she was the most cruel and the most devastating of them all.

Daniel 2

⁴⁰ And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

Like all those before her, Rome was destined to fall in her turn. But, in her falling, she was not replaced by a fifth nation which rose to world dominion but by a divided kingdom.

Daniel 2

⁴¹ Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

⁴² And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.

⁴³ As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

The whole dream is precision predicting, to which more pertinent details will be added as we move deeper into the other prophecies of the book of *Daniel*. It is one of God's impressive abilities that He can foretell what will happen in such detail so far in advance. This was much more than the haphazard guesswork by which a person might accidentally make one or two correct foretellings.

This prophecy has a specific starting point—the beginning of the reign of ancient Babylon as a world-dominating power. This was followed in strict order by a succession of three more world powers making up a total of four—no more and no less. Furthermore there were no gaps in between. Each power immediately filled the vacancy created by the fall of its predecessor.

When the time came for the fourth world empire to end, there was no fifth nation to take its place. Instead it was followed by a mixture of strong and weak powers. This condition has continued until the present day. More than two thousand years have passed since Daniel related the details of his astonishing dream to the king, and history has confirmed that the communication has been true in every respect.

The Establishment of God's Kingdom

Furthermore we are thus provided with a chart of events enabling us to determine at what point we have come in God's timetable for this world. The meaning of the mixture of clay and iron will be studied in the next chapter. For now we want to consider the establishment of God's kingdom in the place of that which man has been trying to build.

Daniel 2

⁴⁴ And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

⁴⁵ Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.

In these verses two mountains are presented: the first of these is the mountain from which the stone is cut without hands.⁴¹ The second mountain is the one into which the stone grew.⁴²

To understand this stone, the mountain from which it was cut, its destruction of all of earth's various kingdoms, and its growth into another mighty mountain, requires that we be familiar with certain Bible symbols.

Firstly let us ask, what is represented by a mountain in prophecy? In short, a mountain symbolizes a kingdom. Whether it be a good or an evil kingdom is determined by the context or by direct statements. Here is an example:

Jeremiah 51

²⁴ And I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea for all the evil they have done in Zion in your sight, says the Lord.

²⁵ Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, who destroys all the earth, says the Lord. And I will stretch out my hand

⁴¹ See *Daniel* 2:34-45.

⁴² See *Daniel* 2:35.

against you, roll you down from the rocks, and make you a burnt mountain.

This is very clearly a pronouncement against an evil kingdom which is none other than Babylon, the great destroyer of God's people. Here she is described as a destroying mountain.

In *Revelation 17* Babylon the Great is carried by a beast which is said to have seven heads. These...

Revelation 17

⁹ ...seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.

¹⁰ There are also seven kings...

This prophecy clearly refers to seven kingdoms which support Babylon the Great, and because they support Babylon, they can only be evil kingdoms.

But the identification of the two mountains in *Daniel 2* brings to view a different kingdom. This is the kingdom of permanence. It will never pass away. The identification of the mountains as God's good kingdom is very clearly set forth in *Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45*. This helps us understand the expression,

Daniel 2

³⁵ ...the stone was cut out...without hands,

—which means that it was of heavenly, not earthly origin. Had it been of earthly origin, it would have been cut out with hands, that is, by man.

So, the two mountains featured in *Daniel 2* symbolize God's kingdom. There is the one from which the stone is cut, and there is the one into which the stone grows. Who is represented by the stone which is cut out and in a sense separated from God's kingdom for a period of time?

This can be none other than Christ who separated himself from the heavenly courts in order to come to this earth and do the work which God had given Him to do.

Philippians 2

⁷ ...but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond-servant, and coming in the likeness of men.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

¹¹ And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

It was through His incarnation and death on the cross that He was able to reach to the lowest depths to which guilty man has fallen, and from that low point begin the climb back to His full restoration as the great King of all kings and Lord of all lords. That ultimate triumph will be achieved by the opposite procedures from those employed by selfish men in their quest for the supremacy of the world.

In the symbols of the image, man's procedures and their consequences are graphically portrayed. The declining value of the material indicates the declining moral value of the nations.

The Youth's Instructor, September 22, 1903:

The image revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, while representing the deterioration of the kingdoms of the earth in power and glory, also fitly represents the deterioration of religion and morality among the people of these kingdoms. As nations forget God, in like proportion they become weak morally.

Another difference between the metals is that they become progressively harder. Of all four, gold is the softest. Silver, though reasonably soft, is a little harder than gold. Bronze is harder still, and iron is the hardest of all four. This symbolizes an increase in the hardness of heart which is a logical result of a decrease in moral worth.

The increased hardness also symbolizes an increase in a certain kind of strength. History shows that each kingdom was larger than the one before and wielded more military and economic might until Rome encompassed the most territory of them all and

boasted the mightiest and most successful armies up till that period in history.

The final kingdom, the one belonging to God which shall never pass away, is a glorious, ever-growing kingdom as pictured by the stone which was cut out of the mountain without hands but becomes larger and larger until it completely fills the whole earth.

As strange as it is true, mankind generally speaking is absolutely determined to reject and oppose the establishment of the kingdom of heaven. This is a wonder, for God offers so much that will satisfy every desire and every holy ambition including fellowship with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the angels, and the redeemed which includes Melchizedek and Gabriel. In heaven the fountains of limitless knowledge will be uncapped, the mysteries of the universe will be explained, and much, much more will be provided. But we need not think that heaven is the starting point for all of this. All of these blessings begin on this earth for the true child of God and will increase in this life and in the life to come.

But there is a cost involved. It is impossible to have the heavenly and the earthly kingdom. We must choose the one or the other as Elijah declared before the assembled hosts of Israel on Mount Carmel:

1 Kings 18

²¹ And Elijah came to all the people, and said, How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him. But the people answered him not a word.

Men hesitate to choose service to God because there is within them the spirit of hatred, pride, and self-seeking which permeates the wicked world. Like spirits attract each other, and inasmuch as there are so few who exhibit any disposition to break the fellowship with the powers of darkness, some means must be found which will open the eyes of men to see the value of the heavenly treasure.

Missionary Qualifications

The true value of divine salvation can only be revealed through a human life which, set free from sin, channels the living, infinite power of God. This means that during those periods when the light of the gospel shone the brightest, the greatest number of souls were saved. The time of the former rain is one example. According to this principle it will be during the soon-coming latter rain, which will be attended by even greater spiritual effectiveness than that which empowered the believers under the outpouring of the former rain, that the greatest ingathering of redeemed ones will take place.

The need for the mighty power of God in any presentation of the gospel is clearly seen in the effect of Daniel's ministry on King Nebuchadnezzar. Firstly the king was a most unlikely soul for the reception of the gospel. As the king of Babylon and the one most strongly filled with the spirit of Babylon, he was best fitted for resistance to and rejection of the gospel truths which Daniel laid before him. One would expect him to ridicule any claims that the Almighty had on him, and worse still, to persecute any in his kingdom who dared to subscribe to the message of the gospel.

The very last thing one would expect him to do would be to bow down before Daniel and praise His God. Yet this was the very thing which he did.

Daniel 2

⁴⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him.

⁴⁷ The king answered Daniel, and said, Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.

⁴⁸ Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon.

⁴⁹ Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

What incredible power attended Daniel and his companions as they served the king of Babylon. As we read the story and begin to understand the reactions of the king, our hearts are lifted up in hope of the mighty outpouring of the latter rain when, once more, we shall be witnesses to such achievements through the endowment of God's Holy Spirit.

When the interpretation of the dream was completed and the king had fallen prostrate before Daniel, the king thereby acknowledged the truth that Daniel was a much greater person than he was. This was a startling reversal from the usual evaluation subscribed to by that king who saw himself as being the greatest man of his day. He expected, no demanded, that all men everywhere recognize his "unqualified superiority."

To Daniel, this question did not constitute an issue, for the subject of personal, superior greatness held no attraction for him. To him all men were brothers equally worthy to receive the grace of a loving God. He was only interested in loving, humble service to all within the needy reach of his ministering hands.

But for King Nebuchadnezzar two great things were accomplished by the dream. He saw more of the power and the character of God, and he realized that he was not the controller of the rise and fall of nations. When he saw that the God of heaven chose to provide him with the information concerning the future history of the world, he was deeply humbled.

He realized how easily God could have, at any time, exacted a terrible revenge for the things Babylon had done to His chosen people. But He had not. If God had possessed within himself the spirit of hatred and revenge which Nebuchadnezzar had in himself, then He would have dealt with the Babylonians in the same way they had dealt with His people.

Hitherto that question had not troubled the king, for he had no real awareness of the invincible power of God. But now that he

had, the possibility of his kingdom suffering immediate destruction became very real. He almost looked for the hand of God to avenge His people. But he found instead, a loving, forgiving God who sought not to condemn, but to justify, who looked for repentance, not vengeance, who longed to see restoration, not destruction. When the king said:

Daniel 2

⁴⁷ Truly your God is the God of Gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret,

—he was testifying that the God of heaven and earth is a different God from all the others. He could now see Him as being different not only in power, but, even more importantly, in character.

The Gospel Revealed to Kings

You may ask why the Lord did not provide the other great kings of the past with the same revelations of His power and character? The answer is that He, being strictly impartial, did give everyone of them opportunity to receive saving revelations of His character and power. That some of earth's great men received less than others was due to two factors:

1. The availability of human instruments, and
2. Because the earthly potentates hardened their hearts against God's attempts to bring them the light of truth.

But they all had a greater or lesser degree of opportunity to understand and to experience His salvation. Consider the experience of Moses in relation to Pharaoh. Moses was just as much a prophet as was Daniel. Both of them foretold the coming of the Redeemer. Moses spoke of the coming of the Saviour in these words:

Deuteronomy 18

¹⁵ The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear,

¹⁸ I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put my words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.

So there is no question about Moses being just as much a prophet as was Daniel. God through Moses repeatedly warned the Egyptians of coming plagues so that they would see God's power and His character of forgiving love. The mighty Pharaoh was as guilty of the mistreatment of God's people as was Nebuchadnezzar, yet Pharaoh was offered forgiveness for his sins and restoration to the divine favor just as much as the proud king of the Babylonians was.

In *Romans* 9:17 Paul recalls the word of God in regard to His dealings with Pharaoh. It is there stated,

Romans 9

¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show my power in you, and that my name may be declared in all the earth.

There were two ways in particular by which God might have shown His power in Pharaoh. The first was for the proud monarch to have accepted the gospel, the power of God to save from sin. If this had been the case, we would have seen such a change in the ruler in Egypt as only the gospel can accomplish. Furthermore it would have preserved the land from destruction.

The other way, the one which he elected to follow, was to reject God's loving appeals, while maintaining his spirit of rebellion and apostasy. By following out this course of action, he cast aside God's protection with the result that there was no escape from the ten terribly destructive plagues which were the powers of nature no longer under God's direction. In this case God's power to save was still displayed, and His people were set free.

The way chosen by King Nebuchadnezzar was to embark on a journey through the steps of salvation—conviction of sin, repentance, confession, forgiveness, true conversion, consecration, and service to God. When the Babylonian king chose this course, he

certainly revealed the power in the gospel and showed forth the loving, forgiving character of the Lord.

He did not achieve all these experiences in a single night, but he made a good beginning by accepting the interpretation of the dream. That accomplished, the way was prepared for him, through further triumphs of the gospel, to advance from faith to greater faith.

As the choice has been laid open before all mighty potentates, so it is open before us as well. Whichever choice they made, the character of God and His power was revealed. But the preferred way in which God ever wants it to be revealed is through restoration, not through a hardening of men's hearts.

26. Churchcraft and Statecraft

Messenger and News Review, December 1995

Daniel 2:41-43

Iron and Clay

WE HAVE already noted that with the fall of the fourth world power, there was a change in the pattern of the rise and fall of nations. A single sovereign state ruling the world was to give place to miscellaneous strong and weak powers as symbolized by the mixture of iron and clay.

Daniel 2

⁴¹ Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

⁴² And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.

⁴³ As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 360:

We need not, and cannot, expect union among the nations of the earth. Our position in the image of Nebuchadnezzar is represented by the toes, in a divided state, and of a crumbling material, that will not hold together.

What an accurate picture that is of the state of the nations since the fall of the last power to rule the world, the Romans. We note that this situation remains despite the repeated attempts on the part of men to unite themselves under a single head.

In their aim to achieve these restorations of single world powers, various devisings have been employed. Alliances and treaties have been drafted and signed into law. Some have attempted union through marriage, and others have used military might. Every one of them represents man's attempt to build a stable, enduring world empire in which its citizens will hopefully find peace and prosperity. Each in turn was a failure. The mixture of iron

and clay points to the human efforts by which men will attempt to achieve this objective.

However, the iron and clay have a double symbolism. They not only represent the nations, they also represent the mingling of churchcraft and statecraft.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1168-1169:

We have come to a time when God's sacred work is represented by the feet of the image in which the iron was mixed with the miry clay. God has a people, a chosen people, whose discernment must be sanctified, who must not become unholy by laying upon the foundation wood, hay, and stubble.

Every soul who is loyal to the commandments of God will see that the distinguishing feature of our faith is the seventh-day Sabbath. If the government would honor the Sabbath as God has commanded, it would stand in the strength of God and in defense of the faith once delivered to the saints. But statesmen will uphold the spurious Sabbath, and will mingle their religious faith with the observance of this child of the Papacy, placing it above the Sabbath which the Lord has sanctified and blessed, setting it apart for man to keep holy, as a sign between Him and His people to a thousand generations.

The mingling of churchcraft and statecraft is represented by the iron and the clay. This union is weakening all the power of the churches. This investing the church with the power of the state will bring evil results. Men have almost passed the point of God's forbearance. They have invested their strength in politics, and have united with the papacy. But the time will come when God will punish those who have made void His law, and their evil work will recoil upon themselves.

There is a great deal which we will learn about the attempted mixing of church and state as we progress through the books of *Daniel* and *Revelation*, but we will leave much of it until we come to the appropriate portions of *Revelation* where more information is provided. There the beast and his image is exposed in further detail.

The Beast of Revelation 13

The beast was formed when the church received the power of the civil authorities in order to enforce her decrees. The failure of any person to comply with these decrees was met by persecution which became more and more severe until the death penalty was applied. Then it was that thousands upon thousands sacrificed their lives rather than yield to the persecuting might of the papacy, the beast of *Revelation* 13. For all those who did this in true faith, there is reserved a place in heaven where they will sit on the throne of God's glory.

By the end of the eighteenth century the papacy had been greatly weakened as a result of internal corruption coupled with the damage done to her power by the great Protestant Reformation. In 1798 the Roman Pontiff, Pope Pius VI, was taken prisoner and died in exile the following year. His being taken prisoner is called the "deadly wound" of the beast in *Revelation* 13:3.

But a great recovery of the lost powers of the papacy is prophesied, and is called the healing of the deadly wound.⁴³ Then there is the lamb-like beast of *Revelation* 13:11-18 who persuades the multitudes to make an image of the papal beast. This will involve the successful solicitation of the power of the state by the churches. Thus churchcraft will work hand in hand with statecraft to bring about "the great new order."

It is very important for us to know which symbol refers to which power so that we can identify the image of the beast wherever and whenever it arises. As we have already seen from the statement quoted above, the feet of iron and clay indicate a mingling of churchcraft and statecraft. But which is which? In *Daniel* 2:41 it says,

Daniel 2

⁴¹ ...yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

⁴³ *Revelation* 13:3.

The government of the Roman Empire including its military force has been used as a pattern for many present day governments. That is the iron. The clay is the weak element, namely the church, which has lost God's power through apostasy from the truth. Because of this loss of power she is forced to seek the power of the state to accomplish her goals. Of course she will not admit this weakness, but relates herself to the state in such a way as to gain control of its power and hide her own weakness.

This has already happened once. That was during the rise of the beast in the early centuries after Christ's return to heaven.

The Great Controversy, p. 443:

When the early church became corrupted by departing from the simplicity of the gospel and accepting heathen rites and customs, she lost the Spirit and power of God; and in order to control the consciences of the people, she sought the support of the secular power. The result was the papacy, a church that controlled the power of the state and employed it to further her own ends, especially for the punishment of "heresy." In order for the United States to form an image of the beast, the religious power must so control the civil government that the authority of the state will also be employed by the church to accomplish her own ends.

All power in heaven and on earth has been given to the Son of God. It is by that awesome, infinite power, that Christ empowers His church in her holy mission of bringing salvation to all men everywhere. In carrying forward the mission of the gospel, the church is to exercise no other power than this. It is therefore a sign that the church has lost the only rightful power she can have when she seeks and acquires the power of the state to enforce her will on the world.

The church was fully conscious of her loss of the power of God before she sought the power of the State. Had she not been, she never would have made any overtures to the imperial authority, nor have received with favor any advances from it. There is a power which belongs with the gospel of Christ, and is inseparable from the truth of the gospel; that is, the power of God. In fact,

the gospel is but the manifestation of that power; for the gospel “is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes.” As long, therefore, as any order or organization of people professing the gospel of Christ maintains in sincerity the principle of that gospel, so long the power of God will be with them, and they will have no need of any other power to make their influence felt for good wherever known. But just as soon as any person or association professing the gospel loses the spirit of it, so soon the power is gone also. Then, and only then, does such an organization seek for another kind of power to supply the place of that which is lost.

Thus was it with the church at this time. She had fallen, deplorably fallen, from the purity and the truth, and therefore from the power, of the gospel. And having lost the power of God and of godliness, she greedily grasped for the power of the State and of ungodliness. And to secure laws by which she might enforce her discipline and dogmas upon those whom she had lost the power either to convince or to persuade, was the definite purpose which the bishopric had in view when it struck that bargain with Constantine, and lent him the influence of the church in his imperial aspirations.⁴⁴

The Potter and the Clay

The appropriateness of clay as the symbol of churchcraft is confirmed by God through Jeremiah the Prophet:

Jeremiah 18

¹ The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying:

² Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear my words.

³ Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel.

⁴ And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.

⁵ Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying:

⁶ O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter? says the Lord. Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel!

⁴⁴ *Great Empires of Prophecy*, p. 472, by A. T. Jones.

Jeremiah was instructed to go and observe the potter at work. When he did, the word of the Lord came to him defining the symbols used. The clay represented “the house of Israel,” or the professed people of the Lord. God, the skilled potter, was represented by the maker of the vessels on the wheel.

An earthenware pot has a number of things about it which illustrate the lives of God’s people. In the beginning before the pots are either sun-baked or thoroughly fired in a kiln, they can be shaped again and again. So with our lives. If the individual believer in Jesus keeps his mind open and responsive to the influences of the Holy Spirit, mistakes can be rectified, and fresh beginnings can be made. This is symbolized by the marring of the vessel while the potter was trying to make it, and his attempt to make it again.

But once the baking process has set the clay beyond any further change, it is then too late to remodel the vessel. So it is with human life. If the time comes when prejudice, pride of opinion, and stubbornness blind the eyes and lock the mind, it becomes impossible to penetrate the darkened chambers of the soul. Such a development makes the individual incapable of receiving light and being changed by it.

There is a lesson in the fact that the vessel begins as a wet, shapeless lump of pottery clay. Quite unable to shape itself, it is utterly dependent upon the potter to fashion it into a vessel worth having. So it is with a human messenger of living truth. I think of the helplessness of a human infant. There is nothing it can do for itself except cry for help. So in spiritual matters we are as helpless as a new baby or a lamb which had wandered from the flock.

Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 187:

The sheep that has strayed from the fold is the most helpless of all creatures. It must be sought for by the shepherd, for it cannot find its way back. So with the soul that has wandered away from God; he is as helpless as the lost sheep, and unless divine love had come to his rescue he could never find his way to God.

The Signs of the Times, January 12, 1915:

Nothing can be more helpless and yet more invincible than the soul that feels its nothingness, and relies wholly upon the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. God would send every angel in heaven to the aid of the one who places his whole dependence on Christ, rather than allow him to be overcome.

For those with a true sense of their helplessness and their great personal need, the following promise is written:

The Desire of Ages, p. 669-670:

At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer.

The Vessel and the Treasure

Earthenware vessels come in a very wide range of shapes and sizes usually designed to fit specific needs. Some are used to store liquids such as oils, fruit juices, and water. Others are for the storage of grain, seeds, and flour. But whatever their occupation, their basic way of using them is much the same. They usually stand vertically on their bases and need to be filled by someone else, for they cannot fill themselves. In addition, they usually need to be filled from above. Once filled, they stand ready to serve by their contents being poured out as needed.

So it is that the true believer can only be filled from above, that is, from the infinite supplies which find their Source in heaven above. Then as needed, his life is to be poured out in tender, loving service to others. Thus, he is a channel through which the blessings from above reach needy souls below.

This system of supply meeting the pressing need, is beautifully illustrated when Christ miraculously fed the multitude by starting with only a few small loaves of bread and a couple of fishes. The

supply of power which Christ through His prayer life had received from His Father, served to create the food. He handed this out to His disciples who in turn distributed it to the people until all were satisfied.

The Desire of Ages, p. 370:

The disciples were the channel of communication between Christ and the people. This should be a great encouragement to His disciples today. Christ is the great center, the source of all strength. His disciples are to receive their supplies from Him. The most intelligent, the most spiritually minded, can bestow only as they receive. Of themselves they can supply nothing for the needs of the soul. We can impart only that which we receive from Christ; and we can receive only as we impart to others. As we continue imparting, we continue to receive; and the more we impart, the more we shall receive. Thus we may be constantly believing, trusting, receiving, and imparting.

A well-filled pot may contain very valuable contents, however, the worth is not found in the vessel but in the contents of the vessel, as Paul wrote:

2 Corinthians 4

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

This is another way of describing the Christian's life as being...

Colossians 1

²⁷ Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The treasure in the vessel is Jesus Christ. When He was upon this earth, He was the greatest treasure ever to dwell in an earthen vessel which was His humanity. The humanity of Christ, though filled with this priceless treasure, was but an earthen vessel still. The presence of the treasure in it did not change it from being an earthen vessel into a golden or silver vessel.

Therefore no matter how powerful a witness for Christ you might become, you will still bear the gospel in an earthen vessel; your witness for Christ will still be given through your fallen, sinful, mortal flesh and blood humanity. God could have used much

more spectacular ways of inviting men to partake of the gospel feast, but, in His infinite wisdom, He elected to use humble vessels of clay through which He offers salvation to the lost.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 330:

“We have this treasure,” the apostle continued, “in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” God could have proclaimed His truth through sinless angels, but this is not His plan. He chooses human beings, men compassed with infirmity, as instruments in the working out of His designs. The priceless treasure is placed in earthen vessels.

Through men His blessings are to be conveyed to the world. Through them His glory is to shine forth into the darkness of sin. In loving ministry they are to meet the sinful and the needy, and lead them to the cross. And in all their work they are to ascribe glory, honor, and praise to Him who is above all and over all.

The Vessel Filled With Corruption

The final manifestation of human devising, when man will seek on a worldwide basis to establish his ways of kingdom-building in the place of God’s, will be the most masterful counterfeit he has ever conceived and executed. But instead of the treasure in the vessel, there will be the mingling of the clay vessel with iron. The mingling of statecraft and churchcraft will be the setting up of the image of the beast.

This will be the devotion of the civil powers to the enforcement of religious legislation. The law of God will be the object of attack as men issue laws requiring all people everywhere to regard Sunday as being the sacred day of the week.

The Great Controversy, p. 593:

Isaiah 8

²⁰ To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness. Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions. At every revival of God’s

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

The Great Controversy, p. 464:

The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work [of the latter rain]; 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.

For us to have any prospect of penetrating that disguise, we must sharpen our spiritual perceptions and increase our capacity to cope with the powers of darkness. That which leads up to the establishment of the master counterfeit of God's system will be the deepest spiritual darkness ever to develop on this planet.

The most recent cause of the magnitude of this counterfeit was the failure of the Advent people to complete the work which God gave them to do. No longer willing to advance in aggressive Christian warfare, they sank back into the Laodicean condition from which deceived state they have never recovered. Thus there has been no significant stemming of the flood tide of apostasy in the world.

Apostasy is always attended by ruin. The deeper the apostasy, the more terrible and extensive the ruin. Finally the ruin will be total in nation after nation, until the destruction becomes global.

The Faithful Will Be Blamed

In the meantime the forces of law and order will be plagued by increasing impotency, and they will be viewed as having lost the

power to control the criminal elements in the world. The state will become ready for any solution while the arguments are advanced that the true Sabbath-keepers are the real cause of all the troubles in the world:

The Great Controversy, p. 590:

And then the great deceiver will persuade men that those who serve God are causing these evils. The class that have provoked the displeasure of Heaven will charge all their troubles upon those whose obedience to God's commandments is a perpetual reproof to transgressors. It will be declared that men are offending God by the violation of the Sunday sabbath; that this sin has brought calamities which will not cease until Sunday observance shall be strictly enforced; and that those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus destroying reverence for Sunday, are troublers of the people, preventing their restoration to divine favor and temporal prosperity.

Thus the accusation urged of old against the servant of God will be repeated and upon grounds equally well established:

1 Kings 18

¹⁷ And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Are you he that troubles Israel?

¹⁸ And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but you, and your father's house, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and you have followed Baalim.

As the wrath of the people shall be excited by false charges, they will pursue a course toward God's ambassadors very similar to that which apostate Israel pursued toward Elijah.

These arguments will be perfectly calculated to excite the fury of the people who, up to the time of these events, will have shown no noticeable disposition to blame others for the fearful losses of health, property, and lives. The peoples of this earth have endured incredible natural disasters and crimes over the past few years in particular—earthquakes, floods, droughts, volcanic eruptions, terrorism, and much more. So far, all of this has remained largely free from “Sunday desecration” charges and agitation.

But it will come. It will start with the effort to establish Sunday worship as the solution to all men's woes and troubles. Those who set about this work will do so with the gravest concern for the security and well being of the people.

- They will be deeply religious and will truly believe that they are the actual messengers of the Most High.
- They will emerge upon the scene in earnest and claim to be totally dedicated to the Lord and His people.
- They will sing the same hymns as true Sabbath-keepers;
- They will confess that Jesus Christ is the Saviour and coming King;
- They will quote from the same Bible, and work miracles of healing and conversion.

Powerful will be their assertions that they are totally committed to building God's kingdom, and the true people of God must be prepared to recognize that they mean what they say. Not one, but both sides will be determined to achieve the same general objectives.

Where then does the difference lie? The unified church and state will set about building the kingdom of God in the wrong way. They will insist on the continuation of these wrong procedures despite the repeated Scriptural warnings to the contrary. This way of kingdom building is unacceptable to God because it produces the greatest possible evils and eventually results in total destruction.

A Warning from Heaven

That which will accentuate the situation once the Sunday agitation begins will be the sounding forth of the most fearful warnings ever addressed to mortals. This will be given in the awesome power of the latter rain. Men and women will rise up against this light which will greatly publicize the truth of God's ways of kingdom building as opposed to man's. Everywhere there will be intense agitation as men and women strive with all their powers to either stifle the message or to understand and then proclaim it.

The Great Controversy, p. 449:

The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the third angel's message. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. Men are not to be left in darkness concerning this important matter; the warning against this sin is to be given to the world before the visitation of God's judgments, that all may know why they are to be inflicted, and have opportunity to escape them.

Prophecy declares that the first angel would make his announcement to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." The warning of the third angel, which forms a part of the same threefold message, is to be no less widespread. It is represented in the prophecy as being proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and it will command the attention of the world.

That warning will be directed against the beast and his image which is the union of churchcraft and statecraft. But as surely as these two will not mix, so surely will the immense, worldwide problems not be solved but rather become worse and still worse, until there will be nothing left, apart from the seven last plagues to complete the work of total devastation.

When the plagues fell on ancient Egypt, and ever since, most people have unquestionably believed that each scourge was a deliberate punishment administered by God on His enemies. But the closing up of the great controversy will reveal that all plagues, whether they be in the past, present, or future, are the fruit of the transgression of God's law of life.

The mingling of churchcraft and statecraft will likewise stand exposed as the source of the most terrible woes which could ever happen to mankind.

27. Righteousness Exalts a Nation

Messenger and News Review, January 1996

Daniel 2:46-49

THE closing verses of *Daniel 2* reveal that the impact of the dream and its interpretation on the mind of the Babylonian monarch was very great.

Daniel 2

⁴⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him.

⁴⁷ The king answered Daniel, and said, Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.

⁴⁸ Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon.

⁴⁹ Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

This was a happy outcome for the faithful four who had risked their lives in order to fulfill God's purpose of conveying the truth of the gospel to the king.

Their Initial Prospects

When the mission was first presented to them, a human assessment of their prospects of survival, were they to faithfully deliver God's message to the king, would have given them little chance of staying alive. There were a number of factors, under normal circumstances, which would have assured this:

1. The king was already enraged by the failure of the wise men to stand by their pretentious claims.
2. Nor would he, who had shown himself to be a Babylonian through and through, be inclined to show respect for those who carried the very principles against which he had been at war up to that time, principles which he believed would utterly destroy Babylon.

3. Furthermore, to be saved by youthful Hebrews in such a critical situation where his best wise men had so utterly failed him, was a serious blow to the monarchy. Normally speaking, this would have been unacceptable to the king.

The same kind of situation had faced the youthful David in his confrontation with the Philistine giant, Goliath. When that mighty warrior challenged Israel to send a champion with whom he could fight, he expected them to send a great and powerful man of war. But when a youth appeared unprotected even by armor, and carrying no other weapons than a slingshot, he felt that he was being treated with contempt. Infuriated by this blow to his pride, he planned to quickly dispose of the “insignificant” shepherd boy.

But David had instructions from the Lord directing him to fight Goliath and, once they had been given to him, he was required to obey them implicitly. Likewise, Daniel was placed in a life-threatening situation when he was commissioned to deliver a message to the king of Babylon. Neither of these two great men of faith were to question God’s directives. It was not for them to assess their chances of success on the one hand, or the possibility of failure on the other. Instead, they were to obey the principle that Christians are not to concern themselves with consequences. These they were to leave entirely with God. The results were altogether God’s responsibility.

The Great Controversy, p. 609-610:

The same trials have been experienced by men of God in ages past. Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Tyndale, Baxter, Wesley, urged that all doctrines be brought to the test of the Bible and declared that they would renounce everything which it condemned. Against these men persecution raged with relentless fury; yet they ceased not to declare the truth.

Different periods in the history of the church have each been marked by the development of some special truth, adapted to the necessities of God’s people at that time. Every new truth has made its way against hatred and opposition; those who were blessed with its light were tempted and tried.

The Lord gives a special truth for the people in an emergency. Who dare refuse to publish it? He commands His servants to present the last invitation of mercy to the world. They cannot remain silent, except at the peril of their souls. Christ's ambassadors have nothing to do with consequences. They must perform their duty and leave results with God.

It was most certainly a dire emergency which suddenly burst upon Daniel and his three friends on that fateful day. There can be no greater emergency than the threatened destruction of God's people either by apostasy or death. After the test concerning the king's diet some years before, only four people emerged as God's truly faithful servants in the king's court. Now those four were greatly endangered. As this crisis over the king's forgotten dream developed, the threat against the continuation of the church in the Babylonian court grew worse with every passing minute. It was truly a critical emergency to meet which God gave special truth which He required His people to declare.

Although to proclaim that message seemed suicidal, Daniel dared not refuse to publish it. He could not remain silent except at the peril of his soul. He knew that he had nothing to do with consequences. He had to perform his duty and leave results with God.

Jesus taught this principle when He refused to yield to the pressure to break His forty-day fast in the desert. There He demonstrated that obedience at any cost is what the Lord requires of us and which is the only safe course to follow. All else is the way of death. It must be clearly understood that God does not require this obedience merely as the means of enforcing His supreme authority. He knows the consequences that will arise from any attempt to build His kingdom in any other way. Therefore, He issues instructions, which if faultlessly obeyed, will guarantee success.

The Desire of Ages, p. 121:

Matthew 4

⁴ Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Often the follower of Christ is brought where he cannot serve God and carry forward his worldly enterprises. Perhaps it appears that obedience to some plain requirement of God will cut off his means of support. Satan would make him believe that he must sacrifice his conscientious convictions. But the only thing in our world upon which we can rely is the word of God.

Matthew 6

³³ Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Even in this life it is not for our good to depart from the will of our Father in heaven. When we learn the power of His word, we shall not follow the suggestions of Satan in order to obtain food or to save our lives. Our only questions will be, What is God's command? and what His promise? Knowing these, we shall obey the one, and trust the other.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 290:

The cloud that was a wall of darkness to the Egyptians was to the Hebrews a great flood of light, illuminating the whole camp, and shedding brightness upon the path before them. So the dealings of Providence bring to the unbelieving, darkness and despair, while to the trusting soul they are full of light and peace. The path where God leads the way may lie through the desert or the sea, but it is a safe path.

Regardless of Cost

The events which took place in Daniel's life will be repeated in the final chapters of the history of God's people and the world. Only those who, like Daniel, have nothing to do with consequences, will be successful instruments in God's service. They must perform their duty under God's direction regardless of the cost.

It is good to remember that in a crisis, whether great or small, we will always feel a pressure. Perhaps our good name, livelihood, possessions, or even our lives will be threatened. The natural reaction of human nature is to take the easiest course to save ourselves from loss. However, it is a reliable rule that if we make our own plans to save ourselves from disaster, then the results of our mistakes will certainly overtake us sooner or later. On the

other hand, if we ignore the threat which has arisen because of obedience to God's commands no matter how terrible or total the consequences might appear to be, God will give us a solution to the problem which will turn out to be thoroughly satisfying. Jesus solemnly warned us to be on guard against the satanic trap of our own works.

Luke 9

²⁴ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

Pilate's attempt to save his position when he was called upon to sentence Christ to crucifixion, is an excellent example of the out-working of this principle.

The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 3, p. 146:

The implied threat in the declaration of the priests, regarding his allegiance to Caesar, intimidated Pilate, so that he yielded to the demands of the mob, and delivered Jesus up to the crucifixion rather than risk losing his position. But the very thing he dreaded came upon him afterward in spite of his precautions. His honors were stripped from him; he was cast down from his high office; and, stung by remorse and wounded pride, he committed suicide not long after the crucifixion.

Another who sought to save himself was Felix. He rejected the truth brought to him by God through the ministry of Paul, and like Pilate, by trying to save himself, he lost both his earthly and his heavenly treasure.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 427:

Felix was finally summoned to Rome because of gross wrongs committed against the Jews. Before leaving Caesarea in answer to this summons, he thought to "show the Jews a pleasure" by allowing Paul to remain in prison. But Felix was not successful in his attempt to regain the confidence of the Jews. He was removed from office in disgrace, and Porcius Festus was appointed to succeed him, with headquarters at Caesarea.

The possible fate which threatened good Queen Esther when she wished to make an appeal for the lives of God's people, was death. But she ignored the consequence with the words,

Esther 4

¹⁶ If I perish, I perish.

The result never overtook her. Instead, she performed her duty with perfect success as the dedicated instrument whereby God was able to save His chosen people from destruction.

The Happy Outcome

It was most fortunate that Daniel and his three friends had rejected any temptation to save their lives by compromising the message God had given them to preach, for, had they followed this policy, not only would they have completely failed to acquire a knowledge of the dream, but would themselves have lost their lives in consequence. That would not have been a happy outcome but rather a tragic one both for the cause of the truth and for the four young men personally.

But, by faithfully living out the principle that they were not to concern themselves with the consequences of obedience, they reaped much more than deliverance from death. Like Joseph, they were appointed the highest administrative posts in the land where they were answerable only to the king. Daniel was made...

Daniel 2

⁴⁸ ...ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon.

Now the outcome became a very happy one. The wonderful blessings extended beyond the saving of the faithful four to the church of God. Think of the power which Daniel wielded over the mightiest kingdom on the earth at that time! Remember, he was still but a young man less than twenty-five years of age when this drama was enacted. To successfully occupy so exalted a position normally required years of experience and many hours of special training, so many in fact, that only mature or aging men could qualify. Furthermore, such high places were usually barred to foreigners, unless one appeared of really exceptional ability and who had confirmed his loyalty to the new regime to a point beyond all question, doubt, or danger.

As far as King Nebuchadnezzar was concerned, Daniel's lack of practical experience constituted no problem. Instead, he saw in this incredible young man, capacities almost beyond belief which more than made up for any shortage of practical experience. The king was fully satisfied that Daniel could and would fill the position better than any other man on earth. He trusted Daniel to render undeviating loyalty to him at all times and in all places.

Furthermore, he saw plainly that this man had an open communion with the God of heaven, the God who had just performed a wonder that none of his gods could do. He believed that this God would give Daniel all he needed to discharge his duties and that no problem could defy Him. The king found in Daniel a person of such flawless integrity and humility that he felt perfectly secure with him. To a ruler this was a coveted situation, for the thrones of powerful potentates were forever under the threat of usurpation by ambitious seekers for power. It has been wisely said that:

"Uneasy lies the head which wears a crown."⁴⁵

When a man is appointed to be the chief administrator over all the wise men of the nation, there is given into his hands the power to shape that nation. This is expected of him. Furthermore, the man chosen is appointed because his convictions best express the will of the leader or leaders of that nation.

I saw this principle in operation a few years ago when, due to a vacancy in the Supreme Court of the United States of America, a new Justice was nominated by the President to occupy the position. Before taking office, the appointment had to be ratified by the Senate. For days the candidate was searchingly questioned to ascertain his position on current and past issues. So searching was the examination, so difficult was it to satisfy the various examiners, that I wondered how anyone could ever hope to gain the support of enough senators to be accepted for the position. When the vote was taken, this particular Justice failed to be accepted.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ William Shakespeare, *Henry IV*, Part Two, Act 3, Scene 1.

⁴⁶ Editorial note: Most likely Fred is referring to the nomination of Robert Bork in 1987, under the Reagan presidency.

When Nebuchadnezzar appointed Daniel a high position, he did so because he approved of the influence he would have over the kingdom. The king did not give his own personal position and power to Daniel so that Daniel had unlimited sway over the kingdom. He still considered everyone under him as servants of his interests. But the king was in the process of conversion. Daniel's interests were becoming his interests.

Even though he did not understand nor did he accept all of Daniel's thinking, he was so impressed that he was willing that Daniel influence the nation according to the righteous ways as outlined by the God of heaven and manifested in Daniel's own life. For Babylon, a new era had begun. It was the dawn of a new day. Just as God had gently and lovingly sought to convert the king through Daniel, so he sought to convert the nation through his faithful and powerful servant.

Cause and Effect

The move to elevate Daniel indicates that the king was greatly impressed by the principles of righteousness as revealed by the great image, the stone which destroyed it, and the two mountains. It was dawning upon the king's mind that:

Proverbs 14

³⁴ Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

Education, p. 175:

To understand these things,—to understand that righteousness exalts a nation; that “the throne is established by righteousness” and “upheld by mercy” (*Proverbs* 14:34; 16:12; 20:28); to recognize the outworking of these principles in the manifestation of His power who “removes kings, and sets up kings” (*Daniel* 2:21),—this is to understand the philosophy of history.

How different history would have been if Israel had diligently established themselves as a righteous nation instead of trying to build a kingdom of righteousness by using unrighteous principles of operation! This cannot be done. It is as futile as any attempt to

produce good fruit on a bad tree. Destruction has always been the result of attempting to build kingdoms of power and permanency in this way.

A truly excellent example of this is the seed-sowing which led to the French Revolution.

The Great Controversy, p. 277-278:

Little did the rulers of the land [France] foresee the results of that fateful policy. The teaching of the Bible would have im-
planted in the minds and hearts of the people those principles of justice, temperance, truth, equity, and benevolence which are the very cornerstone of a nation's prosperity.

Proverbs 14

³⁴ Righteousness exalts a nation.

Thereby,

Proverbs 16

¹² ...the throne is established.

Isaiah 32

¹⁷ The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect,...quietness and assurance forever.

He who obeys the divine law will most truly respect and obey the laws of his country. He who fears God will honor the king in the exercise of all just and legitimate authority.

But unhappy France prohibited the Bible and banned its disciples. Century after century, men of principle and integrity, men of intellectual acuteness and moral strength, who had the courage to avow their convictions and the faith to suffer for the truth—for centuries these men toiled as slaves in the galleys, perished at the stake, or rotted in dungeon cells. Thousands upon thousands found safety in flight; and this continued for two hundred and fifty years after the opening of the Reformation.

It is the purpose of the divine Teacher to reveal to every ruler of men, from world leaders down to the lowliest of earth's administrators, that the way of righteousness is the only way in which God's kingdom on earth can be built. To achieve this objective on a world-wide level, what the Lord needs are spiritually powerful teachers who are as able as Daniel was to open the eyes of kings and rulers to the point where they will be entirely convinced that

this is the only safe course to follow. They will then follow where King Nebuchadnezzar led the way and will not repeat the tragic mistakes which ruined France and every other nation in history which rejected God's ways.

The principles established in these great lessons from the past are as valid today as when they were given long ago. They cannot be otherwise for they are the expression of God's eternal, unchanging laws. The success or failure of a nation is the outworking of cause and effect, not the whimsical, political, ever-changing decrees of finite man.

Just the same, many, even Christians, do not see the present day relevance of the lives and lessons of the past. The past will remain theoretical until we are able to translate it into a personal experience. Only when history becomes our experience will God be able to fulfill His desire to reveal through the children and youth of today, the same truths which He was able to reveal through Daniel and Joseph in their times. What a wonderful day it will be when the prophecy contained in the following paragraph is abundantly fulfilled!

Education, p. 57:

The same mighty truths that were revealed through these men, God desires to reveal through the youth and the children of today. The history of Joseph and Daniel is an illustration of what He will do for those who yield themselves to Him and with the whole heart seek to accomplish His purpose.

What are the same mighty truths which God showed through Daniel and Joseph and which He desires to reveal today through those who with the whole heart seek to accomplish His purpose?

1. Primarily, the great truth to be revealed is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the power of God to deliver from all forms of sin and sickness, and to establish within each believer the spirit of truth and abundant health.
2. Another truth revealed in the gospel is that righteousness exalts a kingdom, irrespective of how large or small that kingdom is.

Kingdom-Building

When the Lord taught us to pray, “Your kingdom come,”⁴⁷ He directed us to ask that the kingdom of God be established within us. But, what constitutes a kingdom? This question cannot here be answered from all angles, but let us consider the aspect of government.

All kingdoms must have a leader, whether a king, president, or simply a person in charge. There is usually at least one person with whom he consults, and there needs to be at least one subject. A family unit composed of a father, mother, and a child, is a kingdom. That is about as small a kingdom as can be found among human beings. At the other end of the scale, kingdoms grow to immense proportions, but they are kingdoms still. Usually, the larger and more powerful they become, the more oppressive is their rulership, though this need not be.

Two examples of larger kingdoms are the Israelites and the Egyptians. By permitting the Israelites to spend time as slaves of the lordly citizens of the kingdom of Egypt, God sought to teach both the Egyptians and the Hebrews that righteousness exalts a nation, while unrighteousness utterly destroys it no matter how large or small, complex or simple its organizational structure might be.

However, both the Hebrews and their oppressors failed to learn the lesson and forged their own fetters. The plagues reduced the number of the Egyptians and many perished by drowning in the Red Sea. Although the children of Israel were marvelously delivered from Egypt, they were eventually scattered far and wide, their beautiful city was destroyed, and their glorious temple desolated. It seemed that the pattern would go on forever without remission as nation followed nation from prosperity down to ruin.

Some more examples are the Philistines, Moabites, Canaanites, Ninevites, Assyrians, Edomites, Babylonians, Medes, Persians, Greeks, Romans, and all the would-be world conquerors who

⁴⁷ *Matthew* 6:10.

have ever attempted to raise themselves up. To them all, in one way or another, God sent the wonderful truth that righteousness establishes and exalts a nation. But, among them all, there was not one found who was prepared to abide in the truth. Though some made good beginnings, they subsequently rejected the principle that righteousness exalts a nation.

One bright spot among others in history marks the time and place where four young men most powerfully revealed this truth in word and life. That they could do this without stirring up the wrath of the king, but instead inspired him to active emulation, was a thrilling achievement worthy of being copied by other nations. The Babylonian monarch thought so highly of these kingdom-building principles as far as he saw them that he purposed to exalt his kingdom by appointing Daniel...

Daniel 2

⁴⁸ ...ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon.

With Daniel in such a position of control, one can be sure that the kingdom of Babylon was governed more and more in the ways of righteousness and that it was being exalted higher and higher.

There had been other bright spots in history when the mighty patriarchs and prophets before and after the flood built their kingdoms in righteousness. After the flood there were men like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, various judges, Samuel, and various kings and prophets. Just so far as their influence extended, all these men and women bore the message that righteousness establishes a kingdom, exalts it, and secures its future. On the other hand, unrighteousness is the embodiment of all that is divisive and destructive. This was the message unfolded to the king in the remarkable dream of the multi-metaleal image.

Wisely, God began from a point of reference with which King Nebuchadnezzar was familiar, namely, the established kingdom of Babylon. He knew how that kingdom was built, for he was the one who had built it. He knew of the rivers of blood which had

been shed by soldiers in battle, of the cruelty practiced in slave labor, of the suffering endured, the exaltation of selfishness, and all the other evils practiced. He saw, as the Holy Spirit quickened his perceptions of right and wrong, that his magnificent kingdom, Babylon, had surely been built in unrighteousness, and therefore would be not exalted, but abased. He saw that only a change could save his proud city.

For a time, the conditions would be met, and for a time, Babylon's disintegration would be delayed. Upon King Nebuchadnezzar's death, those who inherited his throne displayed a fatal rejection of the principle that righteousness exalts a kingdom, and returned to the policy of building a kingdom upon unrighteousness. The inevitable result was decay and ruin.

Likewise the Medo-Persians plunged into their program of world conquest with total disregard for the lessons of immediate history. They went forward as if there was not a single lesson to be learned from any or all of the great nations of the past. In consequence, Medo-Persia rose and fell as did Babylon before it. So in turn, for exactly the same reasons, Greece, Rome, and the divided kingdoms were to rise and fall.

God has not arbitrarily interfered in the process, but has given to man unlimited freedom to choose whether he will learn the great lesson of history or reject its plain and pointed message.

In the meantime, God has been building a kingdom exalted by righteousness as symbolized by the mighty stone cut from the mountain without hands. Though its principles are despised by men, in the soon-coming climax of human history men will receive the final demonstration of the outworking of the awful experiment of man's way of kingdom-building on the one hand, and of the divine answer on the other.

The king was so convinced by what he heard that night long ago, that he was prepared to accept counsel issuing from Daniel. The king did this in regard to Daniel's asking that his three friends also be appointed to very high positions in the kingdom. During the drama surrounding the revelation of the dream and its

interpretation, it appears that Daniel was the main person. It was he who interceded for time, received the revelation from heaven, thanked the Lord for the great blessing received, stood before the king, and received the adoration from the monarch.

Daniel recognized that he was now located in a position of marvelous opportunity to establish Babylon as a righteous nation. As a part of that work he needed men like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who were one with him in mind and heart. There were none to equal these three as Daniel's helpers. And the work of righteousness was greatly advanced by their ministries. Their work eventually resulted in the king's conversion. But Daniel himself sat in the king's court, the position where he was best able to watch over the affairs of the nation.

28. The Image All of Gold

Messenger and News Review, February 1996

Daniel 3:1-7

DANIEL chapter 2 closed with Babylon's king acknowledging the power of God, but the next chapter opens with a remarkable reversal. So it was that the mighty king erected his golden statue and commanded the representatives of all the governing bodies of the world to bow down to it.

Daniel 3

¹ Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

² And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

³ So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁴ Then a herald cried aloud: To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,

⁵ That at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up;

⁶ And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

⁷ So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, and lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

This was an authoritative command which declared that death by fire awaited all who failed to obey. No one doubted his ruth-

less determination to fully carry out his decree. It was a very serious moment in history.

The Intended Message

But what was the king really saying and why? The form of the image was an accurate reproduction of the one he had seen in his dream. However, the difference was that it was made entirely of gold, whereas in the original, only the head was made of gold. By this the king was saying that Babylon would have no successors, and would remain the ruler of the world forever. He was saying with all the force he could command that there would be no kingdoms of silver, bronze, iron, or clay. Most important of all, he was saying that there would be no great stone signifying the coming of Christ's eternal kingdom.

Prophets and Kings, p. 503-505:

The dream of the great image, opening before Nebuchadnezzar events reaching to the close of time, had been given that he might understand the part he was to act in the world's history, and the relation that his kingdom should sustain to the kingdom of heaven. In the interpretation of the dream, he had been plainly instructed regarding the establishment of God's everlasting kingdom.

Daniel 2

⁴⁴ In the days of these kings, [Daniel had declared,] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

⁴⁵ ...the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

The king had acknowledged the power of God, saying to Daniel,

⁴⁷ Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods,...and a revealer of secrets.

For a time afterward, Nebuchadnezzar was influenced by the fear of God; but his heart was not yet cleansed from worldly ambition and a desire for self-exaltation. The prosperity attending his reign filled him with pride. In time he ceased to honor God, and resumed his idol worship with increased zeal and bigotry.

The words,

Daniel 2

³⁸ You are this head of gold,

—had made a deep impression upon the ruler's mind. The wise men of his realm, taking advantage of this and of his return to idolatry, proposed that he make an image similar to the one seen in his dream, and set it up where all might behold the head of gold, which had been interpreted as representing his kingdom.

Pleased with the flattering suggestion, he determined to carry it out, and to go even farther. Instead of reproducing the image as he had seen it, he would excel the original. His image should not deteriorate in value from the head to the feet, but should be entirely of gold—symbolic throughout of Babylon as an eternal, indestructible, all-powerful kingdom, which should break in pieces all other kingdoms and stand forever.

The thought of establishing the empire and a dynasty that should endure forever, appealed very strongly to the mighty ruler before whose arms the nations of earth had been unable to stand. With an enthusiasm born of boundless ambition and selfish pride, he entered into counsel with his wise men as to how to bring this about. Forgetting the remarkable providences connected with the dream of the great image; forgetting also that the God of Israel through His servant Daniel had made plain the significance of the image, and that in connection with this interpretation the great men of the realm had been saved an ignominious death; forgetting all except their desire to establish their own power and supremacy, the king and his counselors of state determined that by every means possible they would endeavor to exalt Babylon as supreme, and worthy of universal allegiance.

The symbolic representation by which God had revealed to king and people His purpose for the nations of earth, was now to be made to serve for the glorification of human power. Daniel's interpretation was to be rejected and forgotten; truth was to be misinterpreted and misapplied. The symbol designed of Heaven to unfold to the minds of men important events of the future, was to be used to hinder the spread of the knowledge that God desired the world to receive. Thus through the devisings of ambitious men, Satan was seeking to thwart the divine purpose for the human race. The enemy of mankind knew that truth un-

mixed with error is a power mighty to save; but that when used to exalt self and to further the projects of men, it becomes a power for evil.

The image was most likely the largest, most beautiful, and most costly golden image ever erected. It stood sixty cubits in height and six cubits in width. According to *Grolier's Encyclopedia*, a cubit was the distance between the tip of a man's longest finger and his elbow. This measurement varied from person to person, but, on an average, a cubit was close to twenty inches or half a meter. In that case, the image stood about thirty meters or ninety-eight feet in height, and about three meters or ten feet in width.

We are not informed as to how it was supported, or whether it was solid or overlaid with gold. But standing alone, erect, and tall, it commanded the attention of all those who traveled within viewing distance of it. The brilliant sunshine reflecting off its polished surface was dazzling and added to its beauty. It was designed to exalt the majesty and power of the monarchy of Babylon. In this objective it was evidently very successful, for practically every official there bowed down.

Prophets and Kings, p. 505-506:

From his rich store of treasure, Nebuchadnezzar caused to be made a great golden image, similar in its general features to that which had been seen in vision, save in the one particular of the material of which it was composed. Accustomed as they were to magnificent representations of their heathen deities, the Chaldeans had never before produced anything so imposing and majestic as this resplendent statue, threescore cubits in height and six cubits in breadth. And it is not surprising that in a land where idol worship was of universal prevalence, the beautiful and priceless image in the plain of Dura, representing the glory of Babylon and its magnificence and power, should be consecrated as an object of worship. This was accordingly provided for, and a decree went forth that on the day of the dedication all should show their supreme loyalty to the Babylonian power by bowing before the image.

History Will Be Repeated

In this story is to be seen the outworking of the same principles of good and evil which repeat themselves from generation to generation. That which has gone before will happen again, not necessarily in every detail, but in principle. Therefore, the better we understand these events from the past, the better we shall know what we to expect in the future conflict. This is verified in the following statement:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1169:

By many, the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is made void, being treated as a thing of naught; while the spurious sabbath, the child of the papacy, is exalted. In the place of God's laws, are elevated the laws of the man of sin,—laws that are to be received and regarded as the wonderful golden image of Nebuchadnezzar was by the Babylonians. Forming this great image, Nebuchadnezzar commanded that it should receive universal homage from all, both great and small, high and low, rich and poor.

King Nebuchadnezzar's forces were represented by the costly image. In addition there were the armed forces, the musical fanfare, and the glittering display of richly clad officials from every land under the king's authority. The monarch intended that the assembling of these forces should so thoroughly awe-inspire the multitude gathered that they would be intimidated into submitting to the royal decrees. Then, should all else fail, there was always the burning, fiery furnace which was reserved for any who dared to question the authority of the Babylonian kingdom.

1 Corinthians 10

¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

What took place in the setting up of that great and mighty image is already taking place again. Millions, through the influence of the great Protestant Reformation and the third angel's message, turned toward the truth that Babylon the Great will fall never to rise again, as foretold in *Revelation* 18:21-24. Convicted

of this, they rejoiced in freedom from Babylon's ways as far as they had recognized the truth.

But the light was not cherished, and today the fruit of Babylon's principles and procedures has brought the entire world to the place where the threat of total destruction looms larger and larger. The time is fast approaching when there will be advanced a great solution, to which everyone will be required to render unconditional homage. At first, the mildest measures will be employed, but when these fail to bring the required obedience, more and more forceful means will be employed. Nothing will be permitted to stand in the way of the new universal religion.

Signs of the Times, May 6, 1897:

History will be repeated. False religion will be exalted. The first day of the week, a common working day, possessing no sanctity whatever, will be set up as was the image at Babylon. All nations and tongues and peoples will be commanded to worship this spurious sabbath. This is Satan's plan to make of no account the day instituted by God, and given to the world as a memorial of creation.

The decree enforcing the worship of this day is to go forth to all the world. In a limited degree, it has already gone forth. In several places the civil power is speaking with the voice of a dragon, just as the heathen king spoke to the Hebrew captives.

Trial and persecution will come to all who, in obedience to the Word of God, refuse to worship this false sabbath. Force is the last resort of every false religion. At first it tries attraction, as the king of Babylon tried the power of music and outward show. If these attractions, invented by men inspired by Satan, failed to make men worship the image, the hungry flames of the furnace were ready to consume them. So it will be now. The papacy has exercised her power to compel men to obey her, and she will continue to do so. We need the same spirit that was manifested by God's servants in the conflict with paganism.

29. Tried by Fire

Messenger and News Review, March 1996

Daniel 3:2-30

Unconditional Loyalty Required

ON THAT great day appointed for the worship of the golden image, King Nebuchadnezzar did not summon all the people of the earth to assemble on the plain of Dura. He called instead certain key people who came as representatives of the general populace. They were...

Daniel 3

² ...the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces.

This was an organized attempt to secure an unconditional statement of loyalty to the Babylonian regime from all his subjects. Each official, duly impressed with the overwhelming influence of this great golden masterpiece and the exercises performed around it, was expected to convey this message of authority with them back to their own territory, thus hopefully setting at nought any thoughts anyone might have of initiating an uprising against the existing government.

At first, it seemed to be successful, for when the orchestra began to play, all bowed down in submission to the king's command. As far as the king could see, there was not one person who remained standing. It was a sight which must have greatly pleased him in his anxiety to really establish his own dynasty and thus secure the Babylonian throne to his family forever.

This is the great ambition cherished by every earthly ruler of men, but realized by none. The best that man can do is to hold the kingdom in the family for no more than a few generations. Then in one way or another, the royal line is broken, and a new family rules the kingdom. In this respect, the kingdom symbolized by the great stone cut out of the mountain without hands will be differ-

ent. It will be an everlasting kingdom never to be replaced by another.

Everywhere the people bowed down except in one place where three young men stood erect. They apparently were located in a position where they could not be seen by the king, but whose vertical stand was noted and reported by certain Chaldeans.

Daniel 3

⁸ Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews.

⁹ They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live forever!

¹⁰ You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image;

¹¹ And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

¹² There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.

God's Protection

These accusers of God's people had a very different character from that of Daniel. When the Chaldeans were in a great crisis, Daniel had said,

Daniel 2

²⁴ Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation.

Thus Daniel used his influence to save the lives of these people. Daniel knew perfectly well that if the situation had been reversed, the Chaldeans would have done nothing to save him and his friends but would have pressed the king for an order of execution against them. Satan is the great destroyer, and he thinks nothing of destroying even his own people along with God's people if thereby he can satisfy his hatred of Christ's work.

The Great Controversy, p. 36:

We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. It is the restraining power of God that prevents mankind from passing fully under the control of Satan. The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God's mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one.

Daniel and his three friends certainly needed divine protection in the court of the Babylonian king when Satan seemingly had the opportunity to slay them along with the wise men of Babylon. To them that protection was readily available on three counts.

1. LIVING WITHOUT KNOWN SIN

In the first case they were living without known sin which condition left God free to establish an impenetrable wall of protection around them. To them was applied the promise:

Psalm 34

⁷ The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.

2. FILLED WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS

In the second case they were filled with righteousness, which indwelling power is in itself the victory over all the power of the wicked one. It was on the cross of Calvary that this victory was confirmed as one of God's great gifts to His people.

The Desire of Ages, p. 490-493:

Beyond the cross of Calvary, with its agony and shame, Jesus looked forward to the great final day, when the prince of the power of the air will meet his destruction in the earth so long marred by his rebellion. Jesus beheld the work of evil forever ended, and the peace of God filling heaven and earth.

Henceforward Christ's followers were to look upon Satan as a conquered foe. Upon the cross, Jesus was to gain the victory for them; that victory He desired them to accept as their own.

Luke 10

¹⁹ Behold, [He said,] I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

The omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit is the defense of every contrite soul. Not one that in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. The Saviour is by the side of His tempted and tried ones. With Him there can be no such thing as failure, loss, impossibility, or defeat; we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. When temptations and trials come, do not wait to adjust all the difficulties, but look to Jesus, your helper.

3. DOING GOD'S WORK

In the third case they were actively engaged in carrying out a crucial commission for the extension of the kingdom of God on earth. When a believer is faithfully and fearlessly obeying God's commands and his work is not yet finished, his life is secure in the hands of the Almighty no matter how threatening or dangerous the situation might become.

Examples of such marvelous protection are found throughout the scriptures. Consider Moses as he boldly entered and left the dangerous presence of Pharaoh time after time. Then there was the feat of David against Goliath and later over the Amalekites. Daniel faced the hungry lions and came back unscathed. Jesus was confronted by demon-possessed men, two great storms at sea, and numerous perils throughout His life on earth. But He was always fully protected so that His life was preserved until, in God's plan for Him, the time came for Him to voluntarily lay down His earthly life.

The Conflict Begins

After the jealous people had reported the Hebrews for refusing to bow before the image, the king flew into a rage and ordered that the faithful three be brought into his presence. Once they arrived there, the angry monarch ordered them to verify their "insubordination," and without waiting for a reply, offered them another opportunity to bow before the image. Once again the orchestra played, and if they prostrated themselves before the image, all would be forgiven, and they could return to their positions again.

On the other hand, should they persist in the stand they had taken, they would be incinerated.

Prophets and Kings, p. 507:

As the three Hebrews stood before the king, he was convinced that they possessed something the other wise men of his kingdom did not have. They had been faithful in the performance of every duty. He would give them another trial. If only they would signify their willingness to unite with the multitude in worshipping the image, all would be well with them;

Daniel 3

¹⁵ But if you worship not, [he added,] you shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

Then with his hand stretched upward in defiance, he demanded,

¹⁵ ...who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

Although the king held these young men in the highest esteem and greatly valued their superior services to the kingdom, he placed the security of his monarchy on a still higher level, as earthly potentates do. He felt that he must make an example of these three, for, should he make an exception in their cases, others would demand the same treatment. He was fully committed to the decree that everyone who refused to bow must die in the furnace regardless of how exalted his position.

Even at this second opportunity, none of the three young men bowed before the image. To them the matter was not open for consideration, discussion, or revision. They knew that for which they stood, and would not compromise God's truth no matter what the consequences might be. The consequences just then were as intimidating as it was possible for them to be—death in a furnace which was heated seven times hotter than usual. So,

Daniel 3

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

¹⁷ If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.

¹⁸ But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.

The faith in these young men was so strong that they grasped the power of God which was much greater than the power of those hungry flames. Unafraid of death or whatever else they might be called upon to suffer, they were ready to live or die as would best serve the interests of the cause of the truth they loved. So it was that they were thrown into the fire. So that we can appreciate how hot the furnace was, the fate of the king's great men of valor is mentioned. When they had approached close enough to hurl the three Hebrews into the furnace, they were too close to survive themselves, and they perished in the intense heat.

Daniel 3

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.

²⁰ And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

²¹ Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

²² Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

²³ And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Just before casting the three young Hebrews into the fire, King Nebuchadnezzar made a boastful challenge against God's power and authority in these words:

¹⁵ And who is the God who will deliver you from my hands?

He was about to see once more that “There is a God in heaven,”⁴⁸ just as Daniel in living faith had said when he revealed the secret dream and its interpretation to the king. When he first heard those words, King Nebuchadnezzar believed them, and acted with the greatest respect and reverence toward the God of heaven, but in the meantime, his faith had devitalized to the point where he regarded himself as more powerful than God. Hear his boastful words again:

Daniel 3

¹⁵ And who is the God who will deliver you from my hands?

He believed at that moment that he was more to be feared than any power on earth below, or in heaven above.

The Signs of the Times, May 6, 1897:

When the king saw that his will was not received as the will of God, he was “full of fury,” and the form of his visage was changed against these men. Satanic attributes made his countenance appear as the countenance of a demon; and with all the force he could command, he ordered that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than its wont, and commanded the most mighty men to bind the youth, and cast them into the furnace. He felt that it required more than ordinary power to deal with these noble men. His mind was strongly impressed that something unusual would interpose in their behalf, and his strongest men were ordered to deal with them.

On that notable day, the power of God was emanating from within those three young servants of God. So powerful was their influence that the heathen king was constrained to take extraordinary steps in an attempt to counteract its effect on himself and his people. But it was a futile effort. The three young Hebrews were unmoved because their faith was firmly based on that power which was the complete master of the king’s mightiest men and his fire. They remained firm even though the king had intensified the heat seven fold.

⁴⁸ *Daniel 2:28.*

Well will it be for the Church of God when the latter rain has deluged it with incredible resources of power by which, once more, the strongest forces men can collectively gather to oppose and destroy God's work will be overcome. Let our faith be exalted to the highest level as we catch greater and still greater views of the awesome power on which living faith is privileged to rest.

A Revelation of the Power of Righteousness

King Nebuchadnezzar was in possession of earthly powers with which he thought to force the world to obey him. What he needed was a fresh revelation of the power of righteousness, and that is precisely what he received.

Daniel 3

²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said to the king, True, O king.

²⁵ Look! he answered, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

The king's fury was now changed to utter astonishment. He had expected the death of the three faithful ones, but instead witnessed them walking around in perfect comfort within the furnace. Furthermore, he saw that a fourth person had joined them who appeared to be like the Son of God, who in fact He was.

Prophets and Kings, p. 509:

From his royal seat the king looked on, expecting to see the men who had defied him utterly destroyed. But his feelings of triumph suddenly changed. The nobles standing near saw his face grow pale as he started from the throne and looked intently into the glowing flames. In alarm the king, turning to his lords, asked,

Daniel 3

²⁴ Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?

²⁵ Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

What a witness to the wonderful power of righteousness! These young men possessed so much spiritual light that, at an earlier time, they were able to convey an accurate representation of the Son of God to the king. This is why he could unhesitatingly recognize the Saviour.

Prophets and Kings, p. 509:

How did that heathen king know what the Son of God was like? The Hebrew captives filling positions of trust in Babylon had in life and character represented before him the truth. When asked for a reason of their faith, they had given it without hesitation. Plainly and simply they had presented the principles of righteousness, thus teaching those around them of the God whom they worshiped. They had told of Christ, the Redeemer to come; and in the form of the fourth in the midst of the fire the king recognized the Son of God.

Now the terrifying arrangement whereby King Nebuchadnezzar set out to secure his kingdom no matter what the cost to others, turned into a beautiful testimony for the permanent establishment of God's kingdom. But at first things did not look that way. The greater Nebuchadnezzar's expense and trouble and the larger the number of witnesses he called, the more frightening were the prospects for God's threatened people. As in Elijah's case at the gates of Jezreel, this is the point where every instinct calls for flight as God's work seems to be engulfed by the enemy.

But instead of being intimidated by the sheer weight of the enemy's preparations for his attack, we can rejoice that his efforts will soon be turned to God's glory. The greater the work of the enemy, the greater the glory to the Almighty, provided we stand faithfully at our appointed post of duty as did the three Hebrews.

When Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego were in controversy with the king, the officials gathered around as closely as possible so as not to miss a single word or fail to witness every detail of the execution. The interest was most intense. In the following moments when it came God's turn to display His power, the same witnesses were already in place, and the testimonies they carried home were the very opposite from what King Nebuchadnezzar

had intended. However, in the end, instead of weakening Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, the whole event served to strengthen it because the king ceased to pursue a downward path of rebellion, and turned again to an acknowledgment of the one true God.

Prophets and Kings, p. 509:

And now, his own greatness and dignity forgotten, Nebuchadnezzar descended from his throne and, going to the mouth of the furnace, cried out,

Daniel 3

²⁶ You servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither.

The three Hebrews showed no sign of leaving the furnace until the king called them out. Then they obeyed immediately. This was as it should have been. King Nebuchadnezzar was their temporal sovereign, and Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego were pledged to obey him in all civil and temporal matters, but when it came to their allegiance to divine authority, that always took precedence. So it was that the ruler who had put them into the furnace must call them out. This he did, and, when he did, they promptly obeyed.

Zeal Without Knowledge

The king was so moved by this demonstration of divine power and its capacity to overturn his well-laid plans, that he promptly issued another decree by which he tried to enforce true religion.

Daniel 3

²⁹ Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.

³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

In taking these steps, King Nebuchadnezzar was setting out to build God's kingdom, but, as is so usual, he sought to do the right thing in the wrong way. The truth of God can never be enforced

on anyone, for in the worship of God only the service of love can be accepted.

Prophets and Kings, p. 510-511:

It was right for the king to make public confession, and to seek to exalt the God of heaven above all other gods; but in endeavoring to force his subjects to make a similar confession of faith and to show similar reverence, Nebuchadnezzar was exceeding his right as a temporal sovereign. He had no more right, either civil or moral, to threaten men with death for not worshiping God, than he had to make the decree consigning to the flames all who refused to worship the golden image. God never compels the obedience of man. He leaves all free to choose whom they will serve.

The great issue in the last days will be over a conflict of religious interests. The great question will not be whether the kingdom of God shall be established, but how it shall be. The great question to be settled is whether God or man will be the great problem-solver. To support their claim, men everywhere will give unqualified endorsement to the grand scheme to unite church and state in the final showdown in the great controversy. This move will be universally acclaimed as the solution for God and man forever. But the laws introduced in order to enforce the grand scheme will be very oppressive to those who refuse to acknowledge and obey them. Fearful will be the persecution which will be brought to bear upon the Lord's faithful ones.

Prophets and Kings, p. 511-513:

By the deliverance of His faithful servants, the Lord declared that He takes His stand with the oppressed, and rebukes all earthly powers that rebel against the authority of Heaven. The three Hebrews declared to the whole nation of Babylon their faith in Him whom they worshiped. They relied on God. In the hour of their trial they remembered the promise,

Isaiah 43

² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you: when you walk through the fire, you shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon you.

And in a marvelous manner their faith in the living Word had been honored in the sight of all. The tidings of their wonderful deliverance were carried to many countries by the representatives of the different nations that had been invited by Nebuchadnezzar to the dedication. Through the faithfulness of His children, God was glorified in all the earth.

Important are the lessons to be learned from the experience of the Hebrew youth on the plain of Dura. In this our day, many of God's servants, though innocent of wrongdoing, will be given over to suffer humiliation and abuse at the hands of those who, inspired by Satan, are filled with envy and religious bigotry. Especially will the wrath of man be aroused against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment; and at last a universal decree will denounce these as deserving of death.

The season of distress before God's people will call for a faith that will not falter. His children must make it manifest that He is the only object of their worship, and that no consideration, not even that of life itself, can induce them to make the least concession to false worship. To the loyal heart the commands of sinful, finite men will sink into insignificance beside the word of the eternal God. Truth will be obeyed though the result be imprisonment or exile or death.

As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, so in the closing period of earth's history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand steadfastly for the right. He who walked with the Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace will be with His followers wherever they are. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain. In the midst of the time of trouble—trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—His chosen ones will stand unmoved. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God's saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf Jehovah will reveal himself as a "God of gods," able to save to the uttermost those who have put their trust in Him.

30. The Great Tree

Messenger and News Review, April 1996

Daniel 4

IN OUR study of the book of *Daniel* we have now arrived at the fourth chapter. After reading it, we can easily imagine it being subtitled “The Book of Nebuchadnezzar.” This point is made because most of it, except verses 28-33, is written in the first person by the great king himself. It is the testimony of his own experience in conversion, for it is the wonderful truth that he eventually became a truly transformed Christian of whom we have this testimony:

The Review and Herald, January 11, 1906:

In Daniel’s life, the desire to glorify God was the most powerful of all motives. He realized that when standing in the presence of men of influence, a failure to acknowledge God as the source of his wisdom would have made him an unfaithful steward. And his constant recognition of the God of heaven before kings, princes, and statesmen, detracted not one iota from his influence. King Nebuchadnezzar, before whom Daniel so often honored the name of God, was finally thoroughly converted, and learned to “praise and extol and honor the King of heaven.”

Softened and Hardened

The conversion of this mighty potentate ranks as one of the greatest achievements of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This king was what one would consider an unlikely candidate for a kingdom inhabited by the meek and lowly. He was triumphant in war, ambitious, proud-spirited, and the great builder of his times. These characteristics were well suited to the hardening of one’s heart, not the softening of it.

Yet, he seems to have had the capacity to honestly see and frankly admit the truth. Through the dream of the image he was convicted of the true philosophy of human history. He was inspired to confess the greatness and power of the God of heaven in terms so unqualified and so sincere that we tend to think that he would remain firm in this decision.

But the time soon came when his feelings changed, and he built the great, golden image on the plain of Dura, the worship of which he enforced by the threat of incineration in a fiery furnace. Then, for the second time, through the fearless ministry of His dedicated servants, God gave the king and his people an incontrovertible demonstration of His power and His righteousness. As a result, the king once again acknowledged who was the real King of kings and Lord of lords.

Unfortunately, this impression did not last, and it was necessary for God to give a further revelation of truth to the king which was in turn followed by an even harder resistance which finally drove him insane for seven years. Incredibly, he recovered his sanity and was fully reinstated as the king of Babylon. Upon his return to the throne, he, now thoroughly converted, recounted this last major experience through which he passed. It is, in short, a wonderful testimony to the saving power of the gospel; a declaration of what can be achieved when once God's power has been permitted to work on the sinner's heart.

It is also an assurance that God will not abandon the one who is prepared to honestly acknowledge the truth when it is shown to him. Furthermore, we are led to understand that great power is required to overcome the unbelief, pride, and misconceptions of God's character which obstruct the work of the gospel. No weak presentation of the gospel will serve to win souls to the truth. All the way through the book of *Daniel* we find the presence of great power within each one of God's faithful servants in every encounter with the king of Babylon.

Unfortunately, human beings appear better able to handle adversity than prosperity. In the hour of grave necessity they cast their helpless selves upon their Saviour, but once the peril is past, they become complacent and fail to maintain a close and living connection with the Source of their strength. By this means God is disappointed and robbed of His glory.

Education, p. 80:

To the secret place of the Most High, under the shadow of the Almighty, men now and then repair; they abide for a season, and the result is manifest in noble deeds; then their faith fails, the communion is interrupted, and the life work marred. But the life of Jesus was a life of constant trust, sustained by continual communion; and His service for heaven and earth was without failure or faltering.

Neither God nor Daniel ever surrendered their efforts to bring salvation to King Nebuchadnezzar. Even when the outlook appeared the darkest, they still grasped every opportunity to stand uncompromisingly for the right, and they were rewarded for their efforts. We too would win more souls were we to cling to the great promises and refuse to let go until heaven has scattered the darkness of unbelief and enthroned the light of truth in its place.

Praise from a New Heart

The mighty king began his declaration of praise in these words:

Daniel 4

¹ Nebuchadnezzar the king, to all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you.

² I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.

³ How great are His signs, and how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation.

This declaration was made after he had come back from spending seven years with the beasts of the field, and both his mind and his kingdom had been restored to him. At this point of time he had at last been truly converted to the truth that only God's kingdom is the kingdom of light and life, and the only one which is eternal. This is because the life of God himself is in it so that it can never pass away. For the once proud king, this answered the great question of life and death. He saw how those who have God's life in them will come forth on the resurrection morning to live forevermore.

His declarations of praise to his Maker were not dutiful religious exercises performed so that he might earn something from the Most High. They were instead the spontaneous expressions of true and sincere gratitude for the power and perfection of all God's ways. This praise is the same that comes from every person who has experienced the redeeming power of God and will continue to flow forth from God's children even after they have been taken to heaven.

Revelation 5

¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,

¹² Saying with a loud voice: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!

¹³ And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!

¹⁴ Then the four living creatures said, Amen! And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

This is the class of praise to which King Nebuchadnezzar's expressions of gratitude and adoration belong. It is thus that he will sing with the redeemed in the wonderful earth made new. After this experience, the glory, beauty, wealth, and seeming indestructibility of his kingdom in which he had put so much trust, no longer was the supreme object of his interest and desires. Instead, his interests and his longings were focused on a heavenly city whose Builder and Maker is God.

The Dream of the Tree

But let us return to that point of time in chapter four before Nebuchadnezzar was converted. Before he could give his great testimony for the Lord, He had to have further instruction from the heavenly Tutor to really establish the truth in his mind. Once

again the message was to be delivered through a dream but without its content being left unknown as was the case with the first dream.

However, he still needed an interpreter in order to understand what he saw. So he called for this service. But whom he called revealed that there was still within him a residue of love for Babylon, and that he still favored a message assigning the ultimate superiority to his great, beloved city and kingdom. Instead of calling Daniel, he called in his team of wise men who had previously failed him so badly. In doing so, he was declaring his belief that Babylon, not God, had the answers. It meant that he still cherished a measure of unbelief in God, while maintaining a degree of confidence in the Babylonian system. It was necessary that this disposition be eliminated from the king's heart and mind, or else he would be robbed of all that with which he had been blessed thus far.

When the vision recorded in *Daniel 2* was presented to the king, it disturbed and troubled him deeply even before he knew what it meant. So too, the dream recorded in *Daniel 4* troubled him even before he knew its interpretation as it is written:

Daniel 4

⁴ I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace.

⁵ I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

Therefore, he determined to discover the message being brought to him in the dream. But he found himself unable to do this without assistance, and thus he called in his team of wise men. Although this was not a good choice, it had a good result, for it made obvious that the Babylonian system was unable to measure up to its claims, and it afforded God another opportunity to show that wisdom and truth are found only with Him.

And so it proved to be. Once again the wise men of Babylon were as unable to interpret the dream as they had been before,

and once again Daniel had to be called in to provide the longed-for interpretation.

Daniel 4

⁶ Therefore I issued a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream.

⁷ Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers came in, and I told them the dream; but they did not make known to me its interpretation.

⁸ But at last Daniel came before me (his name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him is the Spirit of the Holy God), and I told the dream before him, saying:

⁹ Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation.

Then follows a description of the dream which was of a very great and beautiful, fruit-laden tree, within which was found food and shelter for all. This pictured a very great prosperity and the responsibility which accompanies such a weighty trust. Its message to the lordly monarch was that he, the one symbolized in the dream, had grown greater and greater, and richer and richer until there was none like him in all the earth.

But, there was a day of reckoning which was rapidly approaching, the prospects of which were no cause for rejoicing.

The Review and Herald, February 1, 1881:

As the king gazed upon that lofty tree, he beheld a “watcher, even a holy one,”—a divine messenger, similar in appearance to the One who walked with the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace. This heavenly being approached the tree, and in a loud voice cried,

Daniel 4

¹⁴ Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches;

¹⁵ Nevertheless, leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass.

Failing to Cherish the Lesson

The king did not at first resist or reject the message thus brought to him and during the following months wisely heeded the counsel and the warning thus given.

Prophets and Kings, p. 519:

...but the heart that is not transformed by the grace of God soon loses the impressions of the Holy Spirit.

Carelessness took the place of caution and selfishness that of loving service, and the soul headed downward. Finally the day came when pride and oppression reigned supreme, and the king exultantly burst forth with the words:

Daniel 4

³⁰ Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?

The response from heaven was immediate. The voice from above declared the loss of his mind and of his kingdom.

Daniel 4

³¹ While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you!

³² And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.

³³ That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

Care must be taken to ensure that we do not misunderstand God's role in the temporary ruin to which King Nebuchadnezzar was taken. The usual concept is that God arbitrarily calculated the punishment which He considered equal to the crime and just as arbitrarily administered it. If that were God's principles of operation, then He is the destroyer who reigns and rules by the application of force.

But that is the character of Satan and his operating principles. His is the kingdom of force. We have learned to know God much better than that. However, it is not enough to say that God does not destroy. We must understand and appreciate His character so that it may be established in our hearts and lives as well as in our minds.

This then raises the question as to what caused the terrible punishment which the king suffered. With great consistency the word of God declares that both good and evil are the sure and certain harvest arising from the sowing of seed. As in nature, so in the ministry of the gospel. The implantation of the good seed, provided it is carefully and correctly cultivated thereafter, will bring forth a good harvest. This blessing will include a strengthened body and mind. On the other hand, the scattering of evil seed will produce the opposite effect in a terrible ingathering of evil.

This is what King Nebuchadnezzar was suffering at this time—the evil fruits of his defiance of the principles of righteousness. The strain on him mentally, physically, and spiritually brought him down. Unable to bear the strain, he became a senseless maniac. He left human society and for the next seven years lived the life of the beasts of the field. During this time he was a lesson book to as many of his subjects as could reason from cause to effect. To those who could, the message was clear that the sowing determines the reaping.

The Throne Preserved

Now that the king was completely unable to defend his throne, how was it that he did not lose it? How was it that, after seven years, he could return and exercise all his sovereign authority once more? What an opportunity seemed to present itself to those men in the kingdom who were powerful and ambitious. The situation appeared to be ready-made for a change of dynasty. This class of would-be ruler is almost always present in despotic king-

doms. On account of them the reigning monarch has to maintain an unceasing vigilance.

But the wonderful thing is that no such contenders for the throne appear to have presented themselves in Nebuchadnezzar's case. When the king returned, he resumed his position just as if he had never left the throne, except that he returned chastened, repentant, and truly converted. While we are not given the details, we can be sure that the protection of the king's position was due to the restraining hand of God. We can also be sure that God made use of his righteous servants to restrain evil at the upper levels of the kingdom.

The Desire of Ages, p. 439:

Mark 9

⁵⁰ Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

All who would present themselves "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (*Romans* 12:1), must receive the saving salt, the righteousness of our Saviour. Then they become "the salt of the earth," restraining evil among men, as salt preserves from corruption. *Matthew* 5:13.

But, it may be argued, are not God's people in the world to destroy Babylon, not to save her kingdom intact? Is she not the great enemy of God and His people? Will there not be great rejoicing throughout the universe when she comes to her end and there are no longer any to help her?

All these things are true. God's people are to be His instruments by which He will utterly destroy Babylon, but we will not succeed if we set out to do God's work by following Babylon's characteristic procedures. To demonstrate this, we will consider two of Babylon's policies. The first one is usurpation. This is to take over the property or position of another whether friend or foe, good or evil, when you have no right to do so. This is what Satan attempted to do in heaven when he tried to dislodge Christ from His place and fill the position himself.

Although king Nebuchadnezzar was absent in mind and body for seven years, his crown and his kingdom still rightfully be-

longed to him. Had any one of the faithful four tried to make himself king in the place of the legitimate ruler, he would have been as guilty of usurpation as was Satan in heaven. That is an exceedingly serious sin, to practice which is to build up Babylon, not to destroy her. True Christianity, which is the death of Babylon, is absolutely respectful of the property or position of another. Usurpation is strictly forbidden by the command,

Exodus 20

¹⁵ You shall not steal.

It is the manifestation of the spirit of the papacy. The supreme purpose of the great controversy is to totally eliminate this spirit from the universe forever.

The second characteristic of Babylon to which we will give consideration here is the use of force. This comes as a last resort after neither persuasion nor cunning or deception have achieved the desired result. This is easily seen in Lucifer's case. In heaven it was not even possible for him to use force against Christ. But when Christ lived on earth as a human being, Satan employed this means unscrupulously.

Human kingdoms also illustrate this strategy. At first the contenders for the throne gather around themselves a band of ruthless, proud, discontented, ambitious men who soon demonstrate a willingness to destroy anyone who stands in their way. This army grows until it is strong enough to force its way into the strongholds of its opponents. Between the beginning of the struggle and the establishment of the new regime, many lives are lost and much damage done. Cities are reduced to desolate ruin, farmland changed into waste land, families broken up, and facilities which have taken a great deal of time and money to build up become nothing but useless wreckage.

Completely Healed

It required seven years for King Nebuchadnezzar to recover a sound mind in a sound body, but, thanks to the healing power of

God's love, he regained his lost faculties. It was drastic treatment, but it produced the desired results.

It is with considerable satisfaction that we see no trace of pride in his testimony. Gone are the words glorying in the great Babylon which he had built for his personal honor and satisfaction. In their place are found great expressions of wonder over the marvelous power of the everlasting God. While all the other gods are temporary and dependent, the true God is self-sustaining and therefore everlasting. These thoughts became his deep and personal convictions.

Daniel 4

³⁴ And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation.

³⁵ All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, What have You done?

What a joy it will be to meet King Nebuchadnezzar after the resurrection and to hear his personal testimony of his great experiences in coming to the Saviour. He will tell in glowing terms of the love and patience by which his Saviour untiringly worked to bring him back every time he went astray.

His conversion is an encouragement for us to believe that, especially as we come into the days of the latter rain, there will be great and powerful men who will believe in the truth being taught and will take their stand with the final remnant. There will be those who will be positioned in legislative halls from where they will be instrumental in restraining evil men from making a bad situation worse. Some of these men will be saved as the following paragraph reveals:

The Great Controversy, p. 610:

But so long as Jesus remains man's intercessor in the sanctuary above, the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit is felt by

rulers and people. It still controls to some extent the laws of the land. Were it not for these laws, the condition of the world would be much worse than it now is. While many of our rulers are active agents of Satan, God also has His agents among the leading men of the nation.

The enemy moves upon his servants to propose measures that would greatly impede the work of God; but statesmen who fear the Lord are influenced by holy angels to oppose such propositions with unanswerable arguments. Thus a few men will hold in check a powerful current of evil. The opposition of the enemies of truth will be restrained that the third angel's message may do its work.

When the final warning shall be given, it will arrest the attention of these leading men through whom the Lord is now working, and some of them will accept it, and will stand with the people of God through the time of trouble.

We are so accustomed to the message being accepted by the lowlier classes while being considered unworthy of attention by the so-called "upper classes," that some of us will tend to view with suspicion those who will seek to join us from these higher levels. We will tend to dismiss those who are in possession of riches, power, position, and learning as being beyond the reach of the gospel. But they have as much right to salvation as anyone else. Cornelius, Nicodemus, and Paul were men of high station in life who overcame prejudice and became members of God's Church on earth as did the mighty King Nebuchadnezzar.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 139:

Today God is seeking for souls among the high as well as the lowly. There are many like Cornelius, men whom the Lord desires to connect with His work in the world. Their sympathies are with the Lord's people, but the ties that bind them to the world hold them firmly. It requires moral courage for them to take their position for Christ. Special efforts should be made for these souls, who are in so great danger, because of their responsibilities and associations.

In seeking and gaining the conversion of King Nebuchadnezzar, God was demonstrating that His love for those of the upper class

was just as great as it was for the lower class. We too need to have our eyes opened to appreciate the wonderful opportunities provided for all classes, for the gospel is for everyone, and has the power to reach and save all.

The great changes in the life of Babylon's greatest sovereign demonstrate the truth of these words:

Prophets and Kings, p. 521:

The once proud monarch had become a humble child of God; the tyrannical, overbearing ruler, a wise and compassionate king. He who had defied and blasphemed the God of heaven, now acknowledged the power of the Most High and earnestly sought to promote the fear of Jehovah and the happiness of his subjects. Under the rebuke of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, Nebuchadnezzar had learned at last the lesson which all rulers need to learn—that true greatness consists in true goodness. He acknowledged Jehovah as the living God, saying,

Daniel 4

³⁷ I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase.

God's purpose that the greatest kingdom in the world should show forth His praise was now fulfilled. This public proclamation, in which Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the mercy and goodness and authority of God, was the last act of his life recorded in sacred history.

31. Good for Evil

Messenger and News Review, May 1996
Daniel 5

FOR what is now close to six thousand years, the great controversy between Christ and Satan has continued unabated. The issue is whether the fearful plagues which curse mankind, plus the awful strife of men and nations against each other, are the reaping of the seed sown, or the act of an offended God. Soon the issue will be settled for all eternity after which it will never need to be raised again.

Evil Causes the Curse

Actually, but for the blindness of mankind, there is sufficient evidence to vindicate the principle that...

Proverbs 26 [KJV]

² ...the curse causeless shall not come.

When God's character is correctly understood, it will be seen that under no circumstances whatsoever does the curse come from Him. On the contrary, it will become evident that He does all in His power, without betraying His stated principles, to prevent the curse from coming. Every sad and tragic reaping is the fruit of human seed sowing.

This is well illustrated in the lives of King Nebuchadnezzar and his grandson, King Belshazzar, as we read in *Daniel* 5. Here it is revealed that, with undeviating consistency, on every occasion when evil sought the mastery, God responded by offering good in exchange for evil. Furthermore, when evil fell on the king or his people, it was in consequence of their own seed sowing. The fault never lay with the infallible God. It was always and only found with the king and his people. Let us examine God's behavior at this time to see if this observation is actually true.

Initially, the Babylonian King came in contact with the Jewish people when he fell upon them as their conqueror. These contacts took place especially during the reign of the last king of Judah,

King Zedekiah, who, by his treachery, built up a very bad image of himself in the mind of the king of Babylon. By breaking his promises to the king and dishonorably revolting against him, King Zedekiah rendered great evil to him in return for the good he had received. Thus the king of Judah stirred up the pitiless wrath of King Nebuchadnezzar who, by giving evil in return, destroyed Zedekiah's capacity for resistance. The slaughter and destruction were terrible.

God did not retaliate. No curse proceeded from Him. Instead, He sent messages through His prophet, Jeremiah, advising the survivors to respect the king and to seek the peace of the land until, seventy years later, Babylon's power would be broken, and they could then return to their homeland. Thus God could and did prove to be a blessing to His people, but He did this without permitting the heaping of judgments and evils upon King Nebuchadnezzar whose time of reaping had not yet come.

The Conversion of Nebuchadnezzar

In King Nebuchadnezzar God saw the promise of a spirit that would respond favorably to the gospel. But first there was a series of struggles between God and the king in which God continually rendered good in return for evil. The results of these contests were that, whenever God was obeyed and His instruction accepted, great blessings followed, but whenever He was disobeyed, trouble followed.

One of the first gifts bestowed upon King Nebuchadnezzar by God was the loving ministry of Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego. Every day, through the influence of the love and power of God shining forth from their godly lives, the king was unconsciously receiving good in return for the evil he had done them by destroying their homes, their house of worship, and their great city, Jerusalem.

But that was not all that God had for the king. Another blessing was the special light contained in the dream of the great image. Anyone receiving such a revelation of great light from heaven,

light spanning millennia, should regard himself as being very highly privileged. But here it was given to a heathen monarch. Even more remarkable still, he was the mighty conqueror who had slain tens of thousands of the Jews, had destroyed the temple of God built by King Solomon, and was regarded as being the enemy of God and man. Why did God see fit to give him seeming precedence over the people of God who were still loyal to Him?

There were several reasons for his selection. The first one we will list is the king's own salvation. This took considerable time to achieve, though, in the end, success was gained. From the human point of view he did not appear to be a likely candidate for salvation. His life had been molded by pride and prejudice, but the Lord saw the prospects hidden below the unpromising exterior.

The Conversion of Saul

There appear to be similarities between God's working to save King Nebuchadnezzar and His later efforts to save Saul of Tarsus.

- Both were men of great determination to carry out their self-appointed missions.
- Both ruthlessly let nothing stand in their pathway to fame and glory.
- Both destroyed God's people and their possessions.

But, though undiscerned by man, there was in each of them the willingness to surrender to the convictions generated in him by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In the case of Saul of Tarsus, the extraordinary zeal which he manifested in hunting down the Christians was due to his desperate efforts to fight off the deep conviction generated in Him by the Holy Spirit at the stoning of Stephen.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 101-102:

The martyrdom of Stephen made a deep impression upon all who witnessed it. The memory of the signet of God upon his face; his words, which touched the very souls of those who heard them, remained in the minds of the beholders, and testified to the truth of that which he had proclaimed. His death was a sore trial to the church, but it resulted in the conviction of Saul, who

could not efface from his memory the faith and constancy of the martyr, and the glory that had rested on his countenance.

At the scene of Stephen's trial and death, Saul had seemed to be imbued with a frenzied zeal. Afterward he was angered by his own secret conviction that Stephen had been honored by God at the very time when he was dishonored by men. Saul continued to persecute the church of God, hunting them down, seizing them in their houses, and delivering them up to the priests and rulers for imprisonment and death. His zeal in carrying forward this persecution brought terror to the Christians at Jerusalem. The Roman authorities made no special effort to stay the cruel work and secretly aided the Jews in order to conciliate them and to secure their favor.

Neither Saul, nor the Christians, nor the Jewish enemies of God's people saw in the great persecutor his potential as a champion of the truth, but God saw it and poured out on Saul, not condemnation and punishment, but the blessing of salvation. Afterwards, He commissioned him to carry the gospel to the Gentile world. He said to him:

Acts 22

²¹ Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.

That certainly was returning good for evil. It was a situation which provided God with just the right opportunity to live out this principle. What wonderful results followed in the faithful ministry of God's servant, the apostle Paul! It was also an opportunity for God to return evil for evil if that had been the true expression of His character. Fortunately, it is not.

Step-by-Step Schooling

It is a principle that those who have been touched with the light of life and resist it, will battle against the truth with far greater zeal than those who have never seen the light. Thus Saul was intensely zealous in his work of slaying Christians. King Nebuchadnezzar had a similar experience. Each time he resisted the light of heaven, he became an even greater persecutor of God's people until the Lord was able to stop his downward course.

Another reason for the dream being given to the great king was that no one needed the warning it contained as much as he did. He was positioned at the pinnacle of human greatness. Prosperity, power, and plenty filled his life with great satisfaction and a false sense of security. He was reasonably convinced that his glorious city would last forever.

A third reason for God's giving the dream of the great image to this heathen king was to convince him that his pride in the Babylonian system was groundless. God demonstrated that this supposedly superior system could be overcome by four young men from the despised Hebrew nation. This dethronement of the king's pride opened the way for the outpouring of still other blessings.

So the king's schooling advanced from one crisis to the next, eventually leading to the amazing deliverance of Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace. By casting these three young men into what he considered to be their just punishment, the king was certainly returning evil for good. Once again God did not rise up in wrath to mete out a punishment equal to the crime. He did not render evil for evil as the punitive efforts of men are designed to do. Instead, He turned the entire experience into a great blessing and, as a result, Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the superiority of the ways of the true God above and beyond those exercised by the heathen gods.

Consider the goodness God showed the king when the Hebrews were saved from the fiery furnace. If God had not intervened, the three young men would have died, and the king would have been guilty of the murder of three of God's messengers. When he finally did see the goodness of God in preventing him from carrying out so great a crime, he was able to appreciate the character of God who returns good for evil.

But moral deterioration overrode the lessons taught. He continued to use God's earthly blessings for his own gratification. With the mighty soul-saving truths still in his mind, he fought personal conviction with all the physical, mental, and spiritual power at

his command. All this imposed a fearful strain on his mind which was daily drawing nearer to total collapse. His only hope was in immediate repentance and obedience to the word of God as spoken to him through Daniel.

With great clarity God could see the approaching breakdown of the king's nervous system due to his disregard of the messages sent to him in the past, but He did not sit back and allow it to come as a matter of course. Instead, charged with love divine, He stepped in and once more rendered good for evil. Again, the warning of what would overtake him came in the form of a dream, and the appeal of God through Daniel was that He must break off his sins and live righteously.

Daniel 4

²⁷ Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.

It certainly is a great blessing for someone to receive a personal warning from God even while they are wandering in forbidden paths. The Lord might have become impatient with the monarch and passed him by without issuing a statement of what to expect if he should fail to correct his evil ways. As we have already read, the king did make some changes in his life, but only temporarily. Soon the call to repentance was forgotten, and the threatened judgment fell on the unprotected head of King Nebuchadnezzar. It must never be forgotten that the punishment was not an act of God, but rather the sure and certain fruitage of the evil seeds sown by the king himself.

The First Fall of Babylon

It was God's purpose that the great lessons experienced by King Nebuchadnezzar be an equal guide for his grandson, King Bels-hazzar, who was the final king of Babylon. But, after the death of King Nebuchadnezzar, apostasy again began to grow like a cancer where righteousness once prevailed. This resulted in the Babylon of the past becoming a symbol of the fall of the final Babylon.

Prophets and Kings, p. 522-523:

Through the folly and weakness of Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, proud Babylon was soon to fall. Admitted in his youth to a share in kingly authority, Belshazzar gloried in his power and lifted up his heart against the God of heaven. Many had been his opportunities to know the divine will and to understand his responsibility of rendering obedience thereto. He had known of his grandfather's banishment, by the decree of God, from the society of men; and he was familiar with Nebuchadnezzar's conversion and miraculous restoration. But Belshazzar allowed the love of pleasure and self-glorification to efface the lessons that he should never have forgotten. He wasted the opportunities graciously granted him, and neglected to use the means within his reach for becoming more fully acquainted with truth. That which Nebuchadnezzar had finally gained at the cost of untold suffering and humiliation, Belshazzar passed by with indifference.

It was not long before reverses came. Babylon was besieged by Cyrus, nephew of Darius the Mede, and commanding general of the combined armies of the Medes and Persians. But within the seemingly impregnable fortress, with its massive walls and its gates of brass, protected by the river Euphrates, and stocked with provision in abundance, the voluptuous monarch felt safe and passed his time in mirth and revelry.

It was in this context that King Belshazzar made...

Daniel 5

¹ ...a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand.

As the feast progressed, the king and his lords became thoroughly intoxicated, and in that state of inebriation he ordered that the golden and silver vessels which were used in the temple services in Jerusalem, be brought out so that he and his leading men could drink wine therefrom.

The drunkenness of the king and his men had immediate physical consequences to the nation but was also highly symbolic. The wine rendered the rulers of the nation incapable of leadership,

and in that very night the great city fell, never to be inhabited again.

The Second Fall of Babylon

That was the first fall of Babylon. The second is described in the same language:

Revelation 14

⁸ And another angel followed, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

It is plainly stated that her wine is her false doctrines which have the capacity to benumb the spiritual perceptions and destroy them.

Selected Messages, vol. 3, p. 405:

The Revelator says,

Revelation 18

¹ I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

² And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.

This is the same message that was given by the second angel Babylon is fallen,

Revelation 14

⁸ ...because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

What is that wine? Her false doctrines. She has given to the world a false sabbath instead of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and has repeated the lie Satan first told to Eve in Eden—the natural immortality of the soul. Many kindred errors she has spread far and wide, “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

The use of the vessels of the sanctuary to drink wine was an act of final defiance and rebellion. It marked the attainment of total, irreversible apostasy which could only result in total ruin.

“He That Is Without Sin” Pronounces Judgment

At the height of their wanton revelry, God wrote the words of judgment on the palace wall where all could see them but could not understand them. In desperation the king called for the wise men, but they could not tell him what he so urgently wanted to know. Then the queen entered the room and reminded the king of Daniel and his capacity for interpreting dreams and visions. Accordingly, she advised the monarch that he should call the servant of the Most High and listen to all that he might say. So Daniel was called, and in response to the king's request, stated that he would read the mysterious writing and interpret it.

Fearlessly he began by calling the attention of the terror-stricken king to God's dealings with his grandfather. This had been a blessing to Belshazzar and had given him plenty of opportunities to learn saving truth.

Prophets and Kings, p. 529:

The prophet first reminded Belshazzar of matters with which he was familiar, but which had not taught him the lesson of humility that might have saved him. He spoke of Nebuchadnezzar's sin and fall, and of the Lord's dealings with him the dominion and glory bestowed upon him, the divine judgment for his pride, and his subsequent acknowledgment of the power and mercy of the God of Israel; and then in bold and emphatic words he rebuked Belshazzar for his great wickedness. He held the king's sin up before him, showing him the lessons he might have learned but did not.

Belshazzar had not read aright the experience of his grandfather, nor heeded the warning of events so significant to himself. The opportunity of knowing and obeying the true God had been given him, but had not been taken to heart, and he was about to reap the consequence of his rebellion.

There is no terror to compare with that experienced by the guilty sinner who has had great light but has spurned it as did Belshazzar. When such face a final reckoning, usually quite suddenly, they become truly terror-stricken. So it was that Belshazzar died and Babylon fell.

But what a wonderful, illustrious witness Daniel gave that night. He was totally free from the contamination of apostasy while the king was totally contaminated with it. There are so few with a record as pure and unstained as his. But think about the circumstances of Daniel's life. Plucked from his Judean home at the early age of eighteen, he was moved to distant and very wicked Babylon. Here, as an official of the king's court, he was involved in Babylonian affairs on a daily basis, though never at any time a participant in her religious services. Compromise was a policy unknown to this great man of God. Though he was courteous and tactful, everyone knew where he stood.

He is a type of God's people in the last days when the little company standing in the light—in perfect, sinless righteousness—will be called upon by the God of heaven to correctly interpret the prevailing iniquity while all the “wise men” of the day will be powerless to do so. It will be just as final a day of reckoning for modern Babylon as it was back there for ancient Babylon which fell never to rise again. Of that fateful ending the Lord of hosts has declared:

Prophets and Kings, p. 532-533:

Thus,

Jeremiah 51

⁵⁸ The broad walls of Babylon [became] utterly broken, and her high gates...burned with fire.

Thus did Jehovah of hosts...

Isaiah 13

¹¹ ...cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and...lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

Thus did...

¹⁹ ...Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, [become as] Sodom and Gomorrah,
—a place forever accursed.

²⁰ It shall never be inhabited, [Inspiration has declared,] neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.

²¹ But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.

²² And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces.

Isaiah 14

²³ I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, says the Lord of hosts.

For the present, we will leave the story of Babylon's fall until in due course our studies lead us to the more detailed presentations of this subject which are found in the book of *Revelation*. When that time comes, we shall learn much more about the level of consistent, spiritual perfection which God's people must have in order to stand free from sin and from the last great Babylon of the ages.

In that day those who have made the required preparation will stand unmoved during the great storms of the seven last plagues, just as Daniel stood unmoved while great terror, slaughter, and destruction raged around him.

32. The Quest for Wealth, Power, and Position

Messenger and News Review, June 1996

Daniel 6:1-16

WITH our opening of the 6th chapter of *Daniel*, we come to the last one devoted to relating the experiences of some of the main people of that time. The remainder of the book, chapters 7-12, is devoted to great prophetic outline studies which have been sent by God for the enlightenment of His people.

In the past there has been the tendency on the part of adult Christians to assign the first six chapters, with their dramatic stories, to the children's story hour, while reserving the symbolic and prophetic studies for the senior levels. It should now be clear that such a division is not supported by the Scriptures.

However, it is true that the book is divided into two sections each of which in a certain sense is a reflection of the other. The first section reveals the nature of the great controversy as its principles are contested within one lifetime and one nation: the lifetime was Daniel's; the nation was Babylon.

The second section repeats the message of the first, though on an international scale, and does so from Daniel's day until the end of human history. A successful study of the book of *Daniel* is not so much dependent upon age as upon a person's spiritual and mental ability to grasp the themes there presented.

Promotion of Self at the Cost of Others

An understanding of Chapters 7-12 will come in due course, but for now we need to learn the message given in the rise to power of the Medo-Persian kingdom.

Such study speedily reveals that *Daniel* 6 is a restatement of the light contained in the previous five chapters. It is the portrayal of the oft-repeated problem of ambitious men seeking position as an objective in itself because it gives them the wealth and power which they crave. Wherever this occurs, particularly at the higher levels of power, nothing is permitted to stand in the way of the

coveted goal. The most fearful atrocities have been committed by those caught in this satanic trap.

It was the devil himself who first deviated from God's perfect will into these strange paths and thus became Satan. It was in him that the very first seeds of rebellion found lodgment and germination. Until marred by his ambitions, heaven and the universe entertained no thought of pursuing wealth, power, and position as ends in themselves, and this resulted in a very happy situation. No society could be unhappier than the one which makes these things the goals.

If anyone doubts this, he has but to realize that all the unutterable misery found in the world since self-assertion took the place of self-sacrificing love, is the direct result of the installation of the new order of things. One has but to become aware of the incredible loss and suffering which mankind and nature have had to endure in order to realistically evaluate the immense burden that sin has caused.

Yet, bad as the cruelty and injustice already are, they are as nothing compared to what is yet to come, as is stated in the following paragraph:

The Great Controversy, p. 36-37:

The Saviour's prophecy concerning the visitation of judgments upon Jerusalem is to have another fulfillment, of which that terrible desolation was but a faint shadow. In the fate of the chosen city we may behold the doom of a world that has rejected God's mercy and trampled upon His law. Dark are the records of human misery that earth has witnessed during its long centuries of crime. The heart sickens, and the mind grows faint in contemplation. Terrible have been the results of rejecting the authority of Heaven.

But a scene yet darker is presented in the revelations of the future. The records of the past, the long procession of tumults, conflicts, and revolutions, the "battle of the warrior...with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood" (*Isaiah* 9:5), what are these, in contrast with the terrors of that day when the restraining Spirit of God shall be wholly withdrawn from the wicked, no

longer to hold in check the outburst of human passion and satanic wrath! The world will then behold, as never before, the results of Satan's rule.

Under Satan's rule, every man at his own level pursues wealth, power, and position for himself at the cost of others. Those who follow this pattern of behavior are said to trample upon God's law. No one is more guilty of this transgression than Satan, the instigator of all departures from the principles of righteousness.

Before his conversion the mighty king of Babylon made wealth, power, and position the quests of his life and by so doing rejected the laws of God and trampled upon them. After his conversion this situation changed.

The Rise of Medo-Persia

But those who succeeded him abandoned the principles to which he had turned and devoted their efforts to exalting themselves as he had once done. Inevitably, in a few years the collapse came. Babylon fell to the nation seeking wealth, power, and position by the same means through which she had gained it in the first case. The new ruler was Medo-Persia which succeeded Babylon in 538 BC.

The Medes and the Persians, by combining their forces and by skillful planning, found the weak spot in Babylon's defenses and succeeded in causing the fall of that great city. The victory was gained through the drying up of the great River Euphrates. We will study the subject of the River Euphrates more thoroughly when we come to it in the book of *Revelation*. Then we will understand these words:

Revelation 16

¹² Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.

¹³ And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

¹⁴ For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

¹⁵ Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.

¹⁶ And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

By the drying up of the River Euphrates, the Medo-Persian army gained access to the heart of Babylon. Her fall demonstrated once again that the commonly accepted human procedures for building a kingdom are always conducive to its destruction from within and without. There are no exceptions to this rule, for he who lives by the use of the weapons of destruction will perish by the same means. If it does not come in his lifetime it will surely come in the second death, unless there is genuine repentance. So it has been written by Him who never makes a mistake.

Revelation 13

¹⁰ He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

There are two ways in which we can model our lives. One is to copy the pattern formed by the meek and lowly One. Every single detail of His life was the expression of utter and abiding selflessness. Or we can follow in the footsteps of him whose character is the opposite in every particular.

Without question Babylon had risen to supreme authority by following the procedures found at their ugly worst in the heart of Lucifer who had descended from being a covering cherub to becoming the prince of darkness. And Babylon fell by the same procedures. Another kingdom, whose powers had not yet been dissipated through abandoned self-indulgence, had wrested the kingdom from her.

In the great pride of their brilliant success in destroying Babylon, the Medo-Persian kings were blind to what the future held for them. As surely as they had acquired the kingdom through

the shedding of unmeasured volumes of blood, so in due course they would fall in the same manner. And so it was. In the battle of Arbela in 331 BC, the immense Persian army was totally and permanently defeated by the vigorous Grecian army under the command of Alexander the Great.

The Plot Against Daniel

But in the beginning, while the Medo-Persian kings were still fresh from their conquest, God sent them a message of life and truth. This time it came, not through dreams or the deliverance of God's servants from fire, but through a personal experience of being saved from a deadly conspiracy. The entire matter arose as a reaction to the governmental structure which King Darius had set up.

Daniel 6

¹ It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom;

² And over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss.

³ Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.

⁴ So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him.

⁵ Then these men said, We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.

⁶ So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: King Darius, live forever!

⁷ All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.

⁸ Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.

⁹ Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

Those men were collectively dedicated to the acquisition of wealth, power, and position, and each of them concentrated his efforts on securing the most for himself.

Obviously, not every man on earth is reaching out for these things at the same level. Our sinful nature tends to want to rule and covet regardless of our age or station in life. Millions of degraded people might appear so dispirited by the hopelessness of their situation that they have no further interest in seeking power, but, let a new and promising leader arise, and see how quickly he gains an eager, hopeful following.

Those servants of King Darius demonstrated quite conclusively that they would go to any lengths in order to gain their objectives. For instance, though they were bitter rivals, they laid aside their differences in order to achieve the unity necessary for their conspiracy to work. If only one of them had refused to conform to the plan and had informed the king of what was developing behind his back, the plot would have failed.

An excellent example of this type of situation is provided by the Pharisees and Sadducees. There was a continual contention between them as to who was the greatest. When Christ came, He posed the biggest threat of all to their aspirations. Finally, the resurrection of Christ's friend Lazarus filled both of these classes with the greatest apprehension, for they feared that the Saviour would wrest the kingdom from their power.

The Desire of Ages, p. 538-539:

So, as the priests, the rulers, and the elders gathered for consultation, it was their fixed determination to silence Him who did such marvelous works that all men wondered. Pharisees and Sadducees were more nearly united than ever before. Divided hitherto, they became one in their opposition to Christ. Nicodemus and Joseph had, in former councils, prevented the condemnation of Jesus, and for this reason they were not now sum-

moned. There were present at the council other influential men who believed on Jesus, but their influence prevailed nothing against that of the malignant Pharisees.

So, Darius' united band of officials met together in one accord with the murder of Daniel in their hearts. Their plan called for the king to be deceived into signing a decree into law, after which they confidently expected that Daniel would disobey the king's decree and thus bring upon himself the death sentence. As a fitting statement of their malicious anger over the fact that he, a Hebrew, was honored above them, they agreed that the appropriate sentence should be death in the lion's den.

To send someone to an untimely death at the mouths of carnivorous beasts, when he has done no wrong either against God or man, is an incredible injustice. It is barbarism of a dark hue. A man who can do such a thing and gain satisfaction from it, has degenerated to an extremely low level of depravity. Such have come down a long way since the beginning of sin. It would be well if men could really see that the quest for riches, power, and position is the cause of the fearful degradation of present-day mankind.

The Fall of Lucifer

Let us spend a few moments on this point and briefly compare Lucifer's initial departure from the pathway of light and truth, with the sad effort of King Darius' men to establish themselves in coveted positions. This is a valuable exercise, the latter being but the repetition of the former. The determination to acquire power was the issue in both cases.

In heaven, there were three important positions held by the Father, the Son, and Lucifer who was the covering cherub. Of these three, the Son occupied a unique position in that He had two natures in one. He was and is a divine Nature tabernacled in the form and nature of a created being. This arrangement is essential to the establishment and maintenance of all creation.

Through the divine side of Christ, He reaches all the way up to heaven, to the very presence of God the Father, while through His created nature He has complete access to any created being anywhere. It is a perfect arrangement to maintain the union between God the Father and His creation. It is the mystery of God, God in the flesh. It is the ladder of access from earth to heaven, the one seen by Jacob in his dream.

The Desire of Ages, p. 311-312:

Christ is the ladder that Jacob saw, the base resting on the earth, and the topmost round reaching to the gate of heaven, to the very threshold of glory. If that ladder had failed by a single step of reaching the earth, we should have been lost. But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (*Romans* 8:3), He lived a sinless life. Now by His divinity He lays hold upon the throne of heaven, while by His humanity He reaches us. He bids us by faith in Him attain to the glory of the character of God. Therefore are we to be perfect, even as our “Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

To fill that position, Christ had to be a very special being. In fact, He is so special that there is not another one like Him throughout the entire universe. He is the Creator tabernacled in the flesh and blood of a created being. Although this truth is profound, it is nonetheless simple and practical. However, it is hidden from those who have never been blessed with spiritual eyesalve which begins with the new birth experience. When pride developed in Lucifer, he lost the capacity to understand the special role of Christ. Thus it is written of him:

Ezekiel 28

¹⁷ You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.

Then it was that Lucifer decided that he was as fitted as Christ was to possess His wealth, wield His power, and occupy His position. The results speak for themselves in shattered lives and a ruined earth so devastated by every kind of destructive force, that very soon it will be desolated for a thousand years. For almost six thousand years Satan has been free to prove his argument that he

can manage Christ's position, and his performance during that time has proved him to be hopelessly wrong.

Following the Same Path

Like Satan before them, King Darius' men were determined to acquire great wealth, wield great power, and occupy the highest positions they could arrange for themselves, but their plotting only served to destroy them.

Why was Daniel so highly honored? Because all the Christian graces were developed in him. In addition, he had wisdom and the ability to receive the interpretations of visions and dreams. His personality and spirit were excellent as we read:

Daniel 6

³ ...an excellent spirit was in him and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.

All of this bespeaks a very close communion with heaven. God could thus reveal His will to this devoted servant of His as we see in the prophetic outlines recorded in Chapters 7-12. But what King Darius' men saw in Daniel was something very different from what the king saw.

- The king saw him as being a great asset to the kingdom;
- The king's men saw him as a formidable obstruction to their receiving position and power.

So they plotted his overthrow by searching for some secret deficiency with which to discredit him. But search as hard as they could, they found only faithfulness devoid of any fault whatsoever. His integrity was unimpeachable. Finally they concluded that the only way to discredit him was to construct a situation where he could no longer obey God and the king at the same time. Even then, to give themselves the certainty of success, they had to keep their real purpose hidden from the king until the decree became law.

So, in total agreement with one another, they wrote up the decree. By forbidding any person from making any request of any god or king other than Darius, they literally elevated him to the

place of God. This is exalting man over man in the place of God for the acquirement of unlimited wealth, power, and position. This is, in principle, the image of the beast. Those confederates formed a bond of union for the purpose of enforcing human laws in the place of the divine law. The penalty for defying this human enactment was death.

The scheme worked very smoothly up to a point. The unsuspecting king was flattered by the honor apparently being shown to him and was persuaded that the decree would greatly strengthen his authority as the king of the world, so he readily signed it into law. It was now only a matter of gathering the evidence proving that Daniel had violated the decree, and his death was assured, or so they thought. These men knew that their scheme depended on Daniel's maintaining his righteousness. Accordingly, they set a watch on him to prove that he placed his service to God above that of his service to man.

For obvious reasons, Daniel had nothing to do with the making of the decree although he was one of the three men next in rank to the king. As such he should have been kept informed of what was happening. Had this been the case, He would have opposed its passage into law on the grounds that it exalted man above God. But, because the decree was a plot aimed at destroying him, the entire plan was kept hidden from him. He knew nothing of the decree until it had already been signed into law to the immense satisfaction of the confederacy. They had become supremely confident of success.

That confidence was ill-founded, and very soon a reaction took place. Daniel made no effort to conceal his loyalty to God and continued praying to Him three times per day as usual. The spies recorded his violations of the decree and hastened to accuse him before the monarch. King Darius now discerned the real character and purpose of the decree. It had not been formulated to honor him at all, but was designed to destroy his greatly respected helper, Daniel.

Very displeased with himself, the king labored till sunset to find, if possible, some loophole by which he could free Daniel, but his officials reminded him that the laws of Medo-Persia cannot be changed. This left no option for the king other than to arrest Daniel and cast him into the lion's den.

Daniel 6

¹⁶ So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.

So it proved to be. When the king arrived at the lions' den in the morning, Daniel's cheerful voice answered his, and he knew his friend was safe. God had indeed closed the lions' mouths.

To Be Repeated

The situation which developed in Daniel's closing years will be repeated in the last days of human history. Once again, there will be a confederacy of evil, this time on a worldwide basis, and it will be as devoted to the destruction of the final remnant of God's people as Darius' men were devoted to the destruction of Daniel. Writing of that future time, John the revelator declares:

Revelation 17

¹² The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast.

¹³ These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 983:

"These have one mind." There will be a universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan's forces. "And shall give their power and strength unto the beast." Thus is manifested the same arbitrary, oppressive power against religious liberty, freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, as was manifested by the papacy, when in the past it persecuted those who dared to refuse to conform with the religious rites and ceremonies of Romanism.

In the warfare to be waged in the last days there will be united, in opposition to God's people, all the corrupt powers that have apostatized from allegiance to the law of Jehovah. In this warfare the Sabbath of the fourth commandment will be the great point at issue; for in the Sabbath commandment the great Lawgiver identifies himself as the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

Once again, the powers of darkness will join forces in carefully planned plots designed to destroy God's people, but the very same weapons which are intended to destroy His people, will be employed instead to end their enemies' reign of terror. It will be as it was in ancient Persia where the same lions commissioned to devour Daniel, were those which destroyed his enemies. Note the prediction found in the following paragraph.

The Great Controversy, p. 655-656:

The people see that they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping their bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who would keep it holy. Now, in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception.

The multitudes are filled with fury. "We are lost!" they cry, "and you are the cause of our ruin;" and they turn upon the false shepherds. The very ones that once admired them most will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them. The very hands that once crowned them with laurels will be raised for their destruction. The swords which were to slay God's people are now employed to destroy their enemies. Everywhere there is strife and bloodshed.

33. Laws and Lions

Messenger and News Review, July 1996

Daniel 6:18-24

AS WE enter upon the study of further lessons from *Daniel 6*, we come to the point where Daniel, the prophet of God, was sentenced to death in the lions' den. But by divine intervention his life was spared. After this the same lawmaker, King Darius, made another decree which sentenced Daniel's persecutors to the same fate.

The night during which Daniel was in the lions' den was a very unhappy time for the king. He was decidedly angry with himself for having been misled into making the law which condemned Daniel.

Daniel 6

¹⁸ Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him.

¹⁹ Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions.

²⁰ And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?

²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, O king, live forever!

²² My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.

²³ Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.

²⁴ And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

The king's decision to put Daniel's persecutors in the lion's den opens some important questions in regard to human lawmaking, especially since human laws will be very unrighteous in the closing days of this world's history.

The Power of Kings

We will now consider the matter of the power of kings as it prevailed in the past. These men were despots who had the power to frame laws and enforce them. Their word was law and was to be obeyed without question. But, originating as they did from unjust and faulty men, the laws themselves had to be defective. To make matters worse, they were compiled by the most powerful men in the country, thus often guaranteeing that the laws were biased in favor of the rich and powerful at the expense of the weak and poor. Such laws were designed to protect the king from the people, but not the people from the king.

This approach to rulership became known as "The Divine Right of Kings" once it became formally defined during the Middle Ages.

According to the doctrine of divine right, which reached its peak of influence in 17th century Europe, sovereigns were given their right to rule by God and were thus not accountable to their subjects. The English political theorist Sir Robert Filmer (c.1588-1653), author of *Patriarcha* (1680), was a principal exponent of this doctrine, which had evolved partly to check papal incursions into politics. Many of the policies of James I and Charles I of England and Louis XIV of France were justified by invoking the theory of the divine right of kings.⁴⁹

King Darius did not need to invoke the theory of the divine right of kings to make and enforce his decrees on the people. He simply made decrees as he wished, as is demonstrated by his directing Daniel's persecutors to be thrown to the lions.

Of course, not all the decrees signed or spoken into law by those ancient despots were solely to protect the king from the

⁴⁹ *Grolier's Encyclopedia*, 1993.

people. Examples of these were the decrees passed by Kings Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes directing that Jerusalem and the temple be rebuilt. The God of heaven, using the influence He was able to exert on these kings through the prayers of the prophet Daniel and others, was the Source of these remarkable decrees.

The fact that these kings were military commanders who had gathered behind them immense armies for the conquest of the world, set the stage for them to develop despotic rulerships. On the battlefield, absolute, unquestioning obedience to the orders of the general and his officers was critically important for success just as it is in modern warfare. Any assertion of the troops contrary to the orders of those above them is regarded as insubordination meriting the most immediate and severe punishments. Thus a very strong habit pattern was formed which was carried over into times of peace.

In the organizational structure and operation of those ancient despotisms, the law often favored the ones who were above, and seldom if ever those who were below. That meant one law for the king and another for the people. Thus King Darius was very happy to sign the decree his officials suggested while he believed it was for the exaltation of himself, but worked hard to try and countermand it when he realized that in reality, it advantaged the confederacy of satraps.

So far as the king was concerned, his men had proved themselves untrustworthy. Instead of working for his interests alone, they used the power he had given them for the furtherance of their own interests. To make matters worse, they had even gone so far as to manipulate him by supplying him with false information. They told him that the signing of the decree “would add greatly to his honor and authority”:

Prophets and Kings, p. 540:

Accordingly, the princes prepared such a decree, and presented it to Darius for his signature. Appealing to his vanity, they persuaded him that the carrying out of this edict *would add greatly to his honor and authority*. Ignorant of the subtle purpose of the

princes, the king did not discern their animosity as revealed in the decree, and, yielding to their flattery, he signed it.

After the plan failed, if these men had been permitted to go on living, they would have simply waited for another day of opportunity when they might be more successful. But the king had no use for such rulers, and so they died under the law which protected the king from the people, but not the people from the king. Such laws are unjust because they do not apply with equal force to both the king and the people.

However, in God's halls of perfect justice and absolute righteousness there is no law which protects the king from the people without at the same time protecting the people from the king.

A Darker Time Yet to Come

Ruthless as the kings of the past were, much worse is yet to come. The future hour of spiritual darkness will be the worst this world has ever known.

Isaiah 60

² For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 414-415:

The coming of the bridegroom was at midnight—the darkest hour. So the coming of Christ will take place in the darkest period of this earth's history. The days of Noah and Lot pictured the condition of the world just before the coming of the Son of man. The Scriptures pointing forward to this time declare that Satan will work...

2 Thessalonians 2

⁹ ...with all power and...

¹⁰ ...with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.

His working is plainly revealed by the rapidly increasing darkness, the multitudinous errors, heresies, and delusions of these last days. Not only is Satan leading the world captive, but his deceptions are leavening the professed churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. The great apostasy will develop into darkness deep as midnight, impenetrable as sackcloth of hair. To God's people it

will be a night of trial, a night of weeping, a night of persecution for the truth's sake. But out of that night of darkness God's light will shine.

Many laws will be passed in the very last days, especially in regard to the exaltation of the first day of the week in the place of true Sabbath observance. Those enactments will issue from law-makers steeped in the deepest moral and spiritual darkness of all time. That being the character of these lawmakers, the most cruel and oppressive laws must be the result. They will be the worst ever put into effect.

The Signs of the Times, January 17, 1900:

History will be, and even now is being, repeated. The same power from beneath that worked in Christ's day is making itself known. Oppressive laws, which have not in them a particle of the Spirit of God, are being enacted. And the less men submit themselves in obedience to the law of God, the more zealously will they try to enforce human laws. They will teach for doctrine the commandments of men.

The Nature of God's Commandments

Since we are approaching the final battles of the great controversy when the law of God will be the great issue at stake, it is necessary for us to really understand the true character of God's righteous commandments. This is an essential qualification for those who will march behind Him who makes war in righteousness, who never changes, and whose laws are for king and people alike as it is written:

Revelation 19

¹¹ Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

The Great Controversy, p. 582:

In seeking to cast contempt upon the divine statutes, Satan has perverted the doctrines of the Bible, and errors have thus become incorporated into the faith of thousands who profess to believe the Scriptures. The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy con-

cerning the law of God. Upon this battle we are now entering a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition.

The precepts of Jehovah are the transcript of His wonderful character of love and justice. The law of God is absolutely perfect, therefore it cannot be changed, and has no need of change. The law can be kept only by those in whom its living principles have been deeply implanted, for it is not enough for it to be worn as an outward restriction of our behavior. In order to be true, everything we say and do for God must simply be the expression of what we are.

The Signs of the Times, March 12, 1896:

The law of God is the expression of His character. God possesses absolute, invariable, and immutable independence, and His law is without variableness, unalterable, eternal, because it is the transcript of His character. No event can take place that will in any sense make it necessary to declare a law of a contrary nature.

Psalm 19

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.

Any change in the law would mar its perfection. The slightest variance in its precepts would give reason to the hosts of heaven and to unfallen worlds to think that God's counsels and declarations are not to be relied upon, but need to be remodeled, because they are of a faulty character. Should any change be made in the law of God, Satan would gain that for which he had instituted controversy.

Probably the worst misconception in regard to God's holy law which must be cleared from our minds is that the law of God is in itself the punisher of sins committed. It is nothing of the kind. Instead, it is designed to protect us from committing sin and reaping its harvest. It is the truth that:

The Great Controversy, p. 36:

God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejecters of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. Every

ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest. The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan.

The destruction of Jerusalem is a fearful and solemn warning to all who are trifling with the offers of divine grace and resisting the pleadings of divine mercy. Never was there given a more decisive testimony to God's hatred of sin and to the certain punishment that will fall upon the guilty.

The punishment administered to Darius' officials was not according to divine principles, for it was arbitrarily meted out and as arbitrarily administered by an unconverted man. King Darius was the executioner that God could never be. In the last battles of the ages, the law for which we are to stand is the law of equal justice for all men, no matter how good or evil they might be.

Sin Punishes Sin

It was very fitting, however, that the selfsame lions to which Daniel was thrown, were the ones in the end which destroyed his enemies. This will happen at least once again when, during the time of Jacob's trouble, the wicked will be stopped in the very act of trying to destroy God's people.

The Great Controversy, p. 655-656:

The people see that they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heap-
ing their bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who would keep it holy. Now, in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception. The multitudes are filled with fury. "We are lost!" they cry, "and you are the cause of our ruin;" and they turn upon the false shepherds. The very ones that once admired them most will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them. The very hands that once crowned them with laurels will be raised for their destruction. The swords which

were to slay God's people are now employed to destroy their enemies. Everywhere there is strife and bloodshed.

This change in the use of the weapons intended for the destruction of God's people has happened more than once in human history. Another good example was the gallows built by Haman in the days of Queen Esther. On this, Haman intended to terminate the life of Mordecai, the hated Jew. Instead, he was hung there himself.⁵⁰ This entire episode is to reoccur in principle in the last days.

Character Determines Position

So searching will the testing times be that it will not be enough to expose the true nature of all the laws which, coming from sinful man, are unjust and oppressive. In the awesome power of the Holy Spirit, we must be able to reveal the true character of the divine laws and how the Christian attains position.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 543:

In the kingdom of God, position is not gained through favoritism. It is not earned, nor is it received through an arbitrary bestowal. It is the result of character. The crown and the throne are the tokens of a condition attained—tokens of self-conquest through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In this paragraph is laid down the very opposite means from that which sinful men use to gain position. They pursue wealth, power, and position as ends in themselves, whereas the true child of God accepts whatever wealth, power, and position are assigned him. No place is too lowly for him to serve God.

Those who belong to the kingdom of darkness seek the greatest power and the highest position because they believe that this is where the greatest security is found. It was the loss of the knowledge of the true Source of security which initiated the terrible great controversy and which is the cause of every single pain and sorrow ever suffered by mankind. This issue must be settled forever before Christ can return.

⁵⁰ *Esther*, chapters 5 to 9.

Critical as this issue is in bringing the great controversy to its end, it is not sufficiently understood by many of God's true children. This is not to be wondered at, for Christ's closest followers when He was upon the earth were at times preoccupied with the question of who would be appointed to the highest position in the coming kingdom. The closer they approached the crucifixion, the more intense the struggle between the powers of light and darkness became. Then the time came when Christ gave special attention to this problem.

The Desire of Ages, p. 435-436:

The Saviour gathered His disciples about Him, and said to them,

Mark 9

³⁵ If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

There was in these words a solemnity and impressiveness which the disciples were far from comprehending. That which Christ discerned they could not see. They did not understand the nature of Christ's kingdom, and this ignorance was the apparent cause of their contention. But the real cause lay deeper. By explaining the nature of the kingdom, Christ might for the time have quelled their strife; but this would not have touched the underlying cause. Even after they had received the fullest knowledge, any question of precedence might have renewed the trouble. Thus disaster would have been brought to the church after Christ's departure.

The strife for the highest place was the outworking of that same spirit which was the beginning of the great controversy in the worlds above, and which had brought Christ from heaven to die. There rose up before Him a vision of Lucifer, the "son of the morning," in glory surpassing all the angels that surround the throne, and united in closest ties to the Son of God. Lucifer had said,

Isaiah 14

¹⁴ I will be like the Most High;

—and the desire for self-exaltation had brought strife into the heavenly courts, and had banished a multitude of the hosts of God. Had Lucifer really desired to be like the Most High, he

would never have deserted his appointed place in heaven; for the spirit of the Most High is manifested in unselfish ministry. Lucifer desired God's power, but not His character. He sought for himself the highest place, and every being who is actuated by his spirit will do the same. Thus alienation, discord, and strife will be inevitable. Dominion becomes the prize of the strongest.

The kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of force; every individual regards every other as an obstacle in the way of his own advancement, or a steppingstone on which he himself may climb to a higher place.

As the crucifixion drew nearer still, another opportunity was given to the Saviour to establish the truth in His disciples' minds and hearts. James and John, with the help of their mother, requested that they be given positions in the coming kingdom on either side of Christ himself. In response, He expounded the principle of the law of the new kingdom.

The Desire of Ages, p. 549:

The one who stands nearest to Christ will be he who on earth has drunk most deeply of the spirit of His self-sacrificing love, love that...

1 Corinthians 13

⁴ ...vaunts not itself, is not puffed up,

⁵ ...seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil,

—love that moves the disciple, as it moved our Lord, to give all, to live and labor and sacrifice, even unto death, for the saving of humanity. This spirit was made manifest in the life of Paul. He said,

Philippians 1

²¹ For to me to live is Christ;

—for his life revealed Christ to men;

²¹ ...and to die is gain,

—gain to Christ; death itself would make manifest the power of His grace, and gather souls to Him.

²⁰ Christ shall be magnified in my body, [he said,] whether it be by life or by death.

Finally at the foot washing Christ succeeded in dispelling the darkness from the minds of all except Judas, and a new day

dawned for those men. A new spirit possessed them and they were never the same again.

The Desire of Ages, p. 646:

When Jesus girded himself with a towel to wash the dust from their feet, He desired by that very act to wash the alienation, jealousy, and pride from their hearts. This was of far more consequence than the washing of their dusty feet. With the spirit they then had, not one of them was prepared for communion with Christ. Until brought into a state of humility and love, they were not prepared to partake of the paschal supper, or to share in the memorial service which Christ was about to institute. Their hearts must be cleansed. Pride and self-seeking create dissension and hatred, but all this Jesus washed away in washing their feet. A change of feeling was brought about. Looking upon them, Jesus could say,

John 13

¹⁰ You are clean.

Now there was union of heart, love for one another. They had become humble and teachable. Except Judas, each was ready to concede to another the highest place. Now with subdued and grateful hearts they could receive Christ's words.

This same transformation must be achieved in the spirit of every believer in Jesus in order to complete perfection as they move into the final struggles of the ages. The people of God must be without spot and blemish just as Daniel was. Since no defect could be found in him, then none will be found in those whom the Lord will use in the coming repetition of what took place in the days of Daniel and King Darius.

Nor will any fault be found in the gospel message which is based on God's perfect and holy law. In those days, so soon to come now, God's people will be called upon to distinguish between the law of God as He established it, and the cunning counterfeit of it which Satan has introduced.

34. The Prophecies of Daniel

Messenger and News Review, September 1996

Daniel 2:29-45

Authors note: In our study of the prophetic part of the book of *Daniel*, it is assumed that the reader already has a basic understanding of the subject. Therefore, not all the details will be mentioned in the explanations of the prophecies.

THE second section of the book of *Daniel* begins with Chapter 7. In our study, Daniel emerges as a great Old Testament channel of prophetic communication. This is not to be wondered at, for, while still a young man, it was testified of him that:

Daniel 1

¹⁷ Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams...

Divine wisdom had allocated to him the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy. This blessing was made possible by the beautiful purity of his life. So he served God and the king in the field of visions and dreams, while the other three Hebrews were given...

¹⁷ ...knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom.

This was a gift which the church of God needed at that time, for her future looked dark and hopeless. In such a time as that, the voice of God was heard in calm assurance unfolding the events of the future in their order, whether good or evil. The captives in Babylon must have felt their spirits rise as they saw that every world power would come to total ruin. There can only be one kingdom which lasts forever, and that is God's kingdom.

With this short consideration of the circumstances of the church of God at that time, we will now turn to the study of the actual prophecies themselves. These are recorded for those who are living in the very last days of earth's history and are presented to us in the form of fierce beasts of prey, symbolic days and times, and a multi-metale image.

Very close to 2,500 years have passed since those predictions were made, and time has made it possible for us to match the prophecy with its fulfillment. In every case the unfolding of

events has been exactly what the prophecy has led us to expect would happen.

The Great Image

The revelation which provides the basis for the book of *Daniel* was that of the great image shown to King Nebuchadnezzar in his dream, the one which required the services of Daniel both to recall the dream and to interpret its meaning. We will look briefly at this outline of future events in symbolic form which will set the stage for understanding the rest of the book.

After Daniel had received this light from above, he communicated it to the king in these words:

Daniel 2

²⁹ As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be.

³⁰ But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

³¹ You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome.

³² This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

³³ You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

³⁴ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found.

³⁵ And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Without interruption, Daniel unfolded the dream before the monarch on his throne. Once this was accomplished, he proceeded to explain what each symbol meant. He demonstrated that

every symbol, without exception, was provided with a corresponding explanation, and, conversely, that every explanation has its corresponding symbol. It is quite important that we recognize this pattern of revelation in the book of *Daniel*, for, otherwise, we will not understand all the messages contained in these wonderful prophecies. We will come to various examples of this pattern as we proceed.

So it was that once Daniel had presented the details of the dream to the king, he then proceeded with the interpretation. He said:

Daniel 2

³⁶ This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king.

³⁷ You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory;

³⁸ And wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold.

³⁹ But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

⁴⁰ And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

⁴¹ Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

⁴² And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.

⁴³ As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

⁴⁴ And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall

not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

⁴⁵ Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.

The Head of Gold

The time has come for us to match the symbols with the events they predicted. We also need a starting point. Was it there and then, or earlier in the days of Assyrian or Egyptian glory, or later at a time which is yet in the future? The answer to this question is very quickly determined, for, after describing Babylon as a world power under the kingship of King Nebuchadnezzar, he said directly to the king,

Daniel 2

³⁸ You are this head of gold.

So then, we now have a starting point which was the commencement of Babylon's world supremacy in 609 BC. But her dominion was short-lived, lasting a mere 70 years as prophesied by God through Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 25

¹² Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, says the Lord; and I will make it a perpetual desolation.

¹³ So I will bring on that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations.

Babylon, the capital city, was populated by people who believed that the city could never fall. Its fortifications were so massive, its walls were so thick and so high, its water supply so continuous and ample, its food supply so certain and adequate, and its great bronze gates so impenetrable, that there seemed to be no possibility that the great city would fall.

The character of the Babylonian Empire is indicated by the head of gold. It was the golden kingdom of a golden age. Babylon, its metropolis, towered to a height never reached by any of its successors. Situated in the garden of the East; laid out in a perfect square said to be sixty miles in circumference, fifteen miles on each side; surrounded by a wall estimated to have been two hundred to three hundred feet high and eighty-seven feet thick, with a moat, or ditch, around this, of equal cubic capacity with the wall itself; divided into squares by its many streets, each one hundred and fifty feet in width, crossing at right angles, every one of them straight and level; its two hundred and twenty-five square miles of enclosed surface laid out in luxuriant pleasure grounds and gardens, interspersed with magnificent dwellings—this city, with:

- its sixty miles of moat,
- its sixty miles of outer wall,
- its thirty miles of river wall through its center,
- its gates of solid brass,
- its hanging gardens rising terrace above terrace till they equaled in height the walls themselves,
- its temple of Belus three miles in circumference,
- its two royal palaces, one three and a half, and the other eight miles in circumference,
- with its subterranean tunnel under the River Euphrates connecting these two palaces,
- its perfect arrangements for convenience, ornament, and defense, and its unlimited resources,

—this city, containing in itself many things which were themselves wonders of the world, was itself another and still mightier wonder. There, with the whole earth prostrate at her feet, a queen in peerless grandeur, drawing from the pen of inspiration itself this glowing title, “The glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency,” stood this city, fit capital of that kingdom which was represented by the golden head of this great historic image.⁵¹

But the sure word of prophecy declared that Babylon would not last forever but would surely become a heap of ruins which

⁵¹ *Daniel and the Revelation*, by Uriah Smith, p. 42-43.

would never be rebuilt. Another kingdom symbolized by the breast and arms of silver was to rise to dominate the world. This was the kingdom of Medo-Persia under the leadership of Cyrus. The city of Babylon was the last part of the kingdom to fall. Besieging the city was futile, and Cyrus determined to accomplish by strategy what he could not achieve by direct assault. He succeeded in 539 BC in the following way:

He ordered his soldiers to divert the River Euphrates into a huge area dug out for that purpose, and as soon as the river was low enough for them to enter beneath the walls, they did so. Soon the Medo-Persian troops were inside the city. So great was the surprise and so complete the victory, that the whole battle was over and done in a single night. Babylon, the great city which was supposed to rule forever, passed off the scene in less than a century.

The Rest of the Image

The Medo-Persians were confident that their empire would last forever without falling, but fall she likewise did. That event took place at the battle of Arbela in 331 BC when the powerful Greek army led by Alexander the Great conclusively defeated the Medo-Persian army.

Medo-Persia had dominated the world for 208 years which was close to three times as long as the endurance of her predecessor, Babylon. Her dominions were far more extensive but her glory was less, as symbolized by silver which is not so valuable or as beautiful as gold.

The Greeks, symbolized by the belly and thighs of bronze, ruled the world for 163 years until they were compelled to give their place to the Romans at the battle of Pydna in 168 BC.

Thereafter, Rome ruled the world until 476 AD when the last western emperor was deposed by the German, Odoacer. Rome itself lasted for 644 years.

From the increasing life span of the kingdoms as we move along, one would expect that the life span of the power succeed-

ing Rome would be considerable, but instead, the termination of Rome's domination marked the end of world empires. Never again will earthly kingdoms be united worldwide under one head.

In this we have a significant characteristic of Bible prophecy. It is accurate. If it were not, we would not be able to put our entire trust in it. If for instance history had provided us with three or five or more world empires whereas Daniel had said there would be four, then we would lose confidence in his predictions. But there have been precisely four empires—no more and no less—just as prophecy said there would be.

As we proceed into the study of the rest of the book of *Daniel*, we will learn to really appreciate this characteristic. There are great periods of time referred to in Chapters 7-12. The accuracy of these must be treated with the greatest respect, else we shall certainly fail to enter into the light which the Lord has for us.

Following the disintegration and fall of the Roman Empire, the kingdom was to be divided into strong and weak units in which there was to be the strength of the iron mixed with the weakness of the clay. It was declared to Daniel by the Revealer of Secrets that men would attempt by every available means to once again enroll the entire world under one flag, but the proven Spirit of Prophecy through Daniel has declared that it will never be anything else than a fruitless effort.

Men of military expertise such as Charlemagne and Napoleon have accumulated great power and were fired with powerful ambitions which would not be satisfied with anything less than the conquest of the entire world. For a time it seemed as if they were well on the way to success. Behind them lay a trail of death and destruction, broken homes, wrecked prospects, and shattered hopes. Before them lay their mighty aspirations. But always in the day when victory was virtually within their grasp, their best laid schemes began to fall apart, and shortly thereafter they themselves were in full retreat.

Other attempts at world unity have been made through military, political, trade, and social alliances. But the outcome has al-

ways been the same. After a promising outset, the participants have found themselves in hopeless disarray with no possibility of proceeding further. Against all their planning and scheming the sure word of God declares that there will be no fifth empire.

The Nature of Rebellion

One reason for this ever-deepening division which plagues mankind lies in the fact that he is incapable of learning the lessons of cause and effect which are so clearly taught through the events of history. To do this successfully one must be able to understand the actual nature of the rebellion against God and the reason for it. Therefore, let us now establish the fact that sinful man is spiritually blind and, as such, cannot discern what the out-working of a given course of action most certainly will be.

Man's analysis of history is not according to the facts of the case. He sees in it the glorification of himself with his ability to override obstacles, solve problems, and execute great plans. With great confidence in himself, he goes forth to conquer. He does not submit himself to the message of the great image which carries the most solemn warning that every kingdom which is established by using force, will fail. Therefore, he is blind to the real facts of the case.

We need to understand what it is that creates this terrible, life-destroying blindness so that we can avoid being ensnared by it. It is caused by turning from God's presence into the domain where only darkness is found and nothing can be seen just as it actually is. This is the step of unbelief in God which is replaced by man's trusting in himself. Whosoever does this walks in certain darkness.

Man believes only in that which he sees or feels such as people-power and money-power. He believes that by the skillful deployment of these two, every problem can be solved. This is something he can see and feel and therefore can believe in. Man's disposition to disbelieve what he cannot see is especially true in re-

gard to spiritual things. He will not really put his trust in God whom he cannot see for himself.

However, this is not to claim that he will believe everything he can see, for the message of the image is very plain to be seen, but he still will not believe. What could be more plainly presented than the relationship between cause and effect as revealed in the rise and fall of the great empires of prophecy and the lesser nations as well?

There it is shown that every worldly kingdom in its rise to power has employed the same principles of operation as those which preceded it. Thus they demonstrate that they have learned nothing from the past. The king of Babylon, the mighty Nebuchadnezzar, certainly had not, for he used the same tactics and weaponry used by the Assyrians whom he overcame. In turn, the Medo-Persians followed in the footsteps of the Babylonians, and so the powers of this world have followed on through generation after generation of terrible conflicts without seeing and adopting any righteous principles. All that they learned was how to hate their enemies more implacably and how to invent weapons by which they could kill each other more efficiently.

One might wonder why this wastage of human life must go on, but this is the unpreventable result of sin. In order to end the great controversy, sin must develop to its ugly worst, and righteousness in contrast must develop to its radiant best. This exhaustive searching out of the critical issues raised by Satan in his attempts to overthrow the divine government must be permitted to go on until every possible question of truth and error has been made plain and settled forever. Then the justice and mercy of God and His handling of the great controversy will be completely vindicated, so much so that it will be utterly impossible for sin to ever manifest itself again.⁵²

⁵² For further study on this question, see the book, *The Seven Angels*.

Man's Final Attempt, or Christ's Kingdom?

At this point another seeming contradiction appears. While Daniel was informed there would be only four world empires in human history beginning with Babylon, after which every attempt at reuniting the nations would meet with consistent failure, there will be...

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 983:

...a universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan's forces...

In the warfare to be waged in the last days there will be united, in opposition to God's people, all the corrupt powers that have apostatized from allegiance to the law of Jehovah.

So it appears that there will be one more world empire, but this is not so, for, these powers will be united only in their opposition against God's law. It will not be a unity as found in the four kingdoms described in the book of *Daniel*, for the prophecy says that the clay and iron will not mix.

There will be however, one other kingdom which is rising to power under the symbol of the stone cut out of the mountain without hands and which grows into a mountain which will fill the entire earth. God is the builder of this kingdom, which will be the only one which shall never pass away but shall reign and rule forever and ever. This is the kingdom in which every believer in Jesus longs to have a place. Regretfully, many will fail to find entrance as we are warned by Christ:

Matthew 7

¹³ Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

¹⁴ Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

The reason for this lies in the unwillingness of so many to sacrifice the way in which they are determined God's kingdom shall be built. If the Lord would only build His kingdom the way in

which they believe it should be built, men would gladly follow where He leads. Heaven would become a very popular place.

Through the symbolism of the great image God has laid out a very powerful appeal before all mankind to turn away from sin-cursed procedures and enter into His safe and certain ways. Clearly displayed before all is the outworking of both pursuits.

Each occasion when a new kingdom arose to grasp the reins of power and purportedly set out to provide a stable government for its subjects, one simple observation and analysis of its methods of arriving at this happy objective is all that is required to predict that nation's future unless it changes its course in the meantime.

Since the way of kingdom-building employed by Babylon was adopted by Medo-Persia, then its destruction was as sure as Babylon's. No other outcome was possible unless, through deep repentance, Babylon's principles of operation had been exchanged for the ways of righteousness and peace.

As it is with nations, so it is with individuals. If you wish to know where your life as it is now being expended will eventually take you, then you need only determine in whose footsteps you are treading. If you are building in the same way in which Babylon built its power and glory, then your life will end a failure. But if you build according to the way of the Rock which becomes a great mountain and will fill the entire earth, then all of eternity will not be sufficient to exhaust your life.

35. Beasts and Horns

Messenger and News Review, November 1996

Daniel 7:1-25

NOW that we have passed through a brief survey of the basic prophecy of *Daniel*, namely, the great image of chapter 2, we are ready to make a more detailed investigation into the message of *Daniel* 7.

Overview

This chapter is divided into three parts, the first being the presentation of the vision and its various symbols. This is given in verses 1-14. The last section supplying the explanations of the symbols is found in verses 23-28.

In the middle section, verses 15-22, Daniel is troubled by what had been revealed to him and approaches one of the persons standing by to find the answer. In two short verses the message of the prophecy and its interpretation is given as follows:

Daniel 7

¹⁷ Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth.

¹⁸ But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.

Glad to have received that much light, Daniel presses his question further as recorded in verses 19-22. According to the rule laid down in the last chapter, every symbol must have a matching explanation, and every explanation must have a symbol. Therefore, we expect that an explanation for each symbol will be available, and we will find that this is certainly the case.

The Vision

So, firstly we will familiarize ourselves with the prophecy itself, and after this we will concern ourselves with the matching of the interpretation with the symbols. Daniel reported what he saw in these words:

Daniel 7

¹ In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.

² Daniel spoke, saying, I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea.

³ And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.

⁴ The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

⁵ And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: Arise, devour much flesh!

⁶ After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

⁷ After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

⁸ I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

⁹ I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire;

¹⁰ A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

¹¹ I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame.

¹² As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

¹³ I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.

In this vision strange beasts of prey are used to symbolize the four nations which have risen and fallen from the time of Babylon:

1. A lion with two wings;
2. A savage bear;
3. A leopard with four wings; and
4. A beast which was so terrible as to be unlike anything ever seen on earth.

There is no question about each beast being the symbol of a kingdom, for this they are plainly declared to be in:

Daniel 7

¹⁷ These great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth.

These beasts or kingdoms were said to rise out of a tempest-tossed sea. Winds are a symbol of strife as we read:

The Great Controversy, p. 439-440:

The great kingdoms that have ruled the world were presented to the prophet Daniel as beasts of prey, rising when...

Daniel 7

² ...the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.

In *Revelation* 17 an angel explained that waters represent...

Revelation 17

¹⁵ ...peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

Winds are a symbol of strife. The four winds of heaven striving upon the great sea represent the terrible scenes of conquest and revolution by which kingdoms have attained to power.

Four Kingdoms

Just as in *Daniel 2* four kingdoms of worldwide extension were to arise in succession, so there are four great beasts symbolizing kingdoms rising out of a storm-tossed sea.

1. BABYLON

Firstly came the lion with eagle's wings denoting a kingdom of great power and speed, until the wings were plucked off and it stood on two feet like a man. No longer strong, he soon fell a prey to the next beast arising behind him. That first beast is a symbol of Babylon.

2. MEDO-PERSIA

Next came the great bear, the symbol for Medo-Persia. While this conquering nation did some great things for God and His people by which it was possible for the city of Jerusalem and the temple to be rebuilt, nevertheless, great wickedness was found in her.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1168:

The Medo-Persian kingdom was visited by the wrath of heaven because in this kingdom God's law was trampled under foot. The fear of the Lord found no place in the hearts of the people. The prevailing influences in Medo-Persia were wickedness, blasphemy, and corruption.

3. GREECE

After this came the four-headed, four-winged leopard. The leopard is a very fast animal. The thought which is established here is that a four-winged leopard would be very speedy in its conquests of other nations.

There is no question in regard to who the leopard was. It was the kingdom of Greece. A special feature of its rise to power was the rapidity with which, under the generalship of Alexander the Great, it subjugated nation after nation and added them to his record of triumphs.

A second feature was that, after an early death, his kingdom did not continue as a united whole but split up into four divisions each led by one of his four generals: Ptolemy, Cassander, Lysim-

machus, and Seleucus. Ptolemy, the king of the South, and Seleucus, the king of the North, will play a significant role in our understanding of the final events that will accompany the end of human history. We shall see this as our study progresses.

4. ROME

Now comes the fourth and last beast which was so unique and dreadful that it wholly captured Daniel's attention, and he therefore sought a better understanding of the nature of this beast and its opposition to the Lord Most High. This fourth beast is the same as the fourth kingdom in *Daniel 2*, the kingdom of iron, and as such is the symbol of pagan Rome. She ruled the world from the fall of the Grecian Empire until her own fall was completed in 476 AD.

When we read of the fearful warfare conducted by this kingdom against the church of God, we understand Daniel's interest in this oppressor of God's people, and share with him an earnest desire to better understand who he is, and his role as the enemy of God and His people. These questions are not difficult to answer, for we find that the little horn shares the same list of characteristics and does the same work as does the fourth beast himself. Therefore, to identify one is to positively identify the other.

The Ten Horns

At this stage we need to confirm that horns growing out of the head of a beast represent kingdoms which are a part of that beast or empire. This is clearly stated in:

Daniel 7

²⁴ The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings.

Now it is time to positively identify who or what is represented by the little horn. It rises out of the fourth kingdom so cannot rise elsewhere other than from the Roman Empire. The ten horns are ten kingdoms, but none of them are world empires. Since they arise out of the beast, the beast must be there before them. So the

beast came first, and then came the ten horns, each horn representing a king who was less than the whole of Rome.

The Roman Empire disintegrated under the onslaught of powerful tribes. These were as follows: the Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Suevi, Vandals, Heruli, Franks, Burgundians, Lombards, Huns, and the Anglo-Saxons.

The success of these ten tribes over the Roman Empire is dated from 476 AD, however, this does not mean that the Roman Empire completely ceased to exist at that time. It definitely continued to exist after that, but this date marks the point of no return. Before this date the fate of the Roman Empire was not yet sealed. But after that there was no hope that the empire could avoid eventual annihilation. It was just a matter of time.

The Little Horn

After the ten horns were established, another little horn made its presence felt among them by rising after them and in their very midst. The rise of kingdoms in this world almost always means the fall of others, and so we find that three horns are pushed out by the little horn. The result is that seven of the original ten remain, plus the little horn now located in the midst of the seven.

Who then were the three horns which were dislodged by the little horn? They were the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths. The Heruli were uprooted in 493 AD and driven out of Italy. The Vandals in North Africa were the next to be destroyed. Justinian, who was at that time the emperor of the Eastern half of the Roman Empire with its capitol at Constantinople, effected this by sending his army against them under the generalship of Belisarius in 533-534 AD. The military campaign was so successful that the Vandals disappeared from history. Once this was accomplished, General Belisarius invaded Italy and drove out the Ostrogoths. The work was completed by 538 AD. It is from this date that the little horn, having established itself in the place of the three, began its reign.

None of the original ten horns was equipped with seeing eyes nor with a mouth speaking pompous words whose appearance was greater than his fellows, but the little horn was. In this respect it was different from the other remaining seven. He had capacities which they did not have and therefore could speak pompously and would persecute the saints of the Most High. He would intend to change times and law. These things he would do for a period of time described as a time, times, and half a time.

The Rise of Self-Exaltation

Let us now take these points one by one until the accumulated evidences unmistakably identify who the little horn power actually is. The first of these is that he would...

Daniel 7

²⁵ ...speak pompous words against the Most High.

These few words open up a vast field of truth encompassing the whole of the great controversy which began when Lucifer sought to exalt himself above God. This is what speaking pompous words against the Most High means. Every apostasy from the truth, principles, and power of God, has manifested itself in an attempt to establish the human above the divine. This progression from light to darkness, from righteousness to sinfulness, is one which every person seeking a place in the kingdom of God must understand.

Jesus Shows the Way

When Jesus came to the Jewish nation to sweep away the darkness caused by man's loss of righteousness and to admit the glorious light of saving truth, He found the disposition of man to rule in the place of God over his fellowmen to be very strong indeed. This was so pronounced that it was present even among His disciples to the point where they revealed a determination to rule over Him who was the Son of God.

One of the clearest revelations of this disposition surfaced on the occasion when Christ fed the multitude with the loaves and fishes. Then it was that the people saw in Christ's extraordinary

powers the capacity to sweep the Romans from their throne, and they determined to exploit this opportunity to the uttermost. So it was that the people tried to take charge of Christ and compel Him to use His power as they thought it should be employed.

John 6

¹⁴ Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.

¹⁵ Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by himself alone.

The Desire of Ages, p. 378:

In their enthusiasm the people are ready at once to crown Him king. They see that He makes no effort to attract attention or secure honor to himself. In this He is essentially different from the priests and rulers, and they fear that He will never urge His claim to David's throne. Consulting together, they agree to take Him by force, and proclaim Him the king of Israel. The disciples unite with the multitude in declaring the throne of David the rightful inheritance of their Master. "It is the modesty of Christ," they say, "that causes Him to refuse such honor. Let the people exalt their Deliverer. Let the arrogant priests and rulers be forced to honor Him who comes clothed with the authority of God."

In the most positive manner Christ refused them permission to implement their scheme. Instead, He sent the multitudes to their homes and directed His disciples to sail across the lake to Capernaum. They obeyed very reluctantly only because they had no power to force Christ to obey them.

Struggles in the Early Church

From then on until the crucifixion there were more of these power struggles as each man among the twelve sought for himself the highest place in the coming kingdom. Finally, at the foot-washing service, those men apart from Judas were divested of their disposition to rule their fellowmen, but this was not true of all those who joined the newly formed church during the outpouring of the former rain. Even among those who had received the message in the power of the Holy Spirit were some who still

carried the conviction that it was their duty to direct the other workers to labor according to their opinions as to how the work should be accomplished.⁵³

Matters came to a climax when Paul returned to Jerusalem from his last missionary journey. The leaders were impressed to the point of deep conviction as Paul reported the great things God was doing for His people, but, instead of repenting for their stubborn unbelief, they called on him to change his ways so as to recognize them as heads over him, the position which only Christ can occupy.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 403:

This was the golden opportunity for all the leading brethren to confess frankly that God had wrought through Paul, and that at times they had erred in permitting the reports of his enemies to arouse their jealousy and prejudice. But instead of uniting in an effort to do justice to the one who had been injured, they gave him counsel which showed that they still cherished a feeling that Paul should be held largely responsible for the existing prejudice. They did not stand nobly in his defense, endeavoring to show the disaffected ones where they were wrong, but sought to effect a compromise by counseling him to pursue a course which in their opinion would remove all cause for misapprehension.

They began their response by outlining what they considered to be a serious problem, the terrible threat of severe persecution. The leaders in Jerusalem had concluded this was due to Paul's "disrespect" of the ceremonial laws, whereas in fact, it was due to the preaching of the gospel. So they had devised a solution which involved Paul's performing a ceremonial requirement to "prove" he was law-abiding. Having made what they thought was a perfect plan, they said very significantly,

Acts 21

²³ Therefore, do what we tell you...

⁵³ See *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 400, and *Entering into God's Sabbath Rest*, Chapters 10 and 11.

Tragically, that was just what Paul did. What they should have said was,

“Therefore, do what Christ the Head of the church tells you to do.”

But Paul placed himself under the headship of other men, and thus aided in establishing the reign of the mystery of iniquity—the system of man over man in the place of God—in the early church.

Paul’s surrender of himself to the demands of the leaders in Jerusalem could not have been more damaging to the cause of righteousness. The losses sustained were terrible. In the church, he was the great champion of the mystery of God, which is the perfect and complete answer to the mystery of iniquity. His actions as a response to the leading brethren resulted in his being arrested and spending the remainder of his life in Roman prisons, apart from one interval of relatively brief duration. This permitted the church leaders to establish themselves more rapidly and firmly in the place of authority which they believed was theirs.

At first the claim to the occupation of the throne of power and glory was not so explicitly stated. The disposition to rule in the place of God was not so great as it came to be some centuries later when the man of sin had really established himself over the nations and peoples of the world.

Pompous Claims of the Papacy

Then it was that the apostate church, which is known to us as the papacy and which developed from the uncorrected errors carried forward by the leading brethren of Jerusalem in Paul’s day, came out boldly in its support of the erroneous position that the head of the church on earth replaced the true Head, Jesus Christ. This is argued most strongly in the authoritative writings of that church as the following statement on *Daniel 7:25* in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 831 shows. This statement is a copy of material from a large Roman Catholic encyclopedia written during the 18th century. It reads as follows:

The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God...

The Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of the lower regions...

The Pope is as it were God on earth, sole sovereign of the faithful of Christ, chief of kings, having plenitude of power, to whom has been intrusted by the omnipotent God direction not only of the earthly but also of the heavenly kingdom...

The Pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, explain, or interpret even divine laws...

The Pope can modify divine law, since his power is not of man but of God, and he acts as vicegerent of God upon earth with most ample power of binding and loosing his sheep.

Whatever the Lord God himself, and Redeemer, is said to do, that his vicar does, provided that he does nothing contrary to the faith.⁵⁴

This is but a sample of many more claims and assertions which can be cited to demonstrate that the papacy actively teaches that the Pope is exalted above the powers of heaven and earth, and that the Pope can modify, change, and interpret God's laws.

These most certainly are the expressions of great and pompous words against the Most High, and such audacity would be hard to exceed. It provides that a mere, sinful, mortal man be placed in the position of God upon His throne, a concept which every true, intelligent Christian heartily rejects. It is the inevitable outworking of the spirit of domination of man by man which should have been rooted out in the early days of the Christian church but was not.

The placing of man over man in the church can only produce the worst kind of evils, as the knowledge which is from above has revealed to us. To position man over man in the church requires that the present Head, Jesus Christ, be replaced by another, in this case the Roman Pontiff. But what a feeble replacement the very best of humanity would provide!

⁵⁴ Translated from Lucius Ferraris, "Papa II," *Prompta Bibliotheca*, Vol. VI, pp. 25-29.

Worse still, no matter how righteous a man might be, he could never fill the vital role of bridging the gulf which separates man from his Maker. Christ is the only Saviour.

Acts 4

¹² Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

So far then, we have learned from *Daniel 7* that there were to be four world empires, the last of which was the Roman Empire which ruled the world from 168 BC until 476 AD. This mighty empire was to eventually fall into decay and would be divided into ten kingdoms which we listed.

Then there was to rise up after the ten and in the midst of them, another little horn, which displaced three of the original ten horns, and who was to speak pompous words against God. These specifications we tied to the papacy because this was the only power to fulfill these details at the specified time.

There is much more to be learned from *Daniel 7* as we shall discover in the forthcoming chapters.

36. Characteristics of the Little Horn

Messenger and News Review, January 1997

Daniel 7:21-25

IN THE last chapter we started to explain the characteristics of the little horn. That it has a mouth with which it speaks pompous words means that it exalts itself above God and takes His place. In the time of the Roman Empire there was one power which tried to do this, namely the papacy, which declared itself to be god on earth, having authority over the earthly as well as over the heavenly. It claimed also to have the power to change, explain, and interpret the divine laws.

Persecution

The next characteristic of the little horn is that it...

Daniel 7

²⁵ ...shall persecute the saints of the Most High.

The same truth is stated in these words:

²¹ I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them.

Persecution is the application of pressure upon another person in order to force him to conform to a certain way of thinking and acting. The very first example of this in human history was Cain who persecuted his brother Abel, finally killing him. The issue was purely religious, the question being which religion could God accept-Cain's or Abel's. By consuming Abel's offering, God gave incontrovertible evidence that Abel's religion was the true one. At no time was Abel a threat to Cain, for in him was the sweet spirit of deep Christian love, yet Cain murdered his only brother.

Genesis 4

⁴ And the Lord respected Abel and his offering,

⁵ But He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

⁶ And the Lord said unto Cain, Why are you wroth? and why is your countenance fallen?

⁷ If you do well, shall you not be accepted? and if you do not well, sin lies at the door. And unto you shall be his desire, and you shall rule over him.

⁸ Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose against Abel his brother and killed him.

As we read in verse 6-7, the Lord, who had not accepted Cain's sacrifice, spoke to him and warned him.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 74:

But instead of acknowledging his sin, Cain continued to complain of the injustice of God and to cherish jealousy and hatred of Abel. He angrily reproached his brother, and attempted to draw him into controversy concerning God's dealings with them.

In meekness, yet fearlessly and firmly, Abel defended the justice and goodness of God. He pointed out Cain's error, and tried to convince him that the wrong was in himself. He pointed to the compassion of God in sparing the life of their parents when He might have punished them with instant death, and urged that God loved them, or He would not have given His Son, innocent and holy, to suffer the penalty which they had incurred.

All this caused Cain's anger to burn the hotter. Reason and conscience told him that Abel was in the right; but he was enraged that one who had been wont to heed his counsel should now presume to disagree with him, and that he could gain no sympathy in his rebellion. In the fury of his passion he slew his brother.

The truths expressed in this paragraph make it very clear that persecution has no place in the character or ways of God. He does not use pressure tactics in any shape or form in order to win subjects to His kingdom. In the Garden of Eden, God made man with complete freedom of choice as it is written:

Education, p. 23:

Though created innocent and holy, our first parents were not placed beyond the possibility of wrong-doing. God might have created them without the power to transgress His requirements, but in that case there could have been no development of character; their service would not have been voluntary, but forced.

Therefore He gave them the power of choice—the power to yield or to withhold obedience. And before they could receive in fullness the blessings He desired to impart, their love and loyalty must be tested.

In giving humans the power of choice, the right to yield or to withhold obedience, God positioned himself where He could not punish them for exercising that choice, no matter how evil it might be. Therefore, according to His character and His ways, God would not persecute Cain by punishing him for his wrong choice in murdering Abel.

God does not exert any kind of pressure so as to force someone to obey. He rather respects the right of man to choose, then leaves him to the consequences of his own choice. In case of a wrong decision, if God used compelling power, He would contradict himself. But God is consistent. He does not say one thing and then do another. According to the constitution of His kingdom, He does not work by means of coercion or force.

Since persecution is the application of force to produce conformity, it is an admission by the oppressor that he lacks the saving power of love by which souls are won unto eternal life. Persecution cannot do its terrible work without the exercise of compelling power. Therefore, it can never be of God, for He never compels men to serve Him.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 541:

It is no part of Christ's mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, who seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederated with evil angels sometimes bring suffering upon their fellow men in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love.

This short explanation of the character of God shows that the little horn power of *Daniel 7* cannot be of God, for it practices such unrighteous principles as are never found in God's govern-

ment. And although it claims the place of God for itself, it is not a power which was established by God. History reveals that the papacy, despite its claim of representing God on this earth, has worked by means of unrighteousness. By its hand, literally millions of the Christians who were prepared to sacrifice their lives for the truth, were persecuted, tormented, and martyred. The Inquisition was a fearful agency under Satan's control to destroy God's children as we read:

The Great Controversy, p. 59-60:

In the thirteenth century was established that most terrible of all the engines of the papacy—the Inquisition. The prince of darkness wrought with the leaders of the papal hierarchy. In their secret councils Satan and his angels controlled the minds of evil men, while unseen in the midst stood an angel of God, taking the fearful record of their iniquitous decrees and writing the history of deeds too horrible to appear to human eyes.

Revelation 17

⁵ ...Babylon the great...

⁶ ...[was] drunken with the blood of the saints.

The mangled forms of millions of martyrs cried to God for vengeance upon that apostate power.

Many books could be added to those written revealing the details of these atrocities. But we have considered sufficient evidence here to lay out the character of persecution and its persecutors, and to demonstrate that this is an identifying mark of the papacy which not only used force but also did so at the precise time foretold in prophecy.

Time, Times, and Half a Time

For the moment we will pass over the next specification which reads:

Daniel 7

²⁵ ...and shall intend to change times and law.

Before learning how this part of the verse is to be understood, we must first understand the remainder of it:

Daniel 7

²⁵ ...then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.

Obviously, this is a reference to a period of time, but how long is that period? To find the answer, we turn to other Scriptures which state the same truth in different words. These verses are found in *Revelation* 12:6, 14. Firstly we will consider verse 14 which reads,

Revelation 12

¹⁴ But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

This verse refers to the same event that Daniel prophesied of. The woman was to flee to her place in the wilderness where she would be nourished for a time, times, and half a time.

When we compare this with verse 6, we find the same woman making the same flight to her place in the same wilderness where she was fed, not for time, times, and half a time, but for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

⁶ Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

We are therefore left to the conclusion that time, times, and half a time is exactly the same as one thousand two hundred and sixty days. That means that one time is 360 days, two times is 720 days and half a time is 180 days. These days are not literal but symbolic. Each prophetic day stands for a literal year. The Bible confirms this in several places:

Numbers 14

³⁴ According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection.

Ezekiel 4

⁶ And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year.

Further confirmation of the principle that one day stands for one year in Bible prophecy is found in the prophecy of the seventy weeks of *Daniel* 9:24-27. This evidence offers us simple but incontrovertible proof of the correctness of this principle. The time period of 490 days which represents 490 years has a fixed starting point, namely, the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, and is followed by other signs along the way. The most notable of these was the first coming of Christ to His people in the last prophetic week which occurred after 483 years, and His death in the middle of that week—after 3½ years of ministry.

The command to rebuild and restore Jerusalem was completed in the autumn of 457 BC. Then, 483 years later, in 27 AD, Jesus appeared as the Messiah proclaiming that “the time is fulfilled.” The time to which He made reference was the prophecy of the 70 weeks or 490 years of *Daniel* 9. These were completed in 34 AD when Stephen was stoned.

The Desire of Ages, p. 233:

The burden of Christ’s preaching was,

Mark 1

¹⁵ The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe the gospel.

Thus the gospel message, as given by the Saviour himself, was based on the prophecies. The “time” which He declared to be fulfilled was the period made known by the angel Gabriel to Daniel.

Daniel 9

²⁴ Seventy weeks, [said the angel,] are determined upon your people and upon your holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.

A day in prophecy stands for a year. See *Numbers* 14:34; *Ezekiel* 4:6.

Now that the principle of a day for a year has been established, we are ready to apply the 1260 years to the little horn, for it is written that:

Daniel 7

²⁵ ...then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.

When did that important period of time commence? It started immediately after the three kingdoms had fallen to make a place for the little horn power to assume his position among the seven. As history shows, those three were the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths. Their fall was completed by 538 AD, preparing the way for the papacy to take over the position of power.

...in the very beginning of the year 538, Belisarius put an end to the Empire, and Dominion of the Goths, at Rome.

“He had entered the City on the 10th of the preceding December, in triumph, in the name of Justinian, Emperor of the East: and had soon after made it tributary to him: leaving thenceforward from 538 AD, No Power in Rome, that could be said to rule over the earth,—excepting the ECCLESIASTICAL PONTIFICAL POWER.” (Edward King, *Remarks on the Signs of the Times* (Philadelphia ed., 1800), p. 18-19.)⁵⁵

We have but to add to the year 538 the period of 1260 years to find out when the power of the papacy would be broken. The sum of those numbers takes us to 1798. It was in that very year that the over-mastering power of the papacy came to its abrupt end after a considerable period of decline. It happened as follows:

A portion of Napoleon Bonaparte’s army under the leadership of General Berthier entered Rome, declared the end of the political rule of the papacy, imprisoned Pope Pius IV, and took him to France where, shortly afterwards, he died in exile. In the Scriptures this is described as being the deadly wound which in turn was to be healed.

⁵⁵ *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 2, p. 767, by L. E. Froom.

Revelation 13

³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

¹² And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

The duration of the terrible dominion of the papal power is described in verse 5 as being forty-two months.

⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.

The parallel to the little horn from *Daniel 7* is obvious: first of all we find again the mouth, which speaks great things and blasphemies, and secondly we find the same time period which was given for the dominion of that power, for the forty-two months of this scripture are equivalent to the 1260 days from *Revelation 12:6*. As one prophetic day describes one literal year, so one prophetic month consists of thirty prophetic days, which are 30 literal years. Forty-two months times thirty days equals 1260 days, which indicates a time period of 1260 years.

It is important to note here that we are talking about prophetic times. We must not conclude that 360 days make up a Jewish year for this is not true. Taken over a period of time, a Jewish year averages out at three hundred and sixty-five and one quarter days in length. It is a prophetic time which equals 360 days, and it is a prophetic month that consists of 30 days.

The reason for the Bible use of such reckoning can be found in the antediluvian era. In *Genesis 7:11* we read that the flood began on the seventeenth day of the second month. Then in *Genesis 8:3-4* we read that the waters decreased after 150 days, so that the ark could rest on Mount Ararat on the seventeenth day of the seventh month. This means that the flood lasted for precisely five months, which made up the 150 days. Therefore one month was exactly 30

days long at that time and one year would have been 360 days long.

The Attempt to Change the Times

We now move on to the characteristic mentioned earlier, which is that he would...

Daniel 7

²⁵ ...intend to change times and law.

The questions to be answered in connection with our study are:

“What times did the papacy seek to change? Why did it make such an attempt?”

The prophetic time period of 1260 days is one of the most positive identification marks which establishes the identity of the little horn power. Together with the other characteristics it constitutes an incontrovertible proof that the little horn power is the symbol of the papacy. If it were possible to reinterpret this mark, by changing the length or location of the 1260 years, the evidence would be destroyed altogether.

Up until the rise of the Protestant Reformation, the papacy had been untroubled by this eventuality, for she had kept the Scriptures locked away from the people.

The Great Controversy, p. 269:

It had been Rome's policy, under a profession of reverence for the Bible, to keep it locked up in an unknown tongue and hidden away from the people. Under her rule the witnesses prophesied “clothed in sackcloth.”

But when the scriptures were opened to God's messengers, a mighty power attended the proclamation of truth, and thousands upon thousands were delivered from the darkness which for so long had shut out the light. It was a wonderful emancipation, the dawn of a new day. Along with the gospel, the prophecies were especially effective in delivering the oppressed from the repressive system of the papacy.

For some time following the launching of the Reformation, Roman Catholic leadership carefully avoided exposition of the prophecies of *Daniel* and the *Apocalypse*. They seemed unable to parry the force of the incriminating Protestant applications of the prophecies concerning Antichrist, which were undermining the very foundations of the Catholic position....

But what of the various prophecies of the Antichrist that was to do its exploits between the time of Rome's iron empire and the saint's reign? In Germany, Switzerland, France, Denmark, Sweden, England, and Scotland there had been simultaneous and impressive declarations by voice and pen that the Papacy was the specified Antichrist of prophecy. The symbols of Daniel, Paul, and John were applied with tremendous effect. Hundreds of books and tracts impressed their contention upon the consciousness of Europe. Indeed, it gained so great a hold upon the minds of men that Rome, in alarm, saw that she must successfully counteract this identification of Antichrist with the Papacy, or lose the battle.

She felt the tremendous force of the arguments used against her. And she discovered, to her dismay, that she could no longer hold her members by mere ritual, dogma, or force. There must be reasoned evidence and plausible exposition of Scripture prophecy to counter the largely unbroken harmony of the reformed positions. Catholicism must have preachers who would match dynamic Reformation eloquence and scholarship. The Jesuits were summoned to aid in the extremity, and cleverly provided the very method needed both for defense and for attack.

From the ranks of the Jesuits two stalwarts arose, determined to lift the stigma from the Papacy by locating Antichrist at some point where he could not be applied to the Roman Church....

In the reaction that followed, Catholicism loosed all its reserves upon the adherents of the Reformation. But the Counter Reformation did not merely condemn the Reformation in general; it attacked the prophetic positions on which all Protestants were agreed. It repudiated the interpretation which they embodied in their solemn confessions and sealed with their blood. It thus attacked and condemned Protestantism's prophetic spring of action....

Rome had felt the cumulative force of these prophecies. She must somehow offset them. There was no way but to deny their applicability to the Papacy, as their integral existence in the Scriptures could not be denied. The Catholic citadel must be defended on prophetic grounds. The persistent Protestant application to the Papacy of Antichrist, under the various symbols, must be countered and turned if the Protestant fortress was to be overwhelmed. The incriminating finger of prophecy—pointed by Daniel, Paul, and John—must be diverted. The symbols must be pushed out of the entire field of medieval and contemporary history.⁵⁶

There were three Jesuit priests in particular who supplied the papacy with what she needed to counteract the powerful blows being struck against her by the Protestant Reformers. Two contradictory interpretations of the 1260 years were advanced, and, despite the confusing nature of this solution, a great deal of success was achieved in diverting attention away from the Roman Catholic Church.

Two of these men were Ribera of Salamanca in Spain, and Cardinal Bellarmine of Rome. They advanced what is known as the Futurist interpretation which placed Antichrist far away in the future. A third Jesuit, Alcazar, introduced at the same time the Preterist interpretation which locates the appearance of the little horn power before the time of Rome. If either of these were correct, the papacy would most certainly be rescued from being identified as Antichrist.

But prophetic times cannot be changed so easily. For now, we will note that *Daniel* 7:25 describes the presumptuous intentions of the little horn which are:

1. Putting itself in the place of God,
2. Persecuting dissenters and forcing their conscience, and
3. Changing times.

But in reality the little horn power could never take God's place, change fixed times, or force the conscience of a true be-

⁵⁶ *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 2, p. 484-486, by L. E. Froom.

liever (even though it could kill his body). The Apostle Peter declares:

2 Peter 1

¹⁹ And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts:

²⁰ Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,

²¹ For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

The prophetic word is confirmed by virtue of its divine origin. Men may strive as did the Jesuits to change what God has declared, but they will never change anything in actual fact.

Here, for instance, is a prediction declaring that, from a specific starting point, the papacy would reign as a political and religious form of government for 1260 years—no more and no less. A specific starting point is supplied, namely, the fall of three Arian powers which occurred between 533 and 538. It is then a simple matter to add 1260 to 538 and arrive at 1798. It is equally simple to conclude that the taking of the pope prisoner in that year was the accurate and actual termination of the 1260 years which was the time, times, and half a time of the prophecy of *Daniel* 7:25.

There it stands unchanged by all the efforts of all those who have sought to divert from the papacy the incriminating evidences pointing her out as the power she really is—the great Antichrist.

God's predictions were correct to the very year, with starting and ending points 1260 years apart. This is most impressive, especially when every effort was made by the man of sin himself to change the time. But it failed. God had set the time, and there was nothing that could change it. 1798 saw the ending of papal rule as had been foretold for centuries.

37. The Attempt to Change the Law

Messenger and News Review, March 1997

Daniel 7:25

AS WE have already seen, the little horn power attempted to change the times of the prophecy. However, this was not the full extent of his work—he also tried to change the law of God.

Daniel 7

²⁵ He...shall intend to change times and law.

The Law of God

The law of God can be divided into two categories—moral and natural. The former governs our relationship to God and our fellow men, and is expressed in the ten sacred commandments given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. Rightly understood, these are seen to be the expression of perfect love and the true revelation of the divine character of our everlasting Father. They become written in the hearts of all who want God's righteousness to become their own experience.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 52:

The law of God is as sacred as God himself. It is a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, the expression of divine love and wisdom. The harmony of creation depends upon the perfect conformity of all beings, of everything, animate and inanimate, to the law of the Creator.

God has ordained laws for the government, not only of living beings, but of all the operations of nature. Everything is under fixed laws, which cannot be disregarded.

But while everything in nature is governed by natural laws, man alone, of all that inhabits the earth, is amenable to moral law. To man, the crowning work of creation, God has given power to understand His requirements, to comprehend the justice and beneficence of His law, and its sacred claims upon him; and of man unswerving obedience is required.

The moral law involves the human spirit. Man's intelligence or reason determines his relationship to this law. Natural law is more concerned with the basic, unintelligent powers found in

both animate and inanimate things. These natural laws determine how the powers in nature act—not independently, but as agents of the God who created them and uses them to carry out His purposes of love.

God provides men with a knowledge of both the moral and the natural law so that they may understand how to relate to them and be blessed by them. These laws are interactive, which means that keeping one enables us to keep the other. Conversely, this also means that the violation of one will inevitably lead to a violation of the other, resulting eventually in suffering and even death. Therefore, in order for God's purposes of love to be fulfilled, our obedience is needed.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 49:

God placed man under law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence. He was a subject of the divine government, and there can be no government without law. God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character. Such a course would have been contrary to God's plan in dealing with the inhabitants of other worlds. It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule.

Just as Adam was free to obey or disobey God's moral law, so men are free today to choose to either obey or disobey. Many choose to disobey as Adam did. We want to consider two causes of this disobedience. Firstly, rebellion, and secondly, ignorance or misconception.

Natural Law

There is a great deal written about natural law in the Spirit of Prophecy and that its violation is just as destructive as is disobedience to the moral law. Natural law governs the preservation of health, the care for the earth, the safe harnessing and usage of the

powers of nature, the success of marriage, the balanced training of children, and much more.

Men demonstrate considerable inconsistency in their relationship to natural law. They are prepared to recognize the need for strict obedience to law in some fields of human activity, but disregard this factor in other equally important areas.

One purpose of the third angel's message is to fully and finally expose the little horn power or...

2 Thessalonians 2

³ ...the man of sin,

—as the supreme law-breaker. In the proclamation of this message, great stress is laid on the vital importance of learning, understanding, and obeying the natural laws of health. Here is a typical admonition:

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 161:

Our gracious heavenly Father sees the deplorable condition of men who, some knowingly but many ignorantly, are living in violation of the laws that He has established. And in love and pity to the race He causes the light to shine upon health reform. He publishes His law and the penalty that will follow the transgression of it, that all may learn and be careful to live in harmony with natural law. He proclaims His law so distinctly and makes it so prominent that it is like a city set on a hill. All accountable beings can understand it if they will. Idiots will not be responsible. To make plain natural law and urge the obedience of it is the work that accompanies the third angel's message, to prepare a people for the coming of the Lord.

Disobedience through Rebellion

We need to render unswerving obedience to all of God's laws, both natural and moral. But "the man of sin" or the little horn power was not concerned with obedience. His disobedience was caused by rebellion. Of him it is written,

Daniel 7

²⁵ He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to

change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.

So which law did the little horn power or the man of sin set out to change? What made him so bold? And what did he intend by this attempt?

As the little horn power was primarily concerned with fighting against the Most High and His saints, it can be concluded that he was attempting to change the moral law, first and foremost, although the natural law would inevitably be affected too. Satan has always delighted in drawing intelligent beings into his ranks by instilling into others the same discontent of God's government which first led him to rebel in heaven. He considered God's law unfair and arbitrary, therefore he designed to replace it with what he claimed would be a fairer, superior one. To this day he has been pursuing his cause, and in the man of sin he has found an agent through whom he seeks to force his rulership upon others.

Satan claims that his alterations will only improve the moral law. However, his government and God's government are so radically different, that the formation of a partnership between the two is eternally out of the question. There is no place anywhere in God's kingdom for the government of antichrist, no matter how much Satan might insist to the contrary. God declares that any attempt to add anything to His Word or take anything away from it will end in miserable failure.

Revelation 22

¹⁸ For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

¹⁹ And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

God is the only Source of righteousness and life. His moral law is "a transcript of His character."⁵⁷ Only His unaltered law—that is,

⁵⁷ *The Great Controversy*, p. 434; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 52.

His character—in the heart can produce true obedience. Satan’s counterfeit system will always lead to transgression, whether it is expressed in lawlessness or in legalism.

Those who attempt to alter God’s law actually reject it, even though they might strongly affirm that they keep it. No matter how much they try to reach their self-made standard, their obedience will always be forced and contrived, it will never be the true desire of the heart. Satan’s government and God’s can never blend, for true, heart-felt obedience, and the spirit of either legalism or open lawlessness, are diametrically opposed to each other.

Apostasy of the Apostolic Church

Right from the start of the controversy, Satan understood that he must substitute his laws in the place of the moral law, in order to establish his rival kingdom. Later, through the man of sin, he continued coveting and contesting the position of the Creator. At the time of the early church this little horn power was described in the following words:

2 Thessalonians 2

⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.

⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed.

In the case of the apostolic church, freshly blessed with the awesome power of the Holy Spirit, Satan knew that the transition from righteousness to iniquity would not be accomplished in a single day.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 547:

After the descent of the Holy Spirit, when the disciples went forth to proclaim a living Saviour, their one desire was the salvation of souls. They rejoiced in the sweetness of communion with saints. They were tender, thoughtful, self-denying, willing to make any sacrifice for the truth’s sake. In their daily association with one another, they revealed the love that Christ had enjoined upon them. By unselfish words and deeds they strove to kindle this love in other hearts.

Although the church seemed to be invincible in this phase, Satan did not give up. Step by step he craftily introduced his alternative way of government. He began by robbing the believers of essential elements found in God's government, namely, the infinite love of God and unreserved faith in the Almighty. If the members of the early church had been very careful to guard against the subtle penetration of the man of sin, how different the after-history of the world would have been. It would not have been a repetition of the past, where sooner or later every church had yielded to the pressure of selfishness, even though a few individuals here and there had remained faithful. Of their fathers, who had lost the love of God and had become the victims of apostasy, it is written:

Isaiah 42

²² But this is a people robbed and plundered; all of them are snared in holes, and they are hidden in prison houses; they are for prey, and no one delivers; for plunder, and no one says, Restore!

God's intention for His church was that they should ever cherish their first love.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 547-548:

They were to go forward in willing obedience to the new commandment. So closely were they to be united with Christ that they would be enabled to fulfill all His requirements. Their lives were to magnify the power of a Saviour who could justify them by His righteousness.

Never in history had God's ideal for His people as a whole come nearer to active realization than at this time. Unfortunately, the high standard reached by the early church did not last.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 548:

But gradually a change came. The believers began to look for defects in others. Dwelling upon mistakes, giving place to unkind criticism, they lost sight of the Saviour and His love. They became more strict in regard to outward ceremonies, more particular about the theory than the practice of the faith. In their zeal to condemn others, they overlooked their own errors. They lost

the brotherly love that Christ had enjoined, and, saddest of all, they were unconscious of their loss. They did not realize that happiness and joy were going out of their lives and that, having shut the love of God out of their hearts, they would soon walk in darkness.

In order to guard against apostasy, the greatest vigilance must be kept. The slightest deviation from truth must be recognized as dangerous. This does not mean that we are to examine others, but rather, each individual is to examine his own heart.

When changes for the worse do occur, they are often very subtle and small at first, and yet their influence can grow until they dominate the entire individual and eventually even the church. One of the major dangers facing the church comes from members who profess the theory of the truth although they no longer truly experience its sanctifying power. This results from one of the saddest features of apostasy, namely blindness, which deprives its victims of the ability to see how far they have departed from the truth and have begun to walk in darkness. In order to save oneself from this fate, it is vital to be honest and not to consider small departures from truth as unimportant.

The Rise of the Little Horn

After the death of Paul, the mystery of iniquity, which is the mystery of lawlessness, advanced. The transition from true righteousness of the heart to malicious iniquity required several centuries.

The Great Controversy, p. 49-50:

Little by little, at first in stealth and silence, and then more openly as it increased in strength and gained control of the minds of men, “the mystery of iniquity” carried forward its deceptive and blasphemous work. Almost imperceptibly the customs of heathenism found their way into the Christian church.

The spirit of compromise and conformity was restrained for a time by the fierce persecutions which the church endured under paganism. But as persecution ceased, and Christianity entered the courts and palaces of kings, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and His apostles for the pomp and pride of pa-

gan priests and rulers; and in place of the requirements of God, she substituted human theories and traditions.

The nominal conversion of Constantine, in the early part of the fourth century, caused great rejoicing; and the world, cloaked with a form of righteousness, walked into the church. Now the work of corruption rapidly progressed. Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror. Her spirit controlled the church. Her doctrines, ceremonies, and superstitions were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ.

As the spirit of Christ in the church waned, she sank deeper and deeper into apostasy. She even presumed to change God's law.

The Great Controversy, p. 446:

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:

Daniel 7

²⁵ 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.

So the papists simply deleted the second commandment, then split the tenth commandment into two in order to maintain the number of commandments at ten. These changes showed a bold presumption on the part of the little horn, but it was the change in the fourth commandment that was the precise fulfillment of the prophecy.

Disobedience through Deception and Ignorance

It required a long time for the people to become sufficiently deceived to accept the change in the fourth commandment. At first the seventh-day Sabbath alone was regarded by all Christians as God's holy day. Considerably later, Sunday began to be revered as a memorial of Christ's resurrection. Thereafter, as the mystery of iniquity became progressively more firmly entrenched in the church, reverence for the divine institution decreased while that for Sunday steadily increased, until the seventh day came to be regarded as a common day possessing no sanctity whatsoever, and Sunday became the hallowed day of worship.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 832:

The first official action of the Catholic Church expressing preference for Sunday was taken at the Council of Laodicea, in the 4th century. Canon 29 of this council stipulates that "Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday [Sabbath], but shall work on that day; but the Lord's day they shall especially honor, and, as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day."

Although this was the first official action taken by the Catholic Church in regard to the relevant value of the Sabbath versus Sunday, it was a step of considerable power. From this foundation they went on to build reverence for Sunday and contempt for the Sabbath. Instead of trying to conceal all evidence of the origin of this attempted change in the law, the papacy even went so far as to point to it as an evidence of its authority!

The Great Controversy, p. 447-448:

Roman Catholics acknowledge that the change of the Sabbath was made by their church, and declare that Protestants by observing the Sunday are recognizing her power. In the *Catholic Catechism of Christian Religion*, in answer to a question as to the day to be observed in obedience to the fourth commandment, this statement is made:

"During the old law, Saturday was the day sanctified; but the church, instructed by Jesus Christ, and directed by the Spirit of God, has substituted Sunday for Saturday; so now we sanctify

the first, not the seventh day. Sunday means, and now is, the day of the Lord.”

As the sign of the authority of the Catholic Church, papist writers cite “the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of;...because by keeping Sunday, they acknowledge the church’s power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin.” (Henry Tuberville, *An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine*, page 58.) What then is the change of the Sabbath, but the sign, or mark, of the authority of the Roman Church—“the mark of the beast”?

So eventually, the change in the law had become complete and God’s holy Sabbath day, the symbol for the connection of Creator and creature, had been apparently replaced by the first day of the week. So powerful was the deception, that men considered the cruel persecution of dissenters as the work of God by which they were revealing His character and rendering Him commendable service.

John 15

²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will keep yours also.

²¹ But all these things they will do to you for my name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent me.

John 16

² They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.

³ And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor me.

⁴ But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

By its blatant persecution and its confident boasting, the church itself gave further evidence of being the little horn. This man of sin is directly opposed to all that God determines. In the last great battle of the ages he will march against God’s people who have persevered and kept God’s commandments, and have the faith of Jesus.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 982-983:

Two great opposing powers are revealed in the last great battle. On one side stands the Creator of heaven and earth. All on His side bear His signet. They are obedient to His commands. On the other side stands the prince of darkness, with those who have chosen apostasy and rebellion (RH May 7, 1901).

To Obey or Disobey

Every person is free to choose on which side he will be found. Will he choose obedience to God's laws, or will he deviate from a clear "thus says the Lord"?

Selected Messages, vol. 3, p. 424:

The Lord of heaven permits the world to choose whom they will have as ruler. Let all read carefully the thirteenth chapter of *Revelation*, for it concerns every human agent, great and small. Every human being must take sides, either for the true and living God, who has given to the world the memorial of Creation in the seventh-day Sabbath, or for a false sabbath, instituted by men who have exalted themselves above all that is called God or that is worshiped, who have taken upon themselves the attributes of Satan, in oppressing the loyal and true who keep the commandments of God. This persecuting power will compel the worship of the beast by insisting on the observance of the sabbath he has instituted. Thus he blasphemes God, sitting "in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 *Thessalonians* 2:4).

Of all God's laws, it is the Sabbath that will be the greatest issue. This is clearly and emphatically stated again and again in the Spirit of Prophecy in words such as the following:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 977:

The Sabbath question is to be the issue in the great final conflict, in which all the world will act a part. Men have honored Satan's principles above the principles that rule in the heavens. They have accepted the spurious sabbath, which Satan has exalted as the sign of his authority. But God has set His seal upon His royal requirement. Each Sabbath institution, both true and false, bears the name of its author, an ineffaceable mark that shows the authority of each.

This statement and many more like it clearly and plainly declare that the honoring or the dishonoring of the seventh-day Sabbath will be the great point of controversy in the final, testing battle. But the question remains:

“Why should the Sabbath be so important? Why single out one commandment above the rest?”

We can learn the answer by looking at the history of the Sabbath in the last century. When the early Adventists, including Ellen White, first began to observe the seventh-day Sabbath, they did not keep it because they considered it more important than the other nine commandments but because they knew it was according to heaven’s order. Ellen White describes the development as follows:

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 75-76:

In the autumn of 1846 we began to observe the Bible Sabbath, and to teach and defend it. My attention was first called to the Sabbath while I was on a visit to New Bedford, Massachusetts, earlier in the same year. I there became acquainted with Elder Joseph Bates, who had early embraced the advent faith, and was an active laborer in the cause. Elder B. was keeping the Sabbath, and urged its importance. I did not feel its importance, and thought that Elder B. erred in dwelling upon the fourth commandment more than upon the other nine.

But the Lord gave me a view of the heavenly sanctuary. The temple of God was opened in heaven, and I was shown the ark of God covered with the mercy seat. Two angels stood, one at each end of the ark, with their wings spread over the mercy seat, and their faces turned toward it. My accompanying angel informed me that these represented all the heavenly host looking with reverential awe toward the holy law which had been written by the finger of God. Jesus raised the cover of the ark, and I beheld the tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written. I was amazed as I saw the fourth commandment in the very center of the ten precepts, with a soft halo of light encircling it. Said the angel:

“It is the only one of the ten which defines the living God who created the heavens and the earth and all things that are therein.

When the foundations of the earth were laid, then was laid the foundation of the Sabbath also.”

By showing the connection between the fourth commandment and himself as the Creator, God strengthens the trust and faith of His children. The Sabbath defines the position of the Most High, who alone has the power to create and uphold life. If He were ever dislodged from this position, it would mean the cessation of all life and activity. In order to uphold the whole universe, life-sustaining energy must continue to flow from God. Without the Creator, there would be only darkness and death.

Although sin entered and introduced death on this earth, God has never withdrawn the flood tide of His love, light, and energy. Men are afforded a second opportunity to choose eternal life with God—a life of obedience to His law.

“When the foundations of the earth were laid, then was laid the foundation of the Sabbath also.”

According to this sentence, what is the foundation of the Sabbath? It is God’s creative power. In a declaration given by Jesus about the Sabbath it says:

Mark 2

²⁷ The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

This means that the Sabbath, which is founded on God’s creative power, fills a great, indispensable need on man’s part. A need that existed even before the fall, and much more so thereafter.

Christ and the Sabbath

God is the infinite Source of all the power by which we live. But no matter how much life and power He has, it will serve no useful purpose if disconnected from those it is to serve. Therefore, God and man need a connector, and that role is filled by Jesus Christ. The Sabbath is a symbol of Christ’s power.

The Desire of Ages, p. 288:

Mark 2

²⁸ Wherefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.

These words are full of instruction and comfort. Because the Sabbath was made for man, it is the Lord's day. It belongs to Christ. For,

John 1

³ All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.

Since He made all things, He made the Sabbath. By Him it was set apart as a memorial of the work of creation. It points to Him as both the Creator and the Sanctifier. It declares that He who created all things in heaven and in earth, and by whom all things hold together, is the head of the church, and that by His power we are reconciled to God. For, speaking of Israel, He said,

Ezekiel 20

¹² I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them [—make them holy].

Then the Sabbath is a sign of Christ's power to make us holy. And it is given to all whom Christ makes holy. As a sign of His sanctifying power, the Sabbath is given to all who through Christ become a part of the Israel of God.

So the Sabbath is the symbol of God's power through Christ. To do away with the Sabbath, not merely as a day but as a principle in the heart, is to do away with Christ as the Connector. This will automatically result in the spiritual death of those who lose this connection with God.

God is constantly working to keep Christ in His position as Connector, in order to safeguard the well being of all His creation, particularly sinful man.

John 3

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1085:

The instant man accepted the temptations of Satan, and did the very things God had said he should not do, Christ, the Son of God, stood between the living and the dead, saying, "Let the punishment fall on me. I will stand in man's place. He shall have another chance."

Such is the love of God to man through Christ.

In the attempt by the papacy, the man of sin, to do away with the Sabbath and to rearrange Heaven's order, the worst he could do was to intend to do so. For even though it was his intention to change times and the law, he could never change God. And because God's law is but a transcript of His character, it follows that it was not possible to change God's law.

The connection between the Creator and His faithful creatures remained intact, despite the Sabbath being largely forgotten. Fortunately, the enemy was not able to destroy the true Sabbath, and he will never be permitted to change the times or laws in God's kingdom.

But the amount of success that he has had from this attempt, particularly during the Middle Ages, reveals the terrible results that would occur throughout God's kingdom if his attempts were made law!

38. Thrones and Judgments

Messenger and News Review, April 1997

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

NOW that we have studied in detail the characteristics of the little horn as they are listed in *Daniel* 7, let us briefly summarize them:

- He arises after the other ten horns. vs. 24.
- He arises among them. vs. 8, 20
- He uproots three of the others in his rising. vs. 8.
- He persecutes God's people relentlessly and unmercifully. vs. 25.
- He speaks pompous words against the Most High. vs. 25.
- He intends to change the divine law. vs. 25.
- He intends to change the time periods of the prophecy. vs. 25.
- He rules for time, times, and half a time. vs. 25.
- He is different from the others. vs. 24.

These evidences and their fulfillment in history enabled us to identify the power symbolized by the little horn as the papacy, which ruled from 538 to 1798 AD. In the New Testament this power is also described as the man of sin, the son of perdition, the Antichrist, and the mystery of iniquity or lawlessness.⁵⁸

It is a power different from all the other horns who were kings, presidents, and military conquerors. While these sat upon thrones they had won for themselves by their own power and clung to them by using the sword, the little horn secured the service of others to exercise its authority. The other horns were organizations in which the governors ruled all their subjects including the ecclesiastics, but when the little horn rose to power, the ecclesiastics secured their rulership through the power of the state. They did not build up their own force of arms but orchestrated the state to fight their wars for them.

⁵⁸ See for example *John* 17:12; *2 Thessalonians* 2:3, 7-8; *1 John* 2:18; 3:4.

This situation will be repeated when the image of the beast is set up. The church will make religious laws, but the civil governments will enforce them. By so doing, men usurp the position that is due to God alone, for as far as the religion and conscience of His creatures are concerned, God alone can make laws and administer them for the benefit of all. Any attempt on the part of man to pass or enforce religious laws, is to replace God with men—and this is the mystery of iniquity. History has proved that whenever such a policy requiring union of church and state is adopted, the consequences are horrific.

The Great Controversy, p. 60:

But “the noon of the papacy was the midnight of the world.” (J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, b. I, ch. 4.) The Holy Scriptures were almost unknown, not only to the people, but to the priests. Like the Pharisees of old, the papal leaders hated the light which would reveal their sins. God’s law, the standard of righteousness, having been removed, they exercised power without limit, and practiced vice without restraint. Fraud, avarice, and profligacy prevailed. Men shrank from no crime by which they could gain wealth or position. The palaces of popes and prelates were scenes of the vilest debauchery. Some of the reigning pontiffs were guilty of crimes so revolting that secular rulers endeavored to depose these dignitaries of the church as monsters too vile to be tolerated upon the throne. For centuries Europe had made no progress in learning, arts, or civilization. A moral and intellectual paralysis had fallen upon Christendom.

The Protestant Reformation, which obtained its direction and authority from the Bible and the Bible only, reversed this trend with the result that the midnight passed and a new day dawned for the world. Once that better day arrived, it provided man with a freedom that resulted in great progress including far-reaching scientific advances. It was an enlightenment that revolutionized human existence.

But the progress has not always been forward, for as long as the heart of sinful man is unchanged, it cannot use freedom to advantage. No matter what improvements or discoveries are made,

if man does not make the most of his opportunity and truly submit his heart to God's rulership, apostasy will develop, causing humanity to slide backward to an even lower position.

As for the reformers themselves, they built on the sure foundation of a real conversion. They led men away from apostasy and provided an opportunity, for all those who were willing, to be delivered from the bondage of sin. But the enemy did not give up. He is still at work within the church trying to cause Christians to fall—primarily by tempting them to turn to their own works. Apostasy, as we saw in the case of King Solomon, begins by attempting to do God's work in man's way.

The Throne of the Ancient of Days

With Daniel, we have studied the rise and fall of kingdoms until the emergence of the little horn power. For us it is past history, for Daniel it was still future. At that time, Babylon was the most powerful kingdom that had ever existed. As the vision of its demise and the subsequent rise and fall of Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome unfolded before him, Daniel was deeply troubled. His concern was not for the kingdoms as such, but for the fate of God's children.

But after seeing the power of the enemy, Daniel was to be shown the opposite side of the great controversy. He was to see the power of God and His judgment which will put an end to the cruel despot. Daniel's attention was suddenly directed down the ages to a very different scene:

Daniel 7

⁹ I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire;

¹⁰ A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. And thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

Both the preparation of the court and the entry and seating of the Ancient of Days take place in heaven. But they are of greatest consequence to the believers on this earth in the last days, for they usher in their deliverance.

It was comforting to Daniel to see the glory of God revealed in His judgment for he needed to know that God's power is unsurpassed, no matter how much the little horn might exercise its cruel rulership. As we, too, need to be fortified against the intimidation and utter discouragement that the power of the enemy can cause, we will consider with Daniel the glory and power of God's judgment. To do so, we will begin by studying the significance of God's throne. In order to gain a fuller picture, we will compare *Daniel 7* with other scriptures.

Another prophet who was also given a vision of the throne of God was Ezekiel. Referring to this vision, Ellen White wrote:

Prophets and Kings, p. 535-536:

Upon the banks of the river Chebar, Ezekiel beheld a whirlwind seeming to come from the north,

Ezekiel 1

⁴ ...a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber.

A number of wheels intersecting one another were moved by four living beings. High above all these...

²⁶ ...was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.

Ezekiel 10

⁸ And there appeared in the cherubims the form of a man's hand under their wings.

The wheels were so complicated in arrangement that at first sight they appeared to be in confusion; yet they moved in perfect harmony. Heavenly beings, sustained and guided by the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, were impelling those wheels; above them, upon the sapphire throne, was the Eternal One; and round about the throne was a rainbow, the emblem of divine mercy.

In *Revelation 4* we find the same picture again. Here John describes the throne and One who sits on it who is like a precious stone in appearance. A rainbow surrounds the throne and the four living beings...

Revelation 4

⁶ ...in the midst of the throne, and around the throne,

–have the same faces as described in *Ezekiel*. Twenty-four elders are sitting on a further 24 thrones surrounding God's throne from which incredible energy issues forth.⁵⁹

The Four Living Creatures

Beneath the throne were the intersecting wheels impelled by the four heavenly beings who are described in the first chapter of *Ezekiel*:

Ezekiel 1

⁵ Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man.

⁶ Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings.

¹⁰ As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle.

The four faces of the living creatures symbolize the characteristics of God which are of special importance for the great controversy raging on the earth.

FACE OF A MAN

The first face appeared like that of a man. When God made the earth by His creative skill and power he created man as the only truly intelligent being in order to provide an image of himself. It is true that sin has destroyed this image so that natural man and his character cannot be likened to God anymore, but by Christ's becoming man and condemning sin in human flesh, this image has been restored. Jesus became like His brethren so that they may become like Him.

⁵⁹ See *Revelation 4:4-5*.

LION

On the right side was a face like that of a lion. The lion is well-known for its matchless courage and is aptly named “the king of beasts.” Again we have to take into consideration that after the fall of man, the lion developed a different character from its God-given one. Only in Christ,

Revelation 5

⁵ ...the Lion of the tribe of Judah,

—do we find a true picture of this divine attribute.

OX

On the left side was the face of an ox picturing patient service, epitomized in the service that God renders unwearyingly to the whole universe. The ox renders uncomplaining service to man who is physically a much weaker creature, just as the self-sacrificing service of God is much greater than that of those He serves. When we think of the sacrifice that God willingly made in giving His Son for sin-plagued man, we can see this characteristic at its radiant best.

EAGLE

Finally, there is the face of the eagle. This bird is frequently used in the Scriptures as a symbol of unremitting watchcare, such as in the following text:

Deuteronomy 32

¹⁰ He found him in a desert land, and in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.

¹¹ As an eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its young, spreading out its wings, taking them up, carrying them on its wings,

¹² So the Lord alone led him, and there was no foreign god with him.

God alone can be the Head and Leader of His creatures. He is the Educator and Protector of His people, and He is true to this attribute, no matter how great the resistance He has to meet.

Unrestricted Mobility

The four living creatures impelling the wheels beneath the throne of God are described in *Ezekiel* 1:1-28 as moving like a flash of lightning:

Ezekiel 1

¹⁴ And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

This demonstrates that unlike the thrones of earthly kings, which are anchored to one place, God's throne is not so confined. His throne is able to travel from place to place, at times with incredible speed. Furthermore, God can move from one throne to another, for the mobility is in himself. This does not mean that God changes, but that He is able to attend to the various governmental tasks in His kingdom simultaneously.

One example of this was in 1844 at the beginning of the investigative judgment. We read how at the end of the 2,300 year prophecy, the Father vacated His throne in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, rode in a flaming chariot into the holy of holies and sat down on the throne located there. Then Jesus left His place on the throne in the holy place and stepped into a cloudy chariot with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, which carried Him to the most holy place where His Father awaited Him.

This coming of Christ to His Father, the Ancient of Days, was not His second coming to this earth in power and great glory, but a transition from the first to the second apartment of the sanctuary in heaven.

Early Writings, p. 54-55:

I saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and the Son...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...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.

The Great Controversy, p. 479-480:

Daniel 7

¹³ And, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

¹⁴ And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away.

The coming of Christ here described is not His second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator. It is this coming, and not His second advent to the earth, that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844.

Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies and there appears in the presence of God to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man—to perform the work of investigative judgment and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits.

Daniel watched as the thrones were set in place, the Ancient of Days entered and sat down, then One like the Son of Man was brought before Him and was given dominion and glory and a kingdom. The Ancient of Days was God the Father, who changed His throne in order to fulfill a specific task. His entry into the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary announced that the last phase of human probation had begun. In this phase, the holy place is cleansed from all the sins ever transferred there from the believers on this earth. Jesus himself, the mediator of His people, is then brought before the Ancient of Days in order to receive His kingdom.

Different Thrones

The throne described in *Ezekiel* 1 is the color of a sapphire stone which is a beautiful, rich blue. This throne is encircled by a glorious rainbow,

Ezekiel 1

²⁸ ...like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day.

The key to understanding the purpose of this throne is contained in the symbolism of the rainbow encircling it.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 107:

When man by his great wickedness invites the divine judgments, the Saviour, interceding with the Father in his behalf, points to the bow in the clouds, to the rainbow around the throne and above His own head, as a token of the mercy of God toward the repentant sinner.

Both in the holy place and in the holy of holies, Jesus intercedes for His repentant children. It is God's mercy which delivers the sinner and places him on a foundation of righteousness enabling him to sin no more. Blue, along with purple and scarlet, was the color of the curtains or veils in the Old Testament sanctuary, suggesting that where sin abounds, grace is more abundant. Therefore, as Paul instructs,

Hebrews 4

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Furthermore, blue was the color of the ribbon which all Israelites were instructed to wear on the border of their garments in order to remember that God had delivered them from Egypt.⁶⁰ This reminder of God's mercy was to encourage their obedience.

Christ's sacrificial death on the altar of this earth reveals that mercy and justice are united in the love of God. Before the cross, the enemy of God and man tried to separate mercy from justice in order to deprive the sinner of all hope of redemption. Since Christ's death on the cross, he has tried to separate justice from mercy in order to lull the sinner into a false sense of security.

But at the throne of grace, where justice threatens us as law-breakers, we find God's mercy to which we have access by the blood of Christ. Through the mingling of mercy and justice, when we confess our sinfulness, we are delivered from both the condemnation and the sin itself.

⁶⁰ See *Numbers* 15:38-41.

The Desire of Ages, p. 762:

God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God's law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other.

Psalm 85

¹⁰ Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

The rainbow of promise assures us that God will fulfill his word to us. It is God's mercy that delivers His children from sin, so likewise it is His mercy that delivers them from the time of trouble yet to fall. Just as they feel their last moment has come,

The Great Controversy, p. 636:

...a rainbow shining with the glory from the throne of God, spans the heavens and seems to encircle each praying company. The angry multitudes are suddenly arrested...With fearful forebodings they gaze upon the symbol of God's covenant and long to be shielded from its overpowering brightness.

By the people of God a voice, clear and melodious, is heard, saying, "Look up," and lifting their eyes to the heavens, they behold the bow of promise...and see the glory of God and the Son of man seated upon His throne.

A different throne is described in *Revelation* 20:11. This is the "great white throne" standing "upon a foundation of burnished gold,"⁶¹ before which nothing can exist which still contains any sin. This throne obviously does not serve the purpose of intercession and redemption, for that work has already been completed. Instead of symbolizing mercy, the white throne serves the purpose of justice. It is used in the final coronation of Jesus at the executive judgment, scheduled to take place at the ending of the millennium.

⁶¹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 666.

The Great Controversy, p. 666:

In the presence of the assembled inhabitants of earth and heaven the final coronation of the Son of God takes place. And now, invested with supreme majesty and power, the King of kings pronounces sentence upon the rebels against His government and executes justice upon those who have transgressed His law and oppressed His people. Says the prophet of God:

Revelation 20

¹¹ I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

Revelation 20

¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

In the final judgment of this world, the purity and holiness of our God will shine forth as never before. The white throne symbolizes this purity which stands in dramatic contrast to the nature and mastery of sin. As Jesus sits on the white throne, in spotless purity,

The Great Controversy, p. 665:

The glory of the Eternal Father is enshrouding His Son. The brightness of His presence fills the city of God and flows out beyond the gates, flooding the whole earth with its radiance.

The redeemed are also dressed in the color of perfect purity. Standing before the throne was...

The Great Controversy, p. 665:

Revelation 7

⁹ ...a great multitude which no one could number...clothed with white robes...

...the white robe an emblem of the spotless righteousness of Christ, which now is theirs.

At the time when this judgment is set, grace has finished its work. For those who have rejected God's mercy irrevocably, justice is their only due. God leaves them to the fate they have chosen. There is no justification for sin. The lost who stand before the white throne to receive condemnation to eternal death, experience God's justice unmingled with mercy.

Different Judgments

However, prior to the final judgment at the close of the millennium is the investigative judgment that Daniel observed being set up in chapter 7. Verses 9 to 12 describe the preparation for the judgment, which begins in 1844 with the placing of thrones in their assigned positions, and the seating of the Ancient of Days, God himself.

How many thrones will be set up? The information provided in *Daniel* does not state a precise number, but the verses in *Revelation* 4:2 and 4 list the one on which God sits in addition to the 24 thrones on which the 24 elders sit.

But these 25 are not the only attendants at the judgment. Jesus, our great High Priest, sits at God's right hand, filling a crucial role. The Holy Spirit will also be there, together with the four living creatures and a vast gathering of angels. *Daniel* speaks of...

Daniel 7

¹⁰ ...ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands...

—who attend Him. Ten thousand times ten thousand totals one hundred million, and thousands of thousands amounts to several million, making a total of more than one hundred million ministering spirits faithfully fulfilling their tasks, provided the numbers are literal. Whether this number is literal or not, it is safe to say that a truly innumerable company of heavenly beings,

The Great Controversy, p. 641:

...a vast unnumbered throng,

–surround the throne, all willing to serve. These angels ascend and descend the ladder of Christ in order to accomplish the work of grace for fallen humanity.

With the closing of the investigative judgment, which takes place in the heavenly sanctuary, Christ receives His kingdom and comes back as the bridegroom from His wedding. Then follows the judgment of the wicked—a judgment in which the faithful, as the redeemed from this earth, will take part.

The Great Controversy, p. 647:

As they gather about the great white throne, gladness unspeakable will fill their hearts.

The redeemed will sit with Christ on His throne, just as He sits on the throne with His Father, and together with Him will judge the wicked. The redeemed also unite with Christ at this time to judge Satan and his evil angels.⁶² Then, at the end of the millennium, Christ returns to this earth with the host of the redeemed and a retinue of angels for the final coronation and the final judgment in which the great white throne continues to feature as studied above. Assembled are...

Revelation 7

⁹ ...a great multitude which no one could number...before the throne.

The Great Controversy, p. 666:

Above the throne is revealed the cross; and like a panoramic view appear the scenes of Adam's temptation and fall, and the successive steps in the great plan of redemption.

The unbelievers acknowledge God's justice and righteousness and fall prostrate at the feet of the Prince of life. Sin with its mystery is forever eradicated from God's creation.

The Great Controversy, p. 668:

It is now evident to all that the wages of sin is not noble independence and eternal life, but slavery, ruin, and death....All see that their exclusion from heaven is just. By their lives they have declared: "We will not have this Man [Jesus] to reign over us."

⁶² See *1 Corinthians* 6:3.

As Daniel looked down the ages of time he was able to behold this power of the judgment of God defeating the mystery of iniquity. This same power is available to us today, so that we can be freed from sin and its power while probation lasts.

39. God's Power to Withstand the Enemy

Messenger and News Review, June 1997

Daniel 7:7-21

IN THE previous chapter we saw how the colors of God's thrones symbolize their purpose and the different aspects of God's character, blue symbolizing mercy, and white symbolizing purity and justice. The appearance of the throne also reveals God's power.

God's Throne as a Flaming Chariot

All three of the inspired writers, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Ellen White, saw God's throne in terms of flaming chariots. For instance, from Ezekiel's pen come statements such as these:

Ezekiel 1

⁴ Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

¹³ As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning.

²⁷ Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around.

Through Daniel came the following:

Daniel 7

⁹ I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated...His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire;

¹⁰ A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him.

In the statement from *Early Writings* entitled "End of the 2300 Days," Ellen White saw both the Father and the Son riding in flaming chariots:

Early Writings, p. 55:

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,...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.

The Power of God's Voice

Not only did God's appearance reveal His mighty power to the sight, but also to the hearing. Both Ezekiel and the Apostle John heard great roaring noises like the thundering sound of many waters when God appeared. On another occasion, Ezekiel observed:

Ezekiel 10

⁵ And the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard even in the outer court, like the voice of Almighty God when He speaks.

John reported on two occasions that the manifestation of God's presence was like the sounding forth of many waters.

Revelation 1

¹⁵ His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters.

Revelation 14

² And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps.

These are revelations of the awesome power of that word by which the universe was spoken into existence, and by which everything in it is maintained in its rightful place day after day. In this wonderful role of Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, Jesus is forever established on the Father's right hand as it is witnessed of Him:

Hebrews 1

¹ God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,

² Has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

³ Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

It is by His voice that He discharges His responsibilities, for, in the creation of this earth,

Psalm 33

⁶ By the word of the lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses.

⁸ Let all the earth fear the lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.

⁹ For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast.

That which He accomplished in the six days of creation by speaking, He continues doing in the functioning of the universe on a daily basis. As by His voice He called all things into existence, so by the same voice, and by the same procedures, He sustains all the operations of nature moment by moment.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1062:

God is perpetually at work in nature. She is His servant, directed as He pleases. Nature in her work testifies of the intelligent presence and active agency of a Being who moves in all His works according to His will. It is not by an original power inherent in nature that year by year the earth produces its bounties and the world keeps up its continual march around the sun. The hand of infinite power is perpetually at work guiding this planet. It is God's power momentarily exercised that keeps it in position in its rotations. The God of heaven is constantly at work. It is by His power that vegetation is caused to flourish, that every leaf appears and every flower blooms.

It is not as the result of a mechanism, that, once set in motion, continues its work, that the pulse beats and breath follows breath. In God we live and move and have our being. Every

breath, every throb of the heart, is the continual evidence of the power of an ever-present God. It is God that makes the sun to rise in the heavens. He opens the windows of heaven and gives rain. He makes the grass to grow upon the mountains.

Psalms 147

¹⁶ He gives snow like wool: and scatters the hoarfrost like ashes.

Jeremiah 10

¹³ When He utters His voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens,...He makes lightnings with rain, and brings forth the wind out of his treasures.

Although the Lord has ceased His work in creating, He is constantly employed in upholding and using as His servants the things which He has made. Said Christ,

John 5

¹⁷ My Father works hitherto, and I work.

In *Daniel 7:9-10*, there is revealed a picture of irresistible power: God's throne is a fiery flame, its wheels are a burning fire, and fire issues forth from God in a tremendous stream. As we have read in other scriptures, this is accompanied by the roaring, thundering sound of many waters.

We are familiar today with the powerful sound of an aircraft being launched into the sky. How much greater would be the thunder of the power output needed to operate the forces set in their positions by the voice of God! We earth-bound creatures have but little appreciation of the magnitude and power of that fiery stream which Daniel saw issuing from before Him.

Yet, it is essential knowledge for us—otherwise the description of it would not be included among the things revealed to God's children by His holy prophets. God's people need to know that their Creator has sufficient power to cope, on their behalf, with the seemingly all-powerful forces of darkness arrayed against them.

The Power of the Enemy

The armies which will confront us in the soon-coming battle of Armageddon will be the most powerful, technologically advanced, and best equipped ever to be assembled in support of the

devil's plan to destroy God's work. The most violent, effective and longest attack on God's cause to date was the persecution suffered by the church during the 1260 years of papal dominion. In a previous chapter we considered the fearful words used by the inspired writer to describe the conditions under which God's church was almost completely destroyed.

Daniel 7

⁷ After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

⁸ I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

¹⁹ Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet;

²⁰ And the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.

²¹ I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them.

Matthew 24

²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

That is a description of the awesome forces that joined in warfare against God's people during the period of papal supremacy which lasted from 538 until 1798 AD. It must have taken tremendous faith, courage, and love for the truth of God for the Christians of the middle ages to withstand the papacy—that ruthless

ecclesiastical system backed by the civil powers in unqualified and unlimited support. This was especially true for those who were tried by fire such as Huss and Jerome, Latimer and Ridley, and countless others who gave their bodies to be burned for the sake of the truth.

Persecution Slumbers

Today, such past events may seem to be dim and distant. Many people cannot believe that this dreadful persecution could be carried out by a church making so high a profession of moral integrity as does the papacy. There is widespread forgetfulness that the man of sin never changes—that his spirit and character are changeless.

But he has numerous disguises and, as the occasion demands, he dons the particular sheep's clothing best calculated to hide the wolf beneath. Those who are deceived by these skillful, superficial changes find it difficult to take prophecy seriously or discern any danger in the future. Instead, they tend to believe that humans are becoming more civilized, and therefore more tolerant of each other's religious viewpoint.

Although this theory is far from the truth, it is given credence by the absence of bitter persecution in the church today. The real reasons for this absence are two. The first reason is that the churches are so lacking in spiritual effectiveness that the sins of the world-loving professors of religion in those bodies are left unrebuked, and so no spirit of persecution is awakened.

The Great Controversy, p. 48:

The apostle Paul declares that:

2 Timothy 3

¹² All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Why is it, then, that persecution seems in a great degree to slumber? The only reason is that the church has conformed to the world's standard and therefore awakens no opposition. The religion which is current in our day is not of the pure and holy character that marked the Christian faith in the days of Christ and His apostles. It is only because of the spirit of compromise

with sin, because the great truths of the word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is so little vital godliness in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular with the world. Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled.

But there is a second reason for the current lack of persecution. When God calls a people to carry His message, there are times when it is sometimes necessary for them to be hidden away for a period of preparation. Such was the experience of Moses in Midian for 40 years, and John the Baptist who spent the first 30 years of his life in thorough preparation for a very short ministry. During their preparation time, Moses and John were removed from the haunts of men and consequently did not generate any persecution.

But with Jesus, it was not so. Living in the busy little town of Nazareth after returning from Egypt, the righteous principles of His life, from which He never deviated, were in constant collision with the practices of His brothers, the other children of the village, and the religious leaders of the people. Except for those in whom the same Spirit of love operated, none of them understood Him and none of them could truly tolerate Him.

At the time of the writing of these studies, God's people are similarly in a period of preparation. We are in the tarrying time of the parable of the ten virgins when the virgins, both wise and foolish, are said to be slumbering. It is the period just prior to the descent of the latter rain, when the people of God are making thorough preparation, under God's guidance, for their giving of the final warning. In the meantime, the world is going about its business, while God's true children are going about theirs. It is therefore to be expected, that we should be relatively free of persecutions, particularly on a national or international scale for the present.

Martyrdom

The time is rapidly approaching when the persecutions of the past will be repeated on a scale that will involve every human being on this earth either as a persecutor, or as the persecuted. When this happens once more, it will be but the recommencement of Babylon's established practice from the beginning, which she will continue until the end. Of all her evil methods of eliminating those who refused to yield to her determination to fill the earth with unrighteousness, burning at the stake seems to have been one of the more frequent.

The Great Controversy, p. 569:

The Roman Catholic Church, uniting the forms of paganism and Christianity, and, like paganism, misrepresenting the character of God, had resorted to practices no less cruel and revolting. In the days of Rome's supremacy there were instruments of torture to compel assent to her doctrines. There was the stake for those who would not concede to her claims. There were massacres on a scale that will never be known until revealed in the judgment. Dignitaries of the church studied, under Satan their master, to invent means to cause the greatest possible torture and not end the life of the victim. In many cases the infernal process was repeated to the utmost limit of human endurance, until nature gave up the struggle, and the sufferer hailed death as a sweet release.

The Christians who suffered whatever torture was meted out to them were the pioneers of those who would afterward pass through the flames of martyrdom.

It may appear that later Christians who were burned to death came short of the total victory over fire gained by the three Hebrew youth who emerged from the seven-times overheated furnace without even the pungent odor of smoke in their clothing. However, a closer study of the seeming defeat of those who were not delivered from death once the fire was lit around them at the stake shows that they were just as victorious as were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

They were victors not over death, but over sin and unbelief. The loss of this present life was inconsequential to them. Instead, the vital question that concerned them was whether they would be conquered by unbelief, or would they overcome the enemy by living faith?

The Great Controversy, p. 42:

Thousands were imprisoned or slain, but others sprang up to fill their places. And those who were martyred for their faith were secured to Christ and accounted of Him as conquerors. They had fought the good fight, and they were to receive the crown of glory when Christ should come. The sufferings which they endured brought Christians nearer to one another and to their Redeemer. Their living example and dying testimony were a constant witness for the truth; and where least expected, the subjects of Satan were leaving his service and enlisting under the banner of Christ.

We cannot with confidence declare that everyone who dies confessing Christ is a true overcomer, for there have been those who have died for the cause without being righteous within themselves. Paul warned about this dangerous possibility in these words:

1 Corinthians 13

³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

Huss and Jerome

However, while we cannot with certainty declare every martyr to be a Christian, there are some about whom the inspired writers provide enough information to reveal that they died true martyrs' deaths. Two such were John Huss of Bohemia who was burned at the stake July 6, 1415, and his fellow-believer, Jerome, who was sacrificed by fire on the same place of execution, the following year, May 30, 1416. So thoroughly was each of them burned that all that remained were their ashes.

The Great Controversy, p. 110:

When the body of Huss had been wholly consumed, his ashes, with the soil upon which they rested, were gathered up and cast into the Rhine, and thus borne onward to the ocean. His persecutors vainly imagined that they had rooted out the truths he preached. Little did they dream that the ashes that day borne away to the sea were to be as seed scattered in all the countries of the earth; that in lands yet unknown it would yield abundant fruit in witnesses for the truth.

The voice which had spoken in the council hall of Constance had wakened echoes that would be heard through all coming ages. Huss was no more, but the truths for which he died could never perish. His example of faith and constancy would encourage multitudes to stand firm for the truth, in the face of torture and death. His execution had exhibited to the whole world the perfidious cruelty of Rome. The enemies of truth, though they knew it not, had been furthering the cause which they vainly sought to destroy.

Both Huss and Jerome were genuine martyrs exhibiting the faith of Jesus.

The Great Controversy, p. 109-110:

When the flames kindled about him [John Huss], he began to sing, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me," and so continued till his voice was silenced forever.

Even his enemies were struck with his heroic bearing. A zealous papist, describing the martyrdom of Huss, and of Jerome, who died soon after, said: "Both bore themselves with constant mind when their last hour approached. They prepared for the fire as if they were going to a marriage feast. They uttered no cry of pain. When the flames rose, they began to sing hymns; and scarce could the vehemency of the fire stop their singing."

Their being threatened with burning at the stake was test enough, but that which made the test so much tougher was the horrible, enfeebling conditions both Huss and Jerome were forced to endure during the months prior to their being sentenced to die by being burned alive. The darkness, dampness, impure air, absence of exercise, and lack of any really nourishing foods, were calculated to reduce their capacities to resist their tormentors to

the lowest possible level. It is not surprising therefore, that John Huss became so ill that he almost died from a terrible fever. But the papists failed to achieve their objective, for although greatly weakened, he remained unmoved by his persecutors.

The Great Controversy, p. 107:

Enfeebled by illness and imprisonment,—for the damp, foul air of his dungeon had brought on a fever which nearly ended his life,—Huss was at last brought before the council. Loaded with chains he stood in the presence of the emperor, whose honor and good faith had been pledged to protect him. During his long trial he firmly maintained the truth, and in the presence of the assembled dignitaries of church and state he uttered a solemn and faithful protest against the corruptions of the hierarchy. When required to choose whether he would recant his doctrines or suffer death, he accepted the martyr's fate.

Jerome was subjected to the same ill treatment, with the result that for a time his resolve broke down and he withdrew his support of the Reformation.

The Great Controversy, p. 110-111:

At his first appearance before the council his attempts to reply to the accusations brought against him were met with shouts, "To the flames with him! to the flames!" (Bonnechose, vol. 1, p. 234.) He was thrown into a dungeon, chained in a position which caused him great suffering, and fed on bread and water. After some months the cruelties of his imprisonment brought upon Jerome an illness that threatened his life, and his enemies, fearing that he might escape them, treated him with less severity, though he remained in prison for one year.

The death of Huss had not resulted as the papists had hoped. The violation of his safe-conduct had roused a storm of indignation, and as the safer course, the council determined, instead of burning Jerome, to force him, if possible, to retract. He was brought before the assembly, and offered the alternative to recant, or to die at the stake.

Death at the beginning of his imprisonment would have been a mercy in comparison with the terrible sufferings which he had undergone; but now, weakened by illness, by the rigors of his prison house, and the torture of anxiety and suspense, separated

from his friends, and disheartened by the death of Huss, Jerome's fortitude gave way, and he consented to submit to the council. He pledged himself to adhere to the Catholic faith, and accepted the action of the council in condemning the doctrines of Wycliffe and Huss, excepting, however, the "holy truths" which they had taught.

Very soon Jerome reconsidered his position and retracted his recantation. Such a stand is much more difficult to take than the open declaration of one's position from the outset, for no true Christian likes to appear as a vacillator who does not keep his word of honor no matter what the cost. However, in matters of religious conviction, total religious freedom is the right of all, so that a person may change his faith at any time.

Periods of Persecution by Fire

Through history, there are several periods of persecution all of which have or yet will employ fire to destroy God's people. The first of these periods was the persecution of God's people in the kingdom of Babylon of Old Testament times, the use of fire there being employed to eliminate the faithful three and to intimidate the people of the entire world into worshiping only the gods of Babylon.

Another general period is the great persecution of the Christian church subsequent to the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This period lasted until it was shortened by the great Protestant Reformation. Once again fire was the terrible instrument used by the papacy to destroy a vast number of God's faithful children.

Another period of persecution, the final one, will be Satan's response to the outpouring of the latter rain as predicted in:

Revelation 13

¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

This fire “from heaven” comes down as a means of deceiving humankind into forming an image to the beast. What is this fire? There are some who have claimed that it will be nuclear explosions—but are people deceived by such means? The actual effect of nuclear fire is not to deceive, but to terrorize the people.

The Fiery Stream from God's Throne

Whatever the exact nature of that fire will be, its purpose, like that of all the fires of persecution which have gone before it, will be to destroy utterly the people of God, and to establish sin as an eternal dominion throughout the universe. But God will meet fire with unquenchable fire.

Daniel 7

¹⁰ A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him.

Daniel then sees the utter end of the man of sin as he watches the unfolding of the certain annihilation of the fourth beast and the little horn which spoke such pompous words against the Most High.

Daniel 7

¹¹ I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame.

¹² As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

Great as the fire is, which, in the hands of the terrible fourth beast, destroyed the mortal bodies of the martyrs, it is not to be feared as we are to fear the fiery issue by which the Almighty sustains all the righteous life-forces in the universe and destroys all sinfulness wherever it may be found.

It is clear that as the true martyrs were victorious over fire, so will every soul who is victorious over sin likewise be sustained by the river of fire that issues from the throne of God.⁶³

- Huss and Jerome went singing to their deaths and gave no indication that they were suffering pain.

⁶³ See *Daniel* 7:10, NIV.

- The three Hebrews were similarly untouched by the fire. In their cases even their mortal flesh was saved from pain and destruction.
- John was delivered from immersion in a cauldron of boiling oil.

We know of no statement to the effect that every martyr burned at the stake suffered no pain, but we do have evidence that at least some did not experience any. Here is a report of the historian Wylie:

The train of gunpowder was now ignited. As the flame approached him, he lifted up his eyes and hands to heaven, and prayed for the forgiveness of Pain and of Sir Thomas More, and continued at intervals in supplication till the fire had reached his head. "It is to be observed," says the chronicler, "that as he was at the stake, in the midst of the flaming fire, which fire had half consumed his arms and legs, he spake these words: 'Oh, you papists, behold! you look for miracles; and here now may you see a miracle; for in this fire I feel no more pain than if I were in a bed of down; but it is to me as a bed of roses.' These words he spoke in the midst of the flaming fire, when his legs and arms, as I said, were half consumed."⁶⁴

The time is fast approaching when many more will sacrifice their lives for the truth's sake as it is written:

Selected Messages, vol. 3, p. 397-398:

The two armies will stand distinct and separate, and this distinction will be so marked that many who shall be convinced of the truth will come on the side of God's commandment-keeping people. When this grand work is to take place in the battle, prior to the last closing conflict, many will be imprisoned, many will flee for their lives from cities and towns, and many will be martyrs for Christ's sake in standing in defense of the truth....You will not be tempted above what you are able to bear. Jesus bore all this and far more.

The messages of *Daniel*, *Ezekiel*, *Revelation*, as well as the Spirit of Prophecy, all reveal the necessity for understanding and expe-

⁶⁴ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, Volume 3, p. 382.

riencing the operations of the divine Spirit as far as they have been revealed, so that the fiery stream issuing from God's throne may save and sustain us, instead of destroying us.

40. Death: The Last Enemy to be Destroyed

Messenger and News Review, July 1997

Daniel 7:13-27

THROUGHOUT the book of *Daniel*, the Babylonian colossus is revealed as a powerful force, boastfully and ruthlessly determined to live and reign eternally by the powers emanating from within herself. At the same time, she exhibits a fixed purpose of annihilating all who, disbelieving her claims, look to and believe in the real Source of eternal life—the everlasting Father. Nothing and nobody is permitted to stand in her way.

To accomplish her objectives, she employs her exceeding strength and uses her great iron teeth to devour and break her enemies in pieces, then trample the residue with her feet.⁶⁵ She concentrates all her varied resources on obtaining and retaining world dominion no matter what the cost to others might be. Even when convinced that life under her regime was very temporary indeed, she recoiled with horror from that truth, and once more re-established her corrupted reasoning in its place.

As proof of this we need look only at the behavior of King Nebuchadnezzar who was devoted to building his mighty capital athwart the great River Euphrates. With him, the belief that he and Babylon must live and reign forever over the entire world was paramount to every other interest, and no other outcome for the future was worthy of his consideration. In order to correct his serious misconceptions, God sent a marvelous, illuminating dream to this proud monarch, the theme of which was the transitory nature of mortal man and of his kingdoms as symbolized by the image. When these had passed into eternal oblivion, as they surely would, they would be replaced by a great, permanent kingdom which would be as enduring as eternity.

It was a compelling transmission of great light and power which opened the door on the future and revealed that eternal life is found only in God. The king was convinced of this great truth

⁶⁵ See *Daniel* 7:7.

and testified to it in the presence of Daniel. But his witness was short-lived and he soon reverted to the standard Babylonian position that, as a kingdom, Babylon would live forever, and woe to anyone who believed the contrary.

So it was that King Nebuchadnezzar, with the support of his people, projected his own statement of what the future would be, by constructing an image made entirely of gold. To his mind, a golden future stretched before them which, true or false, he would let no man take away from them. The white-hot glare of a furnace heated to seven times its usual intensity was cited by the monarch as proof enough of where his loyalties lay, and where everyone else's had better lie.

The Source of Immortality

Babylon does not openly and directly war against mankind's quest for eternal life, for that is not the issue. The point of contention is over the way in which it is to be sought, possessed, and established as an eternal hope. Babylon labors under the delusion that the soul of man is immortal and that therefore he continues as an intelligent entity after the death of his body.

But, although man was originally created with the purpose of being blessed with eternal life, that treasure has been forfeited through sin. To recover it requires making a fresh connection with Him who alone has the needed, continual, supply of life. God is that Source, whose life is made available only to those who seek it in Christ, for God gave His only begotten Son to suffer death by cruel crucifixion in order that all who will, may receive immortality. One of the best known texts in all of the Scriptures is:

John 3

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

In *Daniel 7* spiritual Babylon is symbolized by the fourth beast and the little horn power, and is revealed as the great destroyer of

all opposition. She destroys all forms of life, whether human, animal, or otherwise, in order to establish her claim to eternal life, as it is written:

Revelation 18

²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.

If we read this verse exactly as it has been written, we will learn the truth that Babylon is the killer of all those on the earth who have ever been slain. Oh! What a harvester of death she has proven herself to be! Not only that, she has not the slightest justification for such wanton destruction, but rather is terribly condemned for what she has done, and will yet do.

By contrast, God through Jesus Christ is the Saviour of life and the Giver of immortality. Thus every encounter between the church of God and Babylon has been over the issue of the Life-Giver, versus the life-taker. The Life-Giver has been the only one through and from whom life has reached those deprived of this priceless gift. Therefore, whenever individuals have been blessed with physical immortality, as Enoch, Moses or Elijah have been, we can know that this gift came to them from the Life-Giver.

Conversely, everyone in whom death reigns, has received that legacy from one source, namely, Babylon. Every true child of the Life-Giver has been promised that there will be an end to the reign of death, but this promise has not yet been fulfilled for,

1 Corinthians 15

²⁶ The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

In the meantime, the sleeping saints remain in their dusty beds in the prison house of death. It shall not always be so, for when death, the last enemy, has been destroyed,...

Revelation 21

⁴ ...there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

1 Corinthians 15

⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory.

⁵⁵ O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

When Death Will Be Vanquished

Since death is the last enemy over which eternal victory is to be gained, we can know when that utterly desirable achievement shall be realized. It is quite important to be accurately enlightened on this point in order to avoid false expectations which could provide fanatical persons with the opportunity to unsettle the minds of true believers and even, in some cases, to destroy their faith.

If death is the last enemy, all other victories must be gained first, such as that over the beast and his image. Therefore, so long as these remain unconquered, the victory over death cannot be gained. The same is true in regard to the seven last plagues. Until their powers have been broken, victory over them has not been gained, and there still remains the unconquered death to be overcome.

So where do we stand at this present point in time? Death has not yet been conquered, for all other victories have not yet been gained. When will the last enemy actually be put down? As this question is the subject of prophecy, Daniel must have been informed at least in general terms as to when this triumph over our last enemy shall take place.

If we survey the prophetic messages given to this great prophet, Daniel, we will find at the end of every outline of future events, the establishment of a kingdom which is totally delivered from death. Because this future kingdom is the universal kingdom of perpetual peace, there can be no element of death in it at all. At

the time brought to view in these verses, victory must have been gained over that last enemy, for no everlasting kingdom can be established while death still exists. Therefore the everlasting kingdom commences with the victory over death.

The first such reference in *Daniel* to the kingdom from which death will be totally eliminated (subsequent to all the other victories having been gained), is found in the second chapter:

Daniel 2

⁴⁴ And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

The next prophetic outline is recorded in *Daniel* 7 where references to the establishment of the kingdom free from death are found in the following verses:

Daniel 7

¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.

¹⁸ But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.

²⁶ But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever.

²⁷ Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.

At the end of the vision recorded in *Daniel* 8, this great truth is repeated, that an everlasting kingdom is the one in which the last enemy has been destroyed. It is stated in these few, powerful words:

Daniel 8

¹⁴ And he said to me, For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.

In brief, the cleansing of the sanctuary is firstly the purifying of the people of God, to the point where they will be found upon examination by the Judge of the universe to be...

Ephesians 5

²⁷ ...a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

The sanctuary becomes in need of cleansing because of the transfer of the sins of the people to it. When at last the stream of sins from the people into the sanctuary has been stopped at its source, in the hearts and lives of the people, then the sanctuary itself can and will be cleansed of sin and death there. This accomplished, the way will be cleared for the destruction of the last enemy, death.

So far as God's redeemed children are concerned, the last enemy will be destroyed at the resurrection of the just, when Satan will futilely attempt to keep the saved of earth locked in their tombs. At the command of the Life-Giver, every faithful believer who has passed the judgment, will obey that word, thus demonstrating that the last enemy, death, has been rendered entirely powerless. Its reign shall have ended. Never shall it be seen among the saints again. Here the glorious moment is thrillingly described as it is viewed by the prophet under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The Great Controversy, p. 644:

Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints. He looks upon the graves of the righteous, then, raising His hands to heaven, He cries: "Awake, awake, awake, you that sleep in the dust, and arise!" Throughout the length and breadth of the earth the dead shall hear that voice, and they that hear shall live. And the whole earth shall ring with the tread of the exceeding great army of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. From the prison house of death they come, clothed with immortal glory, crying:

1 Corinthians 15

⁵⁵ O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?

And the living righteous and the risen saints unite their voices in a long, glad shout of victory.

At this point, the redeemed will have no more battles to fight against the man of sin, for temptation cannot reach them any longer. Their last enemy, death, shall have been eternally destroyed, never again to threaten the righteous. Behind them lie the terrible defeats, and ultimate victories, through which they shall have passed on their climb to this point, but now the future is glorious with the light of sinless freedom shining all around them.

Daniel 9 closes with the same precious revelations of the end of the power who has made desolate until the consummation.

Daniel 9

²⁷ Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.

The ultimate desolater, or the one who makes desolate, is death. At the present time, millions of God's people lie desolated in their graves, and will remain there until victory over all sin has been achieved in the generation of the living. It was by sin that death entered, but it shall be cast out by righteousness. And the ultimate righteousness was the sacrificial offering made by our wonderful Saviour on Calvary.

Now let us turn to chapter 12 where all the prophecies of the entire book of *Daniel* reach their climax in the resurrection of the righteous. Here, as must be expected, the destruction of our last enemy is described, and its certainty established.

The chapter opens where Michael completes His ministry as our great High Priest. He is then said to stand up thus signifying that probationary time has ended, the restraint has been removed from the wicked, the final time of trouble follows, and then comes the resurrection of the sleeping saints, which signifies that victory over death, the last enemy, has finally been achieved.

Daniel 12

¹ At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book.

² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.

³ Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.

The Immortal Body

Thus the future is bright with hope, vibrant with life, and blessed with eternal security for those who walk no more with the man of sin. Think of what these glorious prospects must have meant to the martyrs as they stood face to face with their deadly enemies who were seemingly in complete mastery of the situation, literally holding their lives in their hands.

Let us remember John Huss. On the dreadful day of his martyrdom, he stood before the crowded people with all the functions and capacities of a normal human being. He was a unique person in that there was not another exactly like him in the entire universe. Some of life's experiences he had shared with others, but there were many memories of experiences that only he had passed through. These had left the effect of their influence upon him. Although these were mostly small differences, they added up to significant characteristics which made him unique.

But his enemies held in their hands the cruel power of death. With that weapon, his foes reduced John Huss to a small pile of ashes. The crowd, looking on, watched the process to its completion. Next, they saw the ashes gathered together with the surface soil from under them, carried to, and cast into the River Rhine whose churning waters scattered the fine dust so that not a single particle of what had been the reformer was joined to any other from that same source.

Such is the power of death, which, in the hands of the remorseless priests demonstrated its capacity to eliminate all opposition against them. As the watchers saw the little heap of ashes scattered far and wide, they would have felt a great sense of futility. How could they ever hope to see John Huss again? And if they were to take their stand as John Huss took his, and in consequence be similarly reduced to ashes scattered to shores as wide as the world apart, how could they ever be reassembled into a fully functioning, living being again? If a person is buried in a coffin, his surviving friends are at least consoled by the thought that all the ingredients for the reconstruction of the individual are contained in one place.

But as John Huss faced his tormentors, his mind was untroubled by the problem of attaining a new body. He knew that God does not need a single particle from our old flesh and blood, and in fact, cannot use them, for they are cursed by sin and death. The flesh and blood which will be resurrected and taken to heaven is immortal, incorruptible flesh and blood.

The Great Controversy, p. 322-323:

Not until the personal advent of Christ can His people receive the kingdom. The Saviour said:

Matthew 25

³¹ 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:

³² And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats:

³³ And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

We have seen by the scriptures just given that when the Son of man comes, the dead are raised incorruptible and the living are changed. By this great change they are prepared to receive the kingdom; for Paul says:

1 Corinthians 15

⁵⁰ Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Man in his present state is mortal, corruptible; but the kingdom of God will be incorruptible, enduring forever. Therefore man in his present state cannot enter into the kingdom of God. But when Jesus comes, He confers immortality upon His people; and then He calls them to inherit the kingdom of which they have hitherto been only heirs.

Sinlessness and Death

A question arises at this point.

“If a person by living faith has achieved perfect sinlessness, then has not the last enemy been destroyed in him? And would not such a person be admitted into heaven without seeing death?”

This would seem to be the logical conclusion. Firstly, let us confirm that it is entirely possible for a true believer in Jesus to be totally free from sin within himself. In every thought, word and deed, his life may be a true expression of righteousness. When Jesus was upon the earth, bearing the burden of sin and suffering from the pressure of temptation, He demonstrated that any human being can overcome as He overcame.

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.

To all those who reach that standard the promise is given that they will sit down with Christ on His Father's throne, as soon as the appropriate, designated time and place have arrived.

Among the lives of the many whose histories have been recorded in the sacred writings, there are few against whom no sin has been recorded. Abel, Enoch, Joseph, Jeremiah, Daniel and his three friends are examples of men who, as far as we know, overcame all sin. All men might have shared likewise in this victory, and, doubtless, there were many more whose lives were

faithful to all God's commandments, but whose names are not recorded in any earthly roll.

However, whether they be few or many, known or unknown to us, is not the point. The fact that men did overcome sin is the point not to be missed. We know that Christ faced all temptations we must face, exactly as we must face them, and did not yield to any of them by so much as a single thought. He made not the slightest concession to temptation whatsoever. He lived a life of perfect and total sinlessness.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 180:

The Saviour took upon himself the infirmities of humanity and lived a sinless life, that men might have no fear that because of the weakness of human nature they could not overcome. Christ came to make us "partakers of the divine nature," and His life declares that humanity, combined with divinity, does not commit sin.

There are other similar statements which, in one way or another, express the same thought, showing there is no justification for sin.

The Desire of Ages, p. 311:

The tempter's agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God.

All such statements confirm that the Christian's life is to be a sinless life. So, having reconfirmed the truth that the Christian's life is to be a sinless one, can we deduce that once constant, sinless living has been achieved and established, the believer could, right there and then, by living faith, grasp the actual victory over death, and be taken to heaven? If this were the truth on the matter, it would of course mean that individuals would be passing from this earth to heaven at various times.

But the scriptures do not support such a view. Paul certainly did not subscribe to these deductions. To demonstrate that, we have but to examine the whole chapter of *Hebrews* 11 in which the apostle lists many great achievements of faith. He then summarizes the conclusions which he draws from these facts:

Hebrews 11

³² And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

³³ Who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

³⁴ Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

³⁵ Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

³⁶ Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.

³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—

³⁸ Of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

³⁹ And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,

⁴⁰ God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

So, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul confirmed that those still in their graves, were not to receive their immortal inheritance ahead of those who were still living. Instead, they were to wait until all could receive the blessing together. Paul repeats this truth in his first letter to the Thessalonians:

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

These verses describe that incredible moment when the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed. Then it will be that the risen saints will utter their triumphant shout over death and the grave, as was shown to Sister White in these words:

Early Writings, p. 287:

The earth mightily shook as the voice of the Son of God called forth the sleeping saints. They responded to the call and came forth clothed with glorious immortality, crying,

“Victory, victory, over death and the grave! O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?”

Then the living saints and the risen ones raised their voices in a long, transporting shout of victory. Those bodies that had gone down into the grave bearing the marks of disease and death came up in immortal health and vigor. The living saints are changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and caught up with the risen ones, and together they meet their Lord in the air. Oh, what a glorious meeting! Friends whom death had separated were united, never more to part.

How blessed we are that God saw fit to close each prophetic unfolding of future events with the promise of the termination of the reign of sin and death. As we study the book of *Daniel*, we find this profoundly stirring promise repeated, imparting to us hope and life instead of the hopelessness of dark despair.

And if this promise is encouraging to us, in our present era of religious freedom, then how much more would it have strengthened, fortified, and sustained the martyrs in their seemingly hopeless resistance against the papacy and her supporters. For over a thousand years, theirs was a constant struggle against their persecutors who...

Daniel 7

²⁵ ...wore out the saints of the Most High.

But thanks to the living power in the word of God, the captivity of His people was eventually turned to freedom.

41. The Saints Possess the Kingdom

Messenger and News Review, September 1997

Daniel 7:13-27

IN THE last chapter, it was revealed that death, the last of all our enemies, will eventually be completely eliminated never to appear again forevermore.

Revelation 21

⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

Joint Heirs with Christ

If this was all that we will receive, it would be more than wonderful enough. Just to be a resident of the new earth, free from sickness, pain and death, happy in communion with other redeemed beings, and seeing our Saviour face to face, would satisfy the longings of every child of God.

But that is only the beginning of the joys and blessedness of the life which awaits us. The plan of salvation, provided and administered by the power and wisdom of our eternal Father, will bring us not only to the level attained by our first parents, but will elevate us into a position of joint-heirship with Christ. We shall surely see and understand that:

1 Corinthians 2

⁹ Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.

There can be no greater privilege, joy, or satisfaction than to be a joint-heir with Christ, as everyone who is saved in His glorious kingdom will experience. As inheritors of the kingdom of God, we actually and literally come into possession of it. This principle is repeatedly stressed in *Daniel 7* as follows:

Daniel 7

¹⁸ But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.

Daniel 7

²¹ I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them,

²² Until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

²⁷ Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.

In each of these verses, the declaration is made that the saints are to possess the kingdom, which means that they come into personal ownership of it. This is a reiteration of the truth expressed by Paul:

Romans 8

¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

¹⁷ And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

God speaks only the truth, so when He says we are children of God, that is what we are. Furthermore, when He states that that sonship makes us heirs and joint-heirs with Christ, we are to comprehend the reality of this relationship, and to understand and accept all that it means to us. We cannot be sons of God without being heirs to the possession of the great universal kingdom of God himself. This is exactly as God intends.

There must be no doubting the reality of our sonship with Christ, which is even more precious than earthly, family relationships, and which came about through the following series of events. When Adam was created, he was given the life of a creature, which life resided in his flesh and blood body. As long as he walked in righteousness, excluding all sin from his life, death did not threaten him. His life remained in residence within him.

There was no death to threaten him until Adam permitted Lucifer to introduce it into God's creation. Once it had become es-

tablished, death permeated all things, leaving everything and everybody destitute of life and liberty.

Forgiveness and Life

The question is raised by some in regard to Adam's transgression:

“Why could not God have simply forgiven him so that they all could then continue as before? There was no doubt about Adam's repentance being truly deep and sincere. Surely God could have accepted it?”

But there was a good reason why God could not let everything carry on as usual, and that was because nothing was in its original condition any longer. To correct the problem, man needed more than forgiveness. He was dead, and although dead men can and have been forgiven, they are dead men still. A forgiven dead man is just as badly off as an unforgiven dead man. It is true that every dead man first needs forgiveness to remove his guilt, but then he needs life to replace the life which he has forfeited. And where can he find the needed supply? There is no value in seeking life from Adam, for death reigns there. Adam cannot supply life,

1 Corinthians 15

²² For as in Adam all die...

Who then can supply the needed life by which the dead shall be raised and shall live forevermore? To this question there is but one answer, for Christ alone has the needed supply.

²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

The word of the living God proclaims this truth repeatedly:

John 11

²⁵ Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live.

These words were spoken by Jesus at the resurrection of Lazarus, the beloved brother of Mary and Martha of Bethany. Earlier He had stated the same truth in these words:

John 10

¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

John 3

³⁶ He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

John 5

²⁴ Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes in Him who sent me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

John 6

⁴⁷ Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in me has everlasting life.

So then, all of us who have lost our lives through Adam, have one Person and only One to whom we can go in order to obtain life in the place of death. We can approach only Jesus Christ who does not merely effect the resurrection and the life, but who is in himself, the resurrection and the life.

This means that the same life which is in Christ becomes present in the believer, who then has the resurrection in himself. Consequently, such a person will not come forth from his dusty bed on the resurrection morning merely as a manifestation of omnipotent power, but because,

“...through faith, His life has become ours.”

That truth is contained in the next paragraph:

The Desire of Ages, p. 388:

John 6

⁴⁷ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on me has everlasting life.

Through the beloved John, who listened to these words, the Holy Spirit declared to the churches,

1 John 5

¹¹ This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

¹² He that has the Son has life.

And Jesus said,

John 6

⁴⁰ I will raise him up at the last day.

Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him. It is by virtue of this union that we are to come forth from the grave,—not merely as a manifestation of the power of Christ, but because, *through faith, His life has become ours*. Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal.

The Two Resurrections

A clear-cut distinction exists between the two resurrections. The first takes place at the beginning of the millennium when the saved are raised to eternal salvation. The second resurrection, which will take place at the close of the millennium, will be of the wicked who are eternally lost. The latter will be an act of solely omnipotent power. It will involve no resurrection response such as there is when Christ has become one flesh with us, and we have become one spirit with Him. The life of Christ in us is implanted there by the operation of the laws of reproduction and is therefore inherited life.

Let us be clear about this process, for it has not always existed. There was a time when all the angels of God, together with every created being in all the worlds throughout the universe, entered the kingdom by being created into it. Only after the introduction of sin did the new procedure become available for man, not as an alternative, but as a replacement for the original process. Since the fall of man, there is no way of entry for him into God's kingdom, other than by being born into it. Therefore, Jesus advised Nicodemus that he had to be born again in order even to see the kingdom of God.

John 3

³ Jesus answered and said to him, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

When a person enters God's kingdom by the dual process of forgiveness and spiritual reproduction, he has in himself both the life of God and the life of man for,

⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

The rebirth to which Jesus pointed in His interview with Nicodemus, is the birth in man of the second spiritual nature designed to replace the loss of his first spiritual nature of which he was robbed in the Garden of Eden by the great deceiver. The life he receives is the life which is in the Father. It is the same life which is in Jesus and, by virtue of its presence there, makes Christ to be the Son of God. The same life, reproduced in the believer, similarly makes him to be a son of God too.

The Original Life of Adam

Even though there is a very marked superiority in the life of Christ over that of Adam, those who first came forth from the Creator's hands were humans of extraordinary powers.

Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 22-23:

God endowed man with so great vital force that he has withstood the accumulation of disease brought upon the race in consequence of perverted habits, and has continued for six thousand years. This fact of itself is enough to evidence to us the strength and electrical energy that God gave to man at his creation. It took more than two thousand years of crime and indulgence of base passions to bring bodily disease upon the race to any great extent.

If Adam, at his creation, had not been endowed with twenty times as much vital force as men now have, the race, with their present habits of living in violation of natural law, would have become extinct. At the time of Christ's first advent, the race had degenerated so rapidly that an accumulation of disease pressed upon that generation, bringing in a tide of woe, and a weight of misery inexpressible.

In Eden, Adam and Eve were given a lofty physical stature, great strength, and incredible vitality. But the comparison being made in the above paragraph is between a perfect created human

being and those who had eroded their own lives by sinful indulgence.

Before sin permeated man, he was visited by Christ in Eden each day. Christ would have come to him as God in the garb of an angel, the outshining of God's glory being veiled by the angel form. There was no other way by which God could communicate with the beings He had created, except through Christ's being both Creator and creature in the same person. It was to fill this need that Christ humbled himself and accepted the nature and position of an angel as well as still being God.

It was the same spirit of condescension which enabled our mighty Saviour to step down from the position of an angel to that of fallen man. It is from these lowly depths that the work of salvation has elevated Him, far above all the powers to be found in this world, to the highest position next to God himself. In God's everlasting kingdom, Christ is and forever will be pre-eminent.

A Royal Priesthood

Paul was greatly concerned that this truth should be seen and understood in all its glory. So he importuned our eternal Father to endow the believers in Ephesus with the deep spiritual discernment needed by His children so that they would understand the mighty inheritance which is theirs in Christ. He prayed that they would comprehend the saving truth that whatever Christ has, we share it together with Him as joint-heirs. He knew that as long as believers obtained and retained in vivid reality a clear picture of the glory and value of that which awaits every believer in Jesus, there would be no danger of their exchanging the heavenly treasure for the earthly. So he wrote:

Ephesians 1

¹⁵ Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,

¹⁶ Do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

¹⁷ That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

¹⁹ And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

²⁰ Which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

²¹ Far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,

²³ Which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Paul sought to find the most sublime words to describe the unlimited heights to which the redeemed shall be lifted in this life and in that to come. All things in the church are placed beneath Christ who is seated on His Father's right hand, and is Head over all things in the church now and forever.

We have been blessed so far with only the faintest conceptions of the riches, glory, and power, which are combined in Christ as He sits with His Father on His throne. This deficiency on our part is not attributable to any delinquency on God's part. He has flung open the doors of divine revelation so that we can compare the miserable best which this sin-cursed earth offers, with the unlimited treasures awaiting those with the faith to grasp the unseen jewels of truth, love, and power.

The Desire of Ages, p. 672:

Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive.

As the Inheritor of the kingdom, Jesus must become King of kings. And as the kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, He must in turn be the King of priests or the great High Priest. Therefore, all of His co-inheritors, who are joint-heirs with Him, will sit with Him on His throne, and will fill the dual offices of king and priest in the everlasting kingdom of grace and glory. John the Revelator perceived this important truth and recorded it for our blessing under the powerful light of the Holy Spirit, as follows:

Revelation 1

⁴ John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

⁵ And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

⁶ And has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

In these verses, John is introducing the last book in the Bible,

¹ The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him.

He then declares the supreme authority of Him who is the subject of this revelation and lists various titles and positions by which He has the right to make us “kings and priests” to God the Father. Let us stress that this endowment of the position and work of a kingly priesthood is not arbitrarily conferred on its recipients, but is the inevitable outworking of Christ’s ministry by virtue of His incredible achievement in solving the sin problem. That solution involved His winning the right to take possession of all our sins and sinfulness, to offer us a new life in exchange for the old, and to implant His own life in the place of the old.

Because Christ had no life to give other than His own, He therefore manifested supreme love toward man in giving that life. It was not “merely” a matter of infusing life into man, as when God breathed into Adam the breath of life, so that man became a living being, but of imparting himself to the helpless human agent.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 92:

All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent.

The truth that we become kings and priests is reiterated in *Revelation* 5 in almost the same words:

Revelation 5

¹⁰ And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.

The context of these verses is found in the highly significant fourth and fifth chapters of *Revelation* where 24 elders were seen sitting on thrones in heaven, and four living creatures were in the midst of the throne, as we have considered previously. The location of the thrones was in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary where the elders and living creatures are symbols of a large company of those who, having been redeemed from this earth, were ministering in the sanctuary.

The time had come when a sealed scroll defied anyone to open it until the Lamb of God emerged with the power to unseal and open it. He took the document from His Father's hand and successfully opened it, whereupon a flood of light shone forth in the form of great prophecies of future events and the mighty revelations of the gospel which attends them. It was in this context that the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures testified that they had been made to be kings and priests unto God.

The apostle Peter looked forward with lively expectation to that time when, as a royal priesthood, we shall be able to minister in the presence of God. Of this he wrote as follows:

1 Peter 2

⁹ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Those who qualify for membership of that company who will be a royal priesthood are a very special people, blessed with a very special education. They will be special in that Christ's life

has been reproduced in them, and they have been highly educated in the school wherein no earthly learning is available.

An interesting parallel is brought to light at this point. Just as the kings of Egypt, Babylon, and Medo-Persia as supreme rulers of the world, each in his allotted period of time, symbolized God in His position of supreme Ruler of the universe, so Joseph and Daniel were a type of the redeemed. Once the education of Joseph and Daniel in turn was complete, they occupied the position nearest the king's throne in the same way that after their special education, the redeemed kings and priests will occupy the position highest to the throne of God throughout the coming eternity. Of this it is clearly written:

Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 413:

So we see that the highest line of earthly education may be obtained, and yet the men possessing it may be ignorant of the first principles which would make them subjects of the kingdom of God. Human learning cannot qualify for that kingdom. The subjects of Christ's kingdom are not made thus by forms and ceremonies, by a large study of books.

John 17

³ This is life eternal, that they might know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.

The members of Christ's kingdom are members of His body, of which He himself is the head. They are the elect sons of God, "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," that they should show forth the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

This picture of the redeemed being a very special people, occupying a very special position, and doing a very special work, confirms the truth we are studying from *Daniel* where the saints are repeatedly declared to have come into possession of the kingdom. So in *Revelation*, they are seen occupying the highest administrative positions in existence. They are shown to be seated around the Father's throne with no one between them and the Omnipotent One.

Higher Than Angels

It would follow then that God's children must occupy positions far above the angels, and will have privileges not available to the angels. That this is true is attested to by a number of statements. Here are two of them:

The Desire of Ages, p. 21:

The angels of glory find their joy in giving, giving love and tireless watchcare to souls that are fallen and unholy. Heavenly beings woo the hearts of men; they bring to this dark world light from the courts above; by gentle and patient ministry they move upon the human spirit, to bring the lost into a fellowship with Christ which is even closer than they themselves can know.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 162-163:

The work of redemption involves consequences of which it is difficult for man to have any conception.

1 Corinthians 2

⁹ Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.

As the sinner, drawn by the power of Christ, approaches the uplifted cross, and prostrates himself before it, there is a new creation. A new heart is given him. He becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. Holiness finds that it has nothing more to require. God himself is...

Romans 3

²⁶ ...the justifier of him which believes in Jesus.

And,

Romans 8

³⁰ Whom He justified, them He also glorified.

Great as is the shame and degradation through sin, even greater will be the honor and exaltation through redeeming love. To human beings striving for conformity to the divine image there is imparted an outlay of heaven's treasure, an excellency of power, that will place them higher than even the angels who have never fallen.

The angels who are tirelessly performing this loving service to human "souls that are fallen and unholy," do so as the expression

of the lovely characters which they have within themselves. Their lives are an expression of what they are, revealing to us that they are very beautiful, totally selfless beings.

Let us not forget that they are the ones who remained loyal to God when the terrible test was brought upon them by Satan. They stood unmoved by the sophistries of the evil one and remained perfectly free from pride, jealousy, rebellion, and unholy ambition. They deserve our genuine admiration, for they are wonderfully free from sin and its effects in every form. We shall learn much more of the loyal angels as we continue to study *Daniel* and *Revelation*.⁶⁶

In the meantime, the hour has not yet struck for Christ and His saints to take possession of the kingdom. That great event will not occur until Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary has been concluded as the following paragraph explains:

The Great Controversy, p. 479-480:

Daniel 7

¹³ And, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

¹⁴ And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away.

The coming of Christ here described is not His second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator. It is this coming, and not His second advent to the earth, that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844. Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies and there appears in the presence of God to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man—to perform the work of investigative judgment and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits.

⁶⁶ Editor's note: Although Fred Wright never finished the articles on *Revelation*, the work of the loyal angels, which he here refers to, is covered in detail in the later book, *The Work of the Angels*, by Andreas Dura.

It will be when that work is completed that Christ and the saints will take possession of the kingdom as foretold over and over in *Daniel* chapter seven.

42. The Judgment Is Set

Messenger and News Review, October 1997

Daniel 7:25-26

AS DANIEL continued to watch the unfolding of the vision recorded in *Daniel* 7, he saw that, in the due process of law which will culminate in Christ's, and those whom He has redeemed, possessing the kingdom of eternal glory, there will be a judgment. In fact, as we studied in a previous chapter, there will be two:

1. An investigative judgment, involving only those who have lodged an appeal against the sentence of eternal death by sending their sins and their sinfulness on beforehand to the judgment; and
2. An executive judgment, which will be concerned with those who have failed the first judgment, or ignored it altogether.

However, these two judgments can also be viewed as different phases of one judgment.

The Timing of the Judgment

Daniel saw that there is an appointed time and place for the judgment to make its examination, to arrive at its totally accurate assessment of each case, and to announce faultlessly the reward due to each person examined.

According to *Daniel* 7, there would firstly come the rise and fall of the four world empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The latter would collapse, not into another single world empire, but into ten kingdoms. The time would then come for another kingdom, namely the papacy, to arise after she had destroyed three kingdoms in the process of her arising. At the end of 1,260 years of supremacy, the papacy's power would be exhausted, and then would come the time when the setting up of the judgment was due to take place:

Daniel 7

²⁵ Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.

²⁶ But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion.

While these verses do not accurately locate the timing when the judgment shall commence, they do make it clear that it would not come before 1798, when the 1,260 years ended. Despite Paul's extensive knowledge of the prophecies of *Daniel*, he likewise spoke of the judgment only as a future event without declaring to his hearers just how far away in the future it was located. So it was that, when he preached to the men of learning on Mars Hill in Athens, he spoke of the judgment as a reality which must be faced by all at some future time. He spoke that truth with clarity and power saying to the Athenians:

Acts 17

³⁰ Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

³¹ Because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.

Later, some time after his arrest, Paul availed himself of the opportunity to preach the gospel before the Roman governor, Felix, to whom he revealed the light from heaven on righteousness, temperance, and the judgment yet to come on men and women alike, whether they have availed themselves of the opportunity to prepare for it or not. Of that interview between the unconverted Roman, and Paul, the messenger of living righteousness, it is recorded that...

Acts 24

²⁵ As he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and *the judgment to come*, Felix was afraid and answered, Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.

Paul did not preach to the Roman governor that the judgment was either present or past, but that it was yet to come. He spoke

of a specific time for this mighty tribunal in which the eternal destiny of every individual shall be decided.

But, before examining the evidences revealing just when the judgment will commence, let us be certain that there will be a judgment which must be faced by all people everywhere. There are numerous scriptures which plainly teach that both men and women, the good and the bad, must face the searching scrutiny of that fateful examination. The following are a selection of them:

Psalms 1

⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

Ecclesiastes 11

⁹ Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these God will bring you into judgment.

Ecclesiastes 12

¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.

The above Old Testament texts apply equally to New Testament Christians, as is testified by a number of New Testament texts declaring the same truths.

Romans 14

¹⁰ But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Hebrews 9

²⁷ And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.

1 Peter 4

¹⁷ For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Despite the solemn finality of the judgment, we may take great comfort from the fact that, for all those who have met the conditions required to pass its searching scrutiny, the investigative judgment will return a verdict involving no condemnation. This means that for such a person, a place in heaven is assured, for...

2 Peter 2

⁹ The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment.

The Judgment Comforts the Martyrs

For the martyrs who were made to stand before corrupt judges, be accused by false witnesses, and who, at the hands of their deadly enemies, suffered more than one might imagine humanity could endure, the knowledge that God would bring every thought, word, and deed of every person, whether living or dead, to an utterly just examination was a great solace. From courts in which they were certain to receive an unjust sentence in every case, to one which could be utterly relied upon to judge every matter according to the witness of truth and of truth alone, they could turn for comfort in the darkest hours.

They knew by the sure word of prophecy that such an unjust state of affairs would not last forever. The judgment would be prepared; ten thousand times ten thousand and a thousand thousands of angels would be assembled as faithful and perfectly truthful witnesses; the Ancient of Days would enter in His flaming chariot, and take His place; the books of record would be opened, and the judgment would convene. They knew that every person is to be judged according to the life which he has lived, and the person he is.

This is not to teach salvation by the works which we have done, for no one can be saved by this means. All who pass the judgment

will do so through the merits of Christ's atonement, by which they firstly obtain the fitness to live by the righteous principles of the law. To obtain that fitness requires the cleansing away of the guilt of all sins committed in the past, of all the uncleanness presently inhabiting our entire being, and the flooding of our souls with the actual life of Christ which can produce only good deeds.

With the provision of every possible facility for the perfecting of righteousness, the Ancient of Days quite justly admits into the kingdom only those who are rendering perfect obedience to His commandments.

It is with longing hearts that the people of the Lord await the redress of the wrongs committed against God, humanity, and the earth. Terrible as the judgment will be, it will be an eternal blessing bringing an irreversible deliverance from our enemies who will thereafter never again be able to persecute us.

From their dusty beds, the anguished cries of those who have given their lives for the sake of the truth metaphorically ask how much longer they must wait until the consummation of all their hopes takes place.

Revelation 6

⁹ When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.

¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?

¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

We understand that the martyrs are not literally calling out from their graves, for the dead do not have that capability. There is no life after death until the resurrection of the dead takes place. They cry out to the Judge of the universe in a symbolic sense.

This is what they would be saying if they could speak.⁶⁷ From those of us who are living still and hope to be alive on the earth when our Saviour returns, the same question begs an answer:

“How long do we still have to wait?”

The simple answer is that the earth as we know it will continue until the work of the gospel is finished. That is the instruction contained in:

Revelation 10

⁵ The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven,

⁶ And swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer,

⁷ But in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

To understand the great prophecies of *Daniel* and the *Revelation*, all of which are related to the gospel and the judgments, requires that we know what this “mystery of God” is. The Scriptures tell us that it is...

Colossians 1

²⁷ ...Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Christ is in us only as the result of the ministry of the gospel in the solving of the sin problem. This mystery is the infilling of the souls of those who are truly cleansed from sinfulness with the life and therefore with the righteousness of Christ. It is the reproduction within the believer of the actual character of God. It is fitness to be an inhabitant of the perfectly pure and holy universe cleansed from all iniquity.

⁶⁷ See *Genesis* 4:10.

The Parable of the Wedding Garment

That fitness is portrayed with great clarity in the parable of the wedding garment which leaves no doubt as to what the standard of character in the judgment is.

The story begins with a certain king making a marriage for his son. The king represents God in the role of the great, final Judge, who, in His boundless mercy, sends an invitation to His subjects to attend the wedding of His Son.

The call was unheeded, thereby insulting the King, who, unlike His earthly counterparts, sent a second invitation to those who had refused the first. Again, the invited guests refused to attend, this time killing the King's messengers, whereupon the King passed the sentence of death upon the murderers.

The King now turned to another class of people among whom He was successful in finding guests who were prepared to come to the wedding. Of this parable we read:

Matthew 22

⁵ But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business.

⁶ And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them.

⁷ But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

⁸ Then he said to his servants, The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.

⁹ Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.

¹⁰ So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good.

¹¹ And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.

¹² So he said to him, Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?

¹³ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.

This is a very definite description of the judgment with special emphasis on the standard by which all men will be judged. In this portrayal,

- God is the King;
- The marriage is the union of humanity with divinity or, Christ in you, the hope of glory;
- The wedding garment is the character which all must have in order to be accounted fit guests for the wedding; and
- The examination of the guests, is the judgment—firstly of the dead, then of the living.

The Sanctuary Services

It is to be noted that the invitation is sent by the King to His servants, by which we are to understand that the message of this parable is addressed to the professed people of God, and not to the unresponsive worldlings. This agrees with the gospel as taught in the services of the sanctuary.

The Great Controversy, p. 480:

In the typical service only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period.

1 Peter 4

¹⁷ Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?

This point of truth is not difficult to understand, for it is but a matter of comparing the two classes of people in the world when the typical sanctuary services were in operation.

The first class was the children of Israel who understood the sacrificial system and were prepared to avail themselves of its provisions. When these committed sins as a result of what they were in themselves, they knew that the problem could be solved in two stages. The first stage involved the removal of iniquity from the transgressor, and its being stored in the first apartment of the sanctuary. They knew it was critical that all their sins should be sent into the sanctuary before their probationary time came to its end. Failure to make sure of this guaranteed the loss of eternal life.

Once the sins reached the sanctuary, the next stage was to ensure that they were removed from there and placed upon the scapegoat so that they might be borne by him into eternal separation from God's people. Let it never be forgotten that no sin ever has or ever will pass directly from the sinner to the scapegoat. The inflexible route is from the sinner to the scapegoat via the ministration of the sanctuary's first apartment. From there the route continues to the scapegoat via the ministration of the final atonement, and from there it is eventually utterly and eternally destroyed.

The other class of people was comprised of those who, for one reason or another, never saw to it that their sins were successfully removed from themselves and placed on a temporary basis in the first apartment of the sanctuary. They are represented in the days of Israel by the godless heathen who had nothing to do with Israel or the sanctuary. Into this same category fell those apostate Israelites who were also obviously not sending their sins to the sanctuary to be stored until the decision time of the investigative judgment.

Status of the Ignorant

But what of those who worship God ignorantly, though faithfully? What of those living in isolation in dark areas of the earth where the name of Jesus has never been spoken? How can such

worshippers know of the character of God, the origin of sin, or the other great truths which clarify and bless our pathway to heaven?

Obviously these folk, not knowing that sins are dealt with through the ministration of Christ in the first and second apartments of the sanctuary, could not consciously follow this way of holiness. Nonetheless, provided they follow the little light they have received until they do actually become truly born again, they will be saved. Thereafter, as long as they maintain their experience, more and still more light is given to them until they are accepted at whatever stage of sanctification they reach, just as we are.

Yet, even though these believers worship God in ignorance, their confessed sins must still follow exactly the same route through the first and second apartments of the sanctuary. This is both necessary and possible because Christ, recognizing that the penitent one is doing the best he can, makes up for the deficiency with His own divine merit. This class of person does not understand specifically where his sins have gone. But what he does experience is that they have gone from him. Such a person will not easily surrender the new-found freedom that righteousness has given him.

Actually, those in this class far outnumber those who do understand the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, as the following statement informs us:

The Great Controversy, p. 390:

Notwithstanding the spiritual darkness and alienation from God that exist in the churches which constitute Babylon, the great body of Christ's true followers are still to be found in their communion. There are many of these who have never seen the special truths for this time. Not a few are dissatisfied with their present condition and are longing for clearer light. They look in vain for the image of Christ in the churches with which they are connected. As these bodies depart further and further from the truth, and ally themselves more closely with the world, the difference between the two classes will widen, and it will finally re-

sult in separation. The time will come when those who love God supremely can no longer remain in connection with such as are...

2 Timothy 3

⁴ ...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

⁵ Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.

The Wedding Garment

Note carefully that when the king enters the room, he expects to find each person clad in the special wedding garment with which he has himself personally provided each individual. As that garment represents the character of perfect righteousness which all must possess who shall qualify to be fit guests for the wedding, it means that those who will pass the judgment must come to it free from the guilt of all their sins, cleansed from the state of sinfulness, and filled with the righteousness of Christ.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 311:

Only the covering which Christ himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul.

Revelation 3

¹⁸ I counsel you, [He says,] to buy of me...white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness does not appear.

Awesome as are the issues confronting those who are today living in the days of the judgment of the dead, soon to pass to the judgment of the living, no one is arbitrarily rejected. God has made ample provision for everyone to be saved. All who are lost will suffer their fate because they have consciously made the wrong choices. In the judgment, just as Daniel viewed it, everyone will clearly see that the lost have chosen the short life of sinful rebellion against God, in preference to the eternal life of righteousness with Him.

The study of the eternal eradication of sin firstly from the individual, and then in turn from the farthest reaches of the universe through the ministration of the earthly and the heavenly sanctuaries is the subject of the next prophecy given to Daniel—the vi-

sion of *Daniel* 8. We will begin our study of that vision in the next chapter of this series. In the meantime, preparation can be made by studying *God's Way in the Sanctuary*, and the chapter entitled "Without a Wedding Garment," in *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 307-319.

43. The Ram, the Goat, and the Little Horn

Messenger and News Review, December 1997

Daniel 8:4-25

WITH this chapter we commence the study of *Daniel* 8, which is the continuation of the prophecy recorded in *Daniel* 2 and 7. In *Daniel* 8, is found the last symbolic vision given to the prophet. All the other verses which follow contain explanations of the symbols presented to the prophet, and which explanations will continue right on through until the very end of the book.

It is true that he received a vision as recorded in *Daniel* 10, but this was not a prophetic vision outlining events in the future through various symbols. Instead it was a vision of Christ providing an introduction to the explanations that were to follow in *Daniel* 11 and 12. These chapters contain the thrilling climax to the message of the great book of *Daniel*.

A Summary of Daniel 7 & 8

As stated earlier, we assume that many of our readers are already familiar with the main points in this remarkable prophecy, so there is no need to repeat what those Advent pioneers have correctly understood and taught. However in order to provide a connecting link, I will briefly paraphrase the words of the prophecy.

The vision recorded in *Daniel* 7, was given in the first year of Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon, and that of *Daniel* 8, in the third year of his reign. In this vision, Daniel saw a powerful ram with two horns, rampaging over the land according to his will. This was the power of Medo-Persia, which was symbolized by the fearsome bear of *Daniel* 7.

Then suddenly a goat came out of the west with great power and speed and attacked the ram which, unable to withstand the onslaught, was consequently destroyed. The goat had been symbolized in chapter 7 by the leopard with four heads. The goat had a single notable horn between his eyes which became broken, and was replaced by four horns.

Then out of one of them came a most remarkable little horn which became exceedingly great in comparison with the ram who was classed as being great, and the male-goat who was classed as being very great. This little horn is introduced as the great enemy of God and His people. This little horn power and the warfare it exercises against God's true people until the controversy is ended, becomes the most important part of the prophecies of *Daniel*. Let us consider a list of its activities clear through until the end of all things shall transpire.

1. He would spread his oppression toward the south, the east, and the pleasant land in that strict order.

It is very important that our interpretation of these symbols be very accurate, for, otherwise we would be able to develop several possible conclusions which would throw doubt on which one is the truth.

2. He was to cast some of the host and of the stars to the ground;
3. He would exalt himself until deemed level with the Prince of the host;
4. He would take away the daily, and would cast down the place of His sanctuary.
5. He cast down the truth to the ground and would practice and prosper.

Then came a very crucial question and its vitally important answer. It was a question involving time:

Daniel 8

¹³ How long shall...both the sanctuary and the host be trodden underfoot?

To this came the reply,

¹⁴ For two thousand, three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.

At this point, we notice that no explanation of the 2,300 days is provided, though it has not been overlooked, but has simply been deferred until later. No mistake has been made, and it will be

found that a wise purpose underlay God's action of postponement. When the time comes for the explanation of the time portion to be completed, we shall find that much greater light than otherwise will shine into our minds, and we shall be immeasurably grateful for God's wisdom in working in this way. Later, we shall see why this is so.

The work of informing us just what God is saying to the human family through these wonderful messages, was committed to the mighty angel who was none other than Gabriel. He was directed by one in great authority. Once commissioned to perform this service, Gabriel obeyed, while the prophet listened with the closest attention.

Thus he was advised of the scope of the description of future events which would reveal developments in the great controversy right down until the end should come and the victory shall have been gained.

The Accuracy of Bible Prophecy

Daniel 8

¹⁹ And he said, Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be.

Without the least shadow of doubt, those preliminary words are a tremendous comfort to all who are blessed with the spiritual capacity to grasp the promise they contain. To each of the vital moments in the plan of salvation, a time has been appointed. When that allotted moment arrives, then will the promised event take place.

An excellent example of the accuracy of Bible prophecies is provided by God's naming in Abraham's day the exact number of years which would come and go before Israel would be permitted to depart from Egypt. Right on time, on the very day, came their release from servitude as it is recorded in the Scriptures:

Exodus 12

⁴⁰ Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years.

⁴¹ And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.⁶⁸

The Desire of Ages, p. 32:

But like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God's purposes know no haste and no delay. Through the symbols of the great darkness and the smoking furnace, God had revealed to Abraham the bondage of Israel in Egypt, and had declared that the time of their sojourning should be four hundred years.

Genesis 15

¹⁴ Afterward, [He said,] shall they come out with great substance.

Against that word, all the power of Pharaoh's proud empire battled in vain. On "the self-same day" appointed in the divine promise,

Exodus 12

⁴¹ ...it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.

So in heaven's council the hour for the coming of Christ had been determined. When the great clock of time pointed to that hour, Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

There is today, as there ever has been, an appointed moment in time set for the second coming of our great Deliverer. When the appointed day arrives, on the very selfsame day, He will be here. In the meantime, the waiting time may seem long and tedious. We may become weary of waiting, it may be that we shall be tempted to doubt whether He will come, and will find it difficult to cling with confidence to His promised word, but none of this will change the appointed time,

⁶⁸ See the Appendix to Page 282 of *Patriarchs and Prophets* for an explanation of the seeming discrepancy between the *Exodus* statement of 430 years [also *Galatians* 3:17], and *The Desire of Ages* statement of 400 years [also *Genesis* 15:13, *Acts* 7:6]. It will be found that the two periods each had a different starting point, but the same ending point.

Daniel 8

¹⁰ ...for, at the appointed time the end shall be.

Our safety is to heed the oft repeated warnings not to let go our hold on the eternal realities, but to work with ever-increasing diligence at making our calling and election sure and certain. There must be no relaxation, no diversion to objectives which occupy the mind without producing profit, and no indulgence of appetites and passions such as erode the spiritual experience rather than to strengthen it.

Hastening the Day

This truth spoken to Daniel by Gabriel of a certain specific day when the end shall come, will appear to contradict the statements which advise us that if we had proven faithful to our trust, we would already be in heaven. The apostle Peter spoke of the power we have to either hasten or retard the day of our Lord's appearing.

2 Peter 3

¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

¹² Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 69:

It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (*2 Peter* 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain.

The Great Controversy, p. 457-458:

The history of ancient Israel is a striking illustration of the past experience of the Adventist body. God led His people in the advent movement, even as He led the children of Israel from Egypt. In the great disappointment their faith was tested as was that of

the Hebrews at the Red Sea. Had they still trusted to the guiding hand that had been with them in their past experience, they would have seen the salvation of God.

If all who had labored unitedly in the work in 1844, had received the third angel's message and proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have been warned, the closing work completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people.

It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But,

Hebrews 3

¹⁹ ...they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Because of their backsliding and apostasy they perished in the desert, and others were raised up to enter the Promised Land.

In like manner, it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed and His people should remain so many years in this world of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God. As they refused to do the work which He had appointed them, others were raised up to proclaim the message. In mercy to the world, Jesus delays His coming, that sinners may have an opportunity to hear the warning and find in Him a shelter before the wrath of God shall be poured out.

There is no problem in this connection. God has absolute foreknowledge of the future right down to the minutest specifications of each individual and, in His book, has recorded every detail before it even existed.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 415:

Our substance was not hid from Him when we were made in secret; His eyes saw our substance, yet being imperfect, and in His book all our members were written when as yet there were none of them.

Psalms 139

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.

With that capacity for knowing the details of the future, God certainly is aware of the exact point of time when Jesus will appear in the clouds of heaven, and as Gabriel testified to Daniel, has appointed that moment accordingly. But, you may question,

“How can God set a date for the event which can be changed by the responses of the people?”

It is because no matter what the people will yet do, God will foresee that and will calculate its influence and effect on the whole world to the ultimate exactitude. For instance, He foresaw the birth of Jeremiah and knew precisely the details of his ministry before he was conceived.

Jeremiah 1

⁴ Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying:

⁵ Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.

The Ram and the Goat

Daniel 8

¹⁹ And he said, Behold, I will make you know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.

These words, spoken as they were by God through Gabriel, reveal God as having absolute foreknowledge of everything which would ever happen throughout His vast domains. Nothing is left to chance, there is no guessing, and absolutely no mistakes are ever made. Consequently, God is never taken by surprise, and He has never failed to provide a perfect solution to every problem regardless of how large or small, simple or complex it may be.

It must have given Daniel a cause for greatly increased confidence in God's faithful omnipotence, the surety that His purposes will be carried out as planned, and that He will most certainly be the champion of the cause of righteousness. Then, as a confirma-

tion of all this, Gabriel continued by naming Medo-Persia and Greece as the powers symbolized by the ram and the male goat. He said,

Daniel 8

²⁰ The ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the kings of Media and Persia.

²¹ And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king.

As there can be only one first king, no opportunity is here provided for a misidentification. Alexander the Great was the only possible person who could have been the fulfillment of the horn which symbolized the first king. He decisively destroyed the power and authority of the Medo-Persian kingdom at the battle of Arbela in 331 BC. The inheritance of the kingdom did not fall to his posterity, but was divided between his four generals:

1. Cassander, who acquired Greece;
2. Lysimachus, whose quarter was Asia Minor;
3. Seleucus, who occupied Babylon and Syria and became known as the king of the north; and
4. Ptolemy, who ruled over Egypt, and was the king of the south.

The Little Horn

Next, out of one of the four horns arose another little horn who becomes the main subject of the prophecy, and the great opponent of the forces of light. It is to warn against this great enemy, and thus have the happy assurance that the ultimate victory is certain, that these prophecies are written.

The power contained in these words from the Most High is very great, so great that the enemies of the truth have devoted much time and effort into replacing it with another, and false interpretation. First then, let us gather up the positive evidences supporting the correct interpretation.

Who then is the little horn power, and what will he do in his warfare against the Most High? Let us then find the heaven-sup-

plied answers to these questions. This will be but a simple matter, for, in his rise to power he cuts down the Grecian kingdom and becomes exceedingly great.

Medo-Persia was a mighty world power rated by God through the angel, Gabriel, as being *great*.

Daniel 8

⁴ I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward...and became *great*.

By this designation, a standard of measurement has been established. Any kingdom which is the subject of this prophecy, is now greater or smaller in comparison with Medo-Persia which was great. According to this standard of measurement, Greece was rated as being *very great* by comparison:

⁸ ...the he goat waxed *very great*.

But the little horn by the same standard of measurement was nothing less than being *exceedingly great*.

⁹ ...a little horn, which waxed *exceeding great*.

Which then was the greatest of the three powers, the great, the very great, or the exceedingly great? Obviously, it must be the power which was exceedingly great.

It is proper to ask at this point which power had arisen upon the fall of Greece that was exceedingly great? The answer is that Rome in both her pagan and papal forms is the only power which meets the specifications of the prophecy.

Furthermore, we are advised in what places and directions she was exceedingly great:

Daniel 8

⁹ ...toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.

It was toward the south, the east, and the pleasant land which were, respectively, Egypt, the eastern countries, and the Land of Israel. These were geographical territories over which Rome established her sovereignty, but which were but representative of

the much wider dominion over which she came to rule. Rome became a world empire as surely as did the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Greek Empires before her.

Next came some of the details of his warfare against the people of God, his exaltation of himself to the level of the Prince of princes, and the description of his character.

Self-Exaltation

This exaltation of himself to the level of Christ has been the prime objective of Satan from the beginning of the great controversy. The enemy of both God and man considered himself as being as qualified as the Son of God himself to enter into the mighty counsels of God's will. Accordingly he set out to establish himself in that coveted position. He therefore in his heart's ambition, secretly announced himself as the rightful occupant of this holy office.

In all this, Satan was not able to correctly know his own heart, but God who knows and correctly reads the hearts of all, has supplied us with an accurate analysis of Satan's terrible mistake. So God said:

Isaiah 14

¹² How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!

¹³ For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north;

¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.

¹⁵ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.

¹⁶ Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms,

¹⁷ Who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners?

¹⁸ All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory, everyone in his own house;

¹⁹ But you are cast out of your grave like an abominable branch, like the garment of those who are slain, thrust through with a sword, who go down to the stones of the pit, like a corpse trodden underfoot.

²⁰ You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land and slain your people. The brood of evildoers shall never be named.

²¹ Prepare slaughter for his children because of the iniquity of their fathers, lest they rise up and possess the land, and fill the face of the world with cities.

At this point in our study of *Daniel* and the *Revelation*, the more conversant we are with the beginning of the great controversy, and the paths along which it is developing, the better we will understand the messages of these two books of prophecy. Also the more clearly we understand the objectives of both God and Satan, the more quickly we will discern the effects of both Christ's and Satan's principles of operation, and the more determined we will be to give God's cause our unqualified support.

If then you are lacking a sound understanding of this subject, it is highly recommended that you prayerfully study the following material: The chapters, "Why Was Sin Permitted" from *Patriarchs and Prophets*, and "The Origin of Evil" from *The Great Controversy*. Read also *The Spirit of the Papacy*, by A. T. Jones. You should do this before continuing.

Deception and Destruction

According to *Isaiah* 14 as quoted above, Rome, as symbolized by the little horn power, is guilty of the greatest crimes committed in all eternal history. She has not only deceived the masses who dwell upon this earth, but has slaughtered them without number. Usually, when men and nations find themselves faced with a common foe bent on their universal destruction, they will band together in self defense hoping that their united efforts will avert the crisis. Should they prove to be successful in defeating their

enemy, they will strip him of all of his wealth, and power, and destroy him, so that he could never again be a threat to them.

The devil, of course, knows this and is well aware that direct, honest frontal attacks made by himself are not successful, so he sets about achieving his objectives by resorting to outright deception. By using this weapon with a skill developed through millenniums of study and practice, he has become very successful in his use of these tactics.

Once his victims are deluded into believing that he is their friend and not their foe; their source of life and not their derivation of death; their shining light and not their pit of darkness; they will reject the truth exposing him, and will instead actually assist him to destroy themselves. This is just what the papacy has done, and will continue to do until she has finally exposed herself as the guilty one. The measure of her power to deceive is revealed by what she has done in this direction thus far. So we read:

Daniel 8

¹⁰ And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them.

¹¹ He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.

¹² Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered.

The greatest of all sins which can be committed against another human being is to cut off that person's access to eternal life. Even that becomes magnified when multiplied numbers of people are deprived of the opportunity of living forever in the Paradise of God. If the loss of one soul is regarded as being so terrible a condemnation, what must be the fearful measure of the guilt which must be borne by those thousands and tens of thousands of individuals and organizations who have deliberately hidden the light from individuals so effectively as to cost them their eternal lives.

Prophets and Kings, p. 86:

That our influence should be a savor of death unto death is a fearful thought, yet it is possible. One soul misled, forfeiting eternal bliss—who can estimate the loss! And yet one rash act, one thoughtless word, on our part may exert so deep an influence on the life of another that it will prove the ruin of his soul. One blemish on the character may turn many away from Christ.

Yet she is said to grow up...

Daniel 8

¹⁰ ...to the host to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled upon them.

Throughout the messages of *Daniel 8*, we are advised that the little horn power prospered as the consequence of her successful deception of so many of earth's inhabitants. Those she could not deceive, she destroyed. We would expect that these ruthless procedures on her part would result in her becoming impoverished, rather than prospered. So great are her crimes against God, His people, and His kingdom, that we would expect the wrath of the Lord to fall upon the man of sin with swift and terrible destruction. We are disappointed when we fail to see it happen, and long for the day when divine justice is finally satisfied.

Two Types of Prosperity

In the meantime, we must expect to see in the man of sin the combination of cunning and deception mingled with resulting material prosperity. Note this thought in verses 24-25:

Daniel 8

²⁴ His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; he shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people.

²⁵ Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without human means.

We understand that righteousness is the way of prosperity. How is it then that we find the little horn power prospering due to the exercise of deception and destruction? The answer is that both ways—those of the devil's and those of the Lord's produce prosperity. But there is a striking difference between the two.

In the kingdom of God, there is no great disparity, no sharply divided class structure. The practice of God's ways brings an honest reward, while those who obtain their riches by following the ways of the man of sin, gain their prosperity by robbing those who obtain their prosperity through honesty, industry, and integrity.

In God's system involving the distribution of wealth, all receive their rightful share, but in the way of the unrighteous, there is a tremendous difference between the riches of the wealthy and the abject poverty of the poor.

In the system of the world which is the way of the man of sin, the rich ever grow richer, and the poor become poorer in all things material, intellectual, and spiritual. This does not go on forever, for eventually the iniquity of the rich and the poor both become so great that their total apostasy ends only in total ruin.

By contrast however, when the gospel is accepted in its purity and power, the day of true emancipation from all bondages commences. In the glorious kingdom of God, the rich do not forever become richer at the expense of the poor, and the poor never are held in slavery to the rich.

Every person on earth should study the principles demonstrated in the quest for riches and power displayed by the man of sin throughout its long dark history. Again and again, individuals have been attracted to her service along what appears to be the sure and certain pathway to great wealth and high position, only to find that in the end, the opposite proved to be true. Let all beware. Store the counsels of *Daniel* 8:25 in your mind, and act upon these words.

Daniel 8

²⁵ Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without human means.

44. The Sanctuary Restored

Messenger and News Review, January 1998

Daniel 8:13-14

IN *DANIEL* 8, the subject which is the greatest cause of concern, is the fate of the sanctuary and the daily services connected with it. It is revealed that all the steps taken against the God of heaven from Daniel's day down until the setting up of Christ's eternal kingdom are centered around the sanctuary.

In the first half of *Daniel* 8, the man of sin is said to grow up to the host of heaven, some of whom he tramples into the dust. He was to attempt to exalt himself as high as the Prince of the host, which, as we saw, was the fruitless effort on his part of his replacing the Son of God with himself.

As the prophet watched the play and counterplay of the mighty forces involved, it must have seemed that the people of God were so few in number, and so weak and scattered, that they were doomed to perpetual enslavement. Yet, the promise of final victory was always there. Every message which God gave to His people was charged with the assurance that the great enemy would eventually be overthrown never to rise again, even though the witness of sight and circumstances declared to the contrary.

How Long?

Thus in reality, it was never a question of whether or not the deliverance would take place. The only question was when it would be effected. That question was therefore raised in:

Daniel 8

¹³ Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?

The whole burden of this question was a matter of time:

“How long before both the sanctuary and the host would no longer be trodden underfoot?”

There was no other question in this verse apart from that. This meant that once the specified time had passed, eternal deliverance from being trampled underfoot would be guaranteed to both the sanctuary and God's people. Never again, would the sanctuary be cast down, nor the people of God be trampled underfoot. It is vital that we learn what this promise involves.

The sanctuary referred to in this question, was the one to be cleansed at the termination of the 2,300 days which ended on October 22, 1844, and could not be the earthly temple which was cleansed annually. The specification confirming this is simple, direct, and clear:

Daniel 8

¹⁴ For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.

It was to be cleansed at that time, whereas the Old Testament building was cleansed annually. The yearly cleansing was a type of the one great cleansing to be effected at the termination of the 2,300 year period. As the Old Testament sanctuary, by the time that Christ had begun His earthly ministry, was no longer the abode of the divine presence, it badly needed cleansing. This it received through the ministry of Christ when He drove out the money-changers, and the buyers and sellers of the sacrificial animals.

But this was a short-lived effect. Very soon, the temple was profaned as before, in response to which Christ cleansed it on a second occasion shortly before His crucifixion, but again, it was only a few hours before the desecrations were as marked as before.

From this final rebellion there was no turning back. Israel had exhausted the divine offers of mercy and pardon, and the resulting total apostasy could only end in total ruin. This terrible outworking was realized in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD. Never again has the temple been rebuilt, despite predictions by various religious groups that it would be. Nowhere in the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy is there a prediction that the

earthly sanctuary would be rebuilt in Jerusalem and serve in the worship of God as did the Old Testament sanctuary.

The Priestly Ministry of Jesus Christ

Instead, throughout the book of *Hebrews* the eyes of God's people are continually directed away from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly one; from the blood of sacrificial animals to the supreme sacrifice of Jesus; which provides for the total and eternal remission of all sin; and from the temporary ministries of a succession of mortal priests, to the One great eternal High Priest the power of whose blood alone can deliver the penitent from destruction.

He is firstly revealed as being one with the Everlasting Father in *Hebrews* 1:1-3, a position for which He became eternally confirmed by His ministry for perishing humanity both before and by His shameful crucifixion.

This qualified Him for the office of the heavenly high priesthood which met every specification of the Melchizedek order as outlined in *Hebrews* 7.

- This is a very much superior priesthood to the one which was sanctified from the house of Levi, and the one which abides eternally.
- This is the sanctuary of the new covenant requiring a new priesthood.
- This is the sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the 2,300 days;

—and is therefore the sanctuary which is the subject of the prophecy of *Daniel* 8. It is the ministry of this institution which enables Christ to bring complete salvation to His people.

Hebrews 7

²² By so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.

²³ Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing.

²⁴ But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.

²⁵ Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶ For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;

²⁷ Who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up himself.

²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.

In His responsible role as our great High Priest, He is able, as stated in the text above, to save to the absolute uttermost those who come to God through Him, and it is through this ministry that the sanctuary in heaven becomes defiled and in need of a thorough cleansing.

Two Apartments – Two Cleansings

We are aware of this because God has provided us with a working model of the heavenly sanctuary. Whatever was performed in the services of the heavenly sanctuary, was faithfully reproduced in the earthly which was but a shadow of the heavenly realities. As there were two apartments in the heavenly sanctuary, so there were two in the sanctuary on earth,⁶⁹ and as surely as there were two cleansings in the sanctuary on earth, so there are two equally distinct cleansings performed in heaven.

That there should be no mistaking these truths. Paul has described the two apartments of the earthly sanctuary, their furnishings, and that there was the daily and yearly services performed in those holy places. Here, first of all, are quoted the verses which describe the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary:

⁶⁹ Anyone of you who is not familiar with the two apartment sanctuary, should study *Exodus* ch. 25-31, and *God's Way in the Sanctuary*.

Hebrews 9

¹ Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary.

² For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary.

Such was the brief description of the furnishings of the holy place which is followed by an equally brief description of the most holy place:

³ And behind the second veil, the furnishings of that part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All,

⁴ Which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant.

As certainly as there were two apartments each with the furnishings peculiar to it, so there were two ministries—those performed on a daily basis, and that which was carried out once a year by the high priest in the second apartment. It must never be forgotten that all this was only symbolic of the real ministry which was performed by Christ who...

¹¹ ...came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.

Day by day, the service of love for which the first apartment was designed was carried forward, while once a year, the special ministry of the second apartment served the blessed purpose for which it was designed as it is written:

Hebrews 9

⁶ Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services.

⁷ But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance.

Despite the power and clarity of the scriptural testimony, there are those who experience difficulty in understanding that there are two apartments in the heavenly sanctuary, even as there are two in the earthly. This condition of ignorance is found to be most deeply entrenched among those who have incorrect understandings as to the nature of the sin-problem. Wherever the one exists, the other is to be found. To solve this problem, they deny that one is the literal counterpart of the other. Instead they impart to it some spiritual quality which robs the services of their soul-saving capacities.

There is no excuse for this. The scriptural evidences are clear, and as if they were not enough, Sister White was given a direct vision by which she was shown these facts with unmistakable clarity. This vital information is recorded in *Early Writings* p. 250-253 from which chapter I will quote the following paragraph:

Early Writings, p. 251-252:

I was then bidden to take notice of the two apartments of the heavenly sanctuary. The curtain, or door, was opened, and I was permitted to enter. In the first apartment I saw the candlestick with seven lamps, the table of shewbread, the altar of incense, and the censer. All the furniture of this apartment looked like purest gold and reflected the image of the one who entered the place. The curtain which separated the two apartments was of different colors and material, with a beautiful border, in which were figures wrought of gold to represent angels. The veil was lifted, and I looked into the second apartment. I saw there an ark which had the appearance of being of the finest gold. As a border around the top of the ark, was most beautiful work representing crowns. In the ark were tables of stone containing the ten commandments.

This truth is again emphasized in the next paragraphs:

Early Writings, p. 252-253:

I was also shown a sanctuary upon the earth containing two apartments. It resembled the one in heaven, and I was told that it was a figure of the heavenly. The furniture of the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary was like that in the first apartment of the heavenly. The veil was lifted, and I looked into the

holy of holies and saw that the furniture was the same as in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. The priest ministered in both apartments of the earthly. He went daily into the first apartment, but entered the most holy only once a year, to cleanse it from the sins which had been conveyed there.

I saw that Jesus ministered in both apartments of the heavenly sanctuary. The priests entered into the earthly with the blood of an animal as an offering for sin. Christ entered into the heavenly sanctuary by the offering of His own blood. The earthly priests were removed by death; therefore they could not continue long; but Jesus was a priest forever. Through the sacrifices and offerings brought to the earthly sanctuary, the children of Israel were to lay hold of the merits of a Saviour to come. And in the wisdom of God the particulars of this work were given us that we might, by looking to them, understand the work of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary.

What is Cleansed?

The work commissioned for execution in both apartments in each of the earthly and the heavenly sanctuaries is a work of cleansing from sinfulness. It was such symbolically while the earthly tabernacle was still standing, but it is actually true in respect to the ministry of the heavenly sanctuary.

But this raises a question, the answer to which to many minds is quite unthinkable. If the sanctuary in heaven is to be cleansed, it must first have become unclean. But how can this be? No sinners walk in the heavenly courts above and only holy angels inhabit its abodes. Yet the scriptures plainly state that the heavenly places in the temple of God are to be cleansed, and this as we know is a literal cleansing of literal uncleanness. Here is the confirmation of this:

The Great Controversy, p. 417:

But the most important question remains to be answered: What is the cleansing of the sanctuary? That there was such a service in connection with the earthly sanctuary is stated in the Old Testament Scriptures. But can there be anything in heaven to be cleansed? In *Hebrews 9* the cleansing of both the earthly and the heavenly sanctuary is plainly taught.

Hebrews 9

²² Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

²³ It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these [the blood of animals]; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these,

—even the precious blood of Christ.

This statement confirms that there is uncleanness in heaven which must be cleansed of it, but does not reveal how heaven came to contain uncleanness, nor how the needed purification would be accomplished.

Let us then begin our study of these questions by noting that sin is much more than the committing of it, or the guilt of it, or even the record of it. If these were all the defilement of which the sanctuary in heaven is to be cleansed, it could be achieved by the obliteration from God's memory of the record and the guilt of it. There would be no need for the disposal of the sin itself.

But sin is an entity, a living force, a cancer which must be disposed of in such a way that it can never be found anywhere in God's universe where sinless perfection alone will be found. Every time that one of God's true children commits sin and in genuine contrition comes to receive pardon and cleansing, his sinfulness is literally transferred as an evil life force from the heart of the sinner to the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven. This is made unmistakably clear in the following paragraph:

The Great Controversy, p. 418:

The ministration of the earthly sanctuary consisted of two divisions; the priests ministered daily in the holy place, while once a year the high priest performed a special work of atonement in the most holy, for the cleansing of the sanctuary. Day by day the repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle and, placing his hand upon the victim's head, confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the innocent sacrifice. The animal was then slain.

Hebrews 9

²² Without shedding of blood, [says the apostle,] there is no remission of sin.

Leviticus 17

¹¹ The life of the flesh is in the blood.

The broken law of God demanded the life of the transgressor. The blood, representing the forfeited life of the sinner, whose guilt the victim bore, was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred in figure to the sanctuary. In some cases the blood was not taken into the holy place; but the flesh was then to be eaten by the priest, as Moses directed the sons of Aaron, saying:

Leviticus 10

¹⁷ God has given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation.

Both ceremonies alike symbolized the transfer of the sin from the penitent to the sanctuary.

The key to the understanding of the message contained in this paragraph is found in the sentence:

“The blood, representing the forfeited life of the sinner...”

This means that when his sin is transferred to and defiles the sanctuary, it is not merely the guilt and the record of it which are transferred, but the very sinfulness itself which is deposited in the sanctuary in heaven. Wherever it is found and whatever it comes in contact with, it defiles, and necessitates a cleansing be made.

“The broken law of God demanded the life of the transgressor,”

—and what it demanded, it will have. By the transfer of sin from the sinner to the first apartment, the transgressor was cleansed, but the sanctuary in heaven was defiled: the cleansing of the one was the defilement of the other. The cleansing was provided on a daily, or continual basis, so that no repentant sinner need be lost. This was made possible by the application of the blood of Jesus so that His life made full atonement for all repentant sinners.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 63:

The Son of God, heaven's glorious Commander, was touched with pity for the fallen race. His heart was moved with infinite compassion as the woes of the lost world rose up before Him. But divine love had conceived a plan whereby man might be redeemed. The broken law of God demanded the life of the sinner. In all the universe there was but one who could, in behalf of man, satisfy its claims. Since the divine law is as sacred as God himself, only one equal with God could make atonement for its transgression. None but Christ could redeem fallen man from the curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven. Christ would take upon himself the guilt and shame of sin—sin so offensive to a holy God that it must separate the Father and His Son. Christ would reach to the depths of misery to rescue the ruined race.

The Daily

Having identified which sanctuary is to be cleansed and when, we will direct our attention to such expressions as:

Daniel 8

¹¹ ...the daily sacrifice,...place of His sanctuary,

¹⁰ ...the host, and...the stars.

The word, “sacrifice,” as it appears in *Daniel 8*, is a word added by the translators, and does not appear in the original text. Concluding that the word, “sacrifice,” was understood as being there, they added it, but in doing so they made a significant mistake as confirmed by the following statement:

Early Writings, p. 74-75:

Then I saw in relation to the “daily” (*Daniel 8:12*) that the word “sacrifice” was supplied by man’s wisdom, and does not belong to the text, and that the Lord gave the correct view of it to those who gave the judgment hour cry. When union existed, before 1844, nearly all were united on the correct view of the “daily;” but in the confusion since 1844, other views have been embraced, and darkness and confusion have followed. Time has not been a test since 1844, and it will never again be a test.

A. T. Jones makes the following comments:

In *Daniel* 8:11-13; 11:31; and 12:11, it will be noticed that the word *sacrifice* is in every case supplied. And it is wholly supplied, for in its place in the original there is no word at all. In the original the only word that stands in this place is the word *tamid*, that is here translated *daily*. And in these places the expression “daily” does not refer to the daily sacrifice any more than it refers to the whole daily ministry or continual service of the sanctuary, of which the sacrifice was only a part. The word *tamid* in itself signifies *continuous or continual, constant, stable, sure, constantly, evermore*. Only such words as these express the thought of the original word, which, in the text under consideration, is translated *daily*. In *Numbers* 28 and 29 alone, the word is used seventeen times, referring to the continual service in the sanctuary.

And it is this continual service of Christ, the true High Priest, “who continues ever,” and “who is consecrated forevermore” in “an unchangeable priesthood”—it is this continual service of our great High Priest, which the man of sin, the Papacy, has taken away. It is the sanctuary and the true tabernacle in which this true High Priest exercises His continual ministry that has been cast down by “the transgression of desolation.” It is this ministry and this sanctuary that the “man of sin” has taken away from the church and shut away from the world and has cast down to the ground and stamped upon and in place of which it has set up itself “the abomination that makes desolate.” What the former Rome did physically to the visible or earthly sanctuary, which was “the figure of the true” (*Daniel* 9:26-27; *Matthew* 24:15), that the latter Rome has done spiritually to the invisible or heavenly sanctuary that is in itself the true. *Daniel* 11:31; 12:11; 8:11, 13.⁷⁰

So it is then that we show no further interest in the meaning of the word “sacrifice,” in this context. Instead, our attention will be directed to the “daily.”

Discovering what the daily is, requires that we simply identify the context in which it is located within the prophecy. Looking at the details of the prophecy shows that it is among those who are under attack from the little horn power, and therefore is in some way or the other, connected with the people of the eternal God. It

⁷⁰ *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection* by A. T. Jones, p. 99-100.

will be found that from them, the daily was taken away, as in fact it was.

This was the result of the casting down of the place of His sanctuary. The rightful place of Christ's sanctuary is in heaven as is so emphatically testified throughout *The Letter of Paul to the Hebrews*. But, when the light of the first angel began to illuminate the minds of men, it found them erroneously teaching that this earth was the counterpart of the Old Testament sanctuary, and that therefore the cleansing of this earth by fire would fulfill the prophecy,

Daniel 8

¹⁴ For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.

The Great Controversy, p. 352:

In explaining *Daniel* 8:14, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed," Miller, as has been stated, adopted the generally received view that the earth is the sanctuary, and he believed that the cleansing of the sanctuary represented the purification of the earth by fire at the coming of the Lord. When, therefore, he found that the close of the 2300 days was definitely foretold, he concluded that this revealed the time of the second advent. His error resulted from accepting the popular view as to what constitutes the sanctuary.

The "generally received view" was an erroneous legacy inherited from errors which prevailed during the dark ages. As the power symbolized by the little horn of *Daniel* 8 isolated the people from all other views apart from her own, she was therefore the author of all such errors by which the spiritually needy were deprived of the light they needed so much. The papacy, by declaring that the churches on the earth were the only temples which are the antitype of the Old Testament sanctuary, very effectively cast down the place of Christ's sanctuary from heaven to this earth. Thus she was guilty of cutting the children of God off from the light and truth by which alone true deliverance can be achieved.

Now, where the sanctuary is to be found, there is also to be found the daily. By casting down the place of Christ's sanctuary from the heaven to this earth, she has robbed those who would be believers in Jesus of the daily ministries of their Priest and Saviour, and thus she makes herself to be the antichrist.

Even up until the time of the writing of these studies on the books of *Daniel* and the *Revelation*, the gospel as taught by so many is so depleted of its omnipotence, that it is no longer the living power of God unto salvation from sinfulness, disease, and death.

For most of the world's inhabitants, the place of Christ's sanctuary is cast down from heaven to this earth, and, in consequence, the daily has been taken away from them, and has left them without access to salvation. The need to restore the sanctuary and the daily to their rightful ministries is nothing short of desperate; a work, which I am glad to know, will be fully accomplished under the falling of the latter rain. Then, every man, woman, and child will each be provided with the unlimited opportunity of finding salvation through Christ's power as our eternal Priest.

45. When the Transgressors Come to the Full

Unpublished Article

Daniel 8:23-27

IN OUR last chapter, we found that the power symbolized by the little horn made attacks upon the sanctuary designed to destroy its value as a means whereby salvation is made available to all mankind.

In this chapter we will examine further evidences designed to unmask both the character and work of this great enemy of God and His beloved people. Our basic reference will be *Daniel* 8:23-27, which reads as follows:

Daniel 8

²³ And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes.

²⁴ His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; he shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people.

²⁵ Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without human means.

²⁶ And the vision of the evenings and mornings which was told is true; therefore seal up the vision, for it refers to many days in the future.

²⁷ And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.

This section of the prophecy begins with a description of a time in history which was so evil, so terminally corrupt, and so unrestrained in wickedness that it could be used as a historical waymark. A king having fierce features would arise when the transgressors have reached their fullness.

This must not be taken to mean that wherever wickedness should reach its height in some localized area, such as Sodom and Gomorrah, that this king would arise; but rather that, throughout

the world generally, evil would have developed to the place where it could truthfully be declared that the transgressors have reached their fullness. Then this king would arise to rule a world in which there were no longer any evils remaining in which men had not indulged; no other cruelties by which they could have oppressed their neighbors; no worse hatred by which they could have persecuted the remaining faithful ones; no greater defiance of divine laws; and there was no worse spirit of seething rebellion against heaven than theirs.

Three Worldwide Developments

By the time Christ returns there will have been just three world-wide developments of the forces of darkness and evil to the point where it can truthfully be said that the transgressors had reached their fullness:

1. The flood in Noah's day;
2. The first advent of Jesus, and
3. The time leading up to our Saviour's second coming.

There will be one more time as well, when the wicked are raised at the close of the millennium, and Satan by his mightiest sermons of all time, fans the evil in the unsaved hearts of the eternally lost to a fever pitch: then for the very last time, the transgressors will have come to the full.

The question before us in *Daniel 8* is,

“To which of these occasions is the angel Gabriel referring, and who is the evil king who would arise at this time?”

It could not be referring to the time of the flood, for that was already past history while the angel spoke of future events. If the time of the flood was the subject of this prophecy, the scriptures would have used the past tense:

“...when the transgressors *came* to the full, a king having fierce features arose.”

At Christ's First Coming

This limits the possibilities to either the first or the second coming of Jesus, for it is written that when He came the first time, the transgressors had truly reached their height. The Jewish people to whom God had entrusted the responsibility and the privilege of bringing the light of truth to the perishing in order to restore the lost image of God in man, became Satan's chief agents in the work of deception and ruin.

The Desire of Ages, p. 36-37:

The people whom God had called to be the pillar and ground of the truth had become representatives of Satan. They were doing the work that he desired them to do, taking a course to misrepresent the character of God, and cause the world to look upon Him as a tyrant. The very priests who ministered in the temple had lost sight of the significance of the service they performed. They had ceased to look beyond the symbol to the thing signified. In presenting the sacrificial offerings they were as actors in a play. The ordinances which God himself had appointed were made the means of blinding the mind and hardening the heart. God could do no more for man through these channels. The whole system must be swept away.

The deception of sin had reached its height. All the agencies for depraving the souls of men had been put in operation. The Son of God, looking upon the world, beheld suffering and misery. With pity He saw how men had become victims of satanic cruelty. He looked with compassion upon those who were being corrupted, murdered, and lost. They had chosen a ruler who chained them to his car as captives. Bewildered and deceived, they were moving on in gloomy procession toward eternal ruin,—to death in which is no hope of life, toward night to which comes no morning.

Satanic agencies were incorporated with men. The bodies of human beings, made for the dwelling place of God, had become the habitation of demons. The senses, the nerves, the passions, the organs of men, were worked by supernatural agencies in the indulgence of the vilest lust. The very stamp of demons was impressed upon the countenances of men. Human faces reflected the expression of the legions of evil with which they were pos-

sessed. Such was the prospect upon which the world's Redeemer looked. What a spectacle for Infinite Purity to behold!

Sin had become a science, and vice was consecrated as a part of religion. Rebellion had struck its roots deep into the heart, and the hostility of man was most violent against heaven. It was demonstrated before the universe that, apart from God, humanity could not be uplifted. A new element of life and power must be imparted by Him who made the world.

The coming of Christ at the time when sin had reached its height was not according to an arbitrary decision. God did not choose the date which happened to suit Him. Instead, the time appointed was chosen with great precision, for it was...

Galatians 4

⁴ ...when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

⁵ To redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

The fullness of time could not arrive until the iniquity of the human race had truly reached its height, a point of time whose location had to be calculated in advance with infallible accuracy. The plan of salvation was designed, not only to save sinners by forgiving their iniquities and advancing to them the gift of a new life, but also to obliterate every trace of evil from existence forever.

Therefore, it must be developed or matured until its iniquitous character has been exposed to the ultimate degree. There must remain no hidden elements only waiting for the opportunity to spring forth in a fresh contamination of wickedness. This can never be permitted, and were the plan of salvation unable to achieve such an immaculate victory, but instead, came short of it in the least degree, it would have to be classified as a complete failure.

With praises to God, we have this confidence that the plan of redemption in the hands of our great administrator of it, Jesus Christ, will prove to be more than adequate to meet the crises which will be leveled against it, and Him. But, if Christ had come

prematurely, that is, before the transgressors had come to the fullness of their bitter revolt against righteousness and its Author, what would that mean?

It would signify that God lacked the ability to predict the future with infallible accuracy, which in turn meant He would fall short of filling the role of being the absolutely, perfectly, flawless Problem-solver. Inaccurate data will always result in faulty conclusions being drawn which, in turn, would cause the problem-solver to make wrong decisions and would mean that sinfulness would always be able to survive even though at first only to a minor extent.

But, because error is prone to grow, so the problem would become greater and greater, forever destroying the peace and harmony of Paradise to an ever increasing extent. No! Jesus had to wait until the fullness of the time had arrived and the transgressors had come to the full. And wait He did! While men waited impatiently, if they waited at all, He waited with infinite patience until the fullness of the time had at last arrived.

Here, in the following paragraph is revealed a calming, encouraging revelation of God's character. The statement is first made that God's purposes know no haste and no delay, followed by the example of the absolute accuracy of the prophecy made to Abraham that in four hundred years, they would leave Egypt—forever. In exactly four hundred years they did, not just at any random time in the year, nor within a month, nor a week of the prophesied date, but on the very day. So we read:

The Desire of Ages, p. 32:

But like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God's purposes know no haste and no delay. Through the symbols of the great darkness and the smoking furnace, God had revealed to Abraham the bondage of Israel in Egypt, and had declared that the time of their sojourning should be four hundred years.

Genesis 15

¹⁴ Afterward, [He said,] shall they come out with great substance.

Against that word, all the power of Pharaoh's proud empire battled in vain. On "the self-same day" appointed in the divine promise,

Exodus 12

⁴¹ ...it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.

So in heaven's council the hour for the coming of Christ had been determined. When the great clock of time pointed to that hour, Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

To be able to see the end from the beginning requires computing power to the infinite degree and only an Omniscient God is in the complete possession of such capacities. But our Lord Jehovah is so equipped. As He demonstrated in His rescue of the Israelites from Egyptian servitude, He is able to predict the exact day four hundred years in advance, just when the event would take place and make His precise plans accordingly. In the implementation of those plans there would be seeming, but never actual delays.

Such revelations of His capacities must have filled the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds with great admiration for God's abilities to solve whatever problem might be placed before Him.

This does not mean that every problem was solved to the entire satisfaction of the dwellers throughout the universe as speedily as the solution was laid out before them. Through the application of the plan of salvation, the sin-problem will be totally and eternally obliterated from the universe. But there will still be heights and depths to be explored and understood which eternity itself will never exhaust. Living righteously will eternally be what it has always been—a matter of trusting God in the unknown because of what we have seen of Him in the known.

Education, p. 308:

For what was the great controversy permitted to continue throughout the ages? Why was it that Satan's existence was not cut short at the outset of his rebellion? It was that the universe might be convinced of God's justice in His dealing with evil; that sin might receive eternal condemnation. In the plan of redemp-

tion there are heights and depths that eternity itself can never exhaust, marvels into which the angels desire to look.

Surprising as it may be to us to learn that the mightiest of the shining angels experienced difficulties in truly understanding the character of God on the one hand, and of our subtle foe on the other. In His infallible word, He has plainly revealed that the mighty angels could not fully understand God's handling of the situation. So horrifying to them were the disgusting practices of the seething corruption that they literally expected the Omnipotent One to arise in wrath and solve the entire problem by sweeping this sin-cursed earth and its guilty inhabitants into oblivion as it is written:

The Desire of Ages, p. 37:

With intense interest the unfallen worlds had watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth. And if God should do this, Satan was ready to carry out his plan for securing to himself the allegiance of heavenly beings. He had declared that the principles of God's government make forgiveness impossible. Had the world been destroyed, he would have claimed that his accusations were proved true. He was ready to cast blame upon God, and to spread his rebellion to the worlds above.

But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son to save it. Though corruption and defiance might be seen in every part of the alien province, a way for its recovery was provided. At the very crisis, when Satan seemed about to triumph, the Son of God came with the embassy of divine grace.

Through every age, through every hour, the love of God had been exercised toward the fallen race. Notwithstanding the perversity of men, the signals of mercy had been continually exhibited. And when the fullness of the time had come, the Deity was glorified by pouring upon the world a flood of healing grace that was never to be obstructed or withdrawn till the plan of salvation should be fulfilled.

This statement provides us with evidence that the angels, while they appeared to have understood something of the justice and holiness of God, had not grasped a true understanding of the na-

ture of the issues involved in the great controversy. They did not see for themselves that Christ had to wait until the fullness of the time had come, that is, until the transgressors had come to the full, before He could come to this earth as the redemptive sacrifice.

His arrival here in human flesh and blood was a step which demonstrated that as surely as the transgressors had come to the full, so it was that in Christ, righteousness had likewise come to the full in a sin-cursed, mortal flesh and blood body. They needed to see that this was necessary so that righteousness at its radiant best could be compared with iniquity at its ugly worst. The grand meeting place where these two mighty forces collided was at the cross where Christ drew forth from within the great enemy, every weapon upon which he could call in his desperate determination to destroy the plan of salvation.

But Christ our Saviour was pre-eminently successful in achieving the objectives of that battle. Satan, after exhausting each deceptive power which had been so effective in developing the transgression to the full in the first case, was then compelled to cast aside his disguise so completely that the angels were able to discern the true nature of the devil's charges and claims against God's government. The transgressors had truly come to the full. It was a victory which was achieved as it only could be by the employment of the weapons of truth and love.

Revelation 19

¹¹ Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and *in righteousness* He judges and makes war.

The Desire of Ages, p. 759:

God's government is moral, and *truth and love* are to be the prevailing power.

The Desire of Ages, p. 761:

Could one sin have been found in Christ, had He in one particular yielded to Satan to escape the terrible torture, the enemy of

God and man would have triumphed. Christ bowed His head and died, but He held fast His faith and His submission to God.

Revelation 12

¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken.

Not only had the transgressors come to the full, but it was also seen by the holy angels that they had reached the condition of total, unrestrained rebellion, for which there is no cure.

At the Second Advent

Yet, while this tearing away of Satan's mask exposed him naked and defenseless as a wolf divested of his sheep's clothing, the great controversy was not then terminated. There were certain revelations of truth which remained unclear even to the angels even though the transgressors had come to the full.

The Desire of Ages, p. 761:

Yet Satan was not then destroyed. The angels did not even then understand all that was involved in the great controversy. The principles at stake were to be more fully revealed. And for the sake of man, Satan's existence must be continued. Man as well as angels must see the contrast between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness. He must choose whom he will serve.

Men have not as yet been able to see behind the mask. The scales are still over their eyes. It is one thing for the transgressors to come to the full; they must also be seen to have arrived at that fearful pitch of incurable iniquity. This has not been achieved

even as yet so far as men are concerned, and so we look to one more occasion when the transgressors will come to the full—namely at the second advent of the Saviour when wickedness will again be as it was in the time of the flood and in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 414-415:

The coming of the bridegroom was at midnight—the darkest hour. So the coming of Christ will take place in the darkest period of this earth's history. The days of Noah and Lot pictured the condition of the world just before the coming of the Son of man. The Scriptures pointing forward to this time declare that Satan will work...

2 Thessalonians 2

⁹ ...with all power...

¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.

His working is plainly revealed by the rapidly increasing darkness, the multitudinous errors, heresies, and delusions of these last days. Not only is Satan leading the world captive, but his deceptions are leavening the professed churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. The great apostasy will develop into darkness deep as midnight, impenetrable as sackcloth of hair. To God's people it will be a night of trial, a night of weeping, a night of persecution for the truth's sake. But out of that night of darkness God's light will shine.

A more terrible picture of total apostasy could not be painted. Note those words once more:

The great apostasy will develop into darkness deep as midnight, impenetrable as sackcloth of hair.

For the last time the transgressors will have come to the full, and by the faithful ministry of Jesus and of the Holy Spirit through the one hundred and forty-four thousand down on this earth, the transgressors will not only have come to the full, but will confess that they see the depths of iniquity to which they have descended. Their fullness of iniquity will be seen for what it actually is both by the spotless inhabitants of the unfallen worlds, but by both the righteous and the wicked on this earth below. In

that fearful hour, the wicked will stand utterly self-condemned, while God and all who are His, will stand totally vindicated.

The Great Controversy, p. 655-656:

The people see that they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping their bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who would keep it holy. Now, in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception.

The multitudes are filled with fury. "We are lost!" they cry, "and you are the cause of our ruin;" and they turn upon the false shepherds. The very ones that once admired them most will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them. The very hands that once crowned them with laurels will be raised for their destruction. The swords which were to slay God's people are now employed to destroy their enemies. Everywhere there is strife and bloodshed.

By these conclusive events, the reason for God's permitting the great controversy to continue for so long, will be fully seen by all. There will be no need for God to vindicate himself, for the outworking of the spirit and deeds of the transgressors will do the work of proving that unrighteousness is self-destruction. On the other hand, God will be fully revealed as the Author of peace. Then it will be proven that:

Isaiah 32

¹⁷ The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance forever.

46. The King with Fierce Features

Unpublished Article

Daniel 8:23-25

IN *DANIEL* 8, a highly significant development is prophesied to occur at the time that the transgressors came to the full—a great and terrible king was to arise who would dedicate himself to the awful, horrible, and dreadful task of obliterating God’s people from the face of the earth, if that were possible. He would be a totally unscrupulous potentate, whose unprincipled methods of destroying would be most marked in his attacks upon the holy people and even more so upon the Prince of the host, the Saviour himself.

The care taken by the Revealer of future events to disclose the awful truth about this great and terrible usurper, warns us that this powerful king is not to be taken lightly, for, eventually, he will have the great forces of the entire world at his command in opposition to God and His people.

It would not be by his own might that he would be able to rule all nations, but by the accumulation of forces contributed by others. At their expense, he would become empowered to gather to himself the power and riches of the globe, which, with great skill and cunning he would manipulate to serve his unholy purposes. He would be identified as the great liar who deceives the entire world. Thus he is recognized in the *Revelation*:

Revelation 12

⁹ So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Identifying the Little Horn

Most of the details of the prophecy of *Daniel* 8:1-14, as it was in *Daniel* 7, are devoted to describing the character, objectives, and work of this little horn power. In addition, the description is expressed in language which is very straightforward and such as we would expect to see used in sounding a solemn and urgent warn-

ing. The inescapable conclusion to be drawn from the presence and tone of this prophecy is that it will be very clearly understood by God's people everywhere. And that is the truth especially when this prophecy is linked with its companion prophecy of *Revelation 14*.

With this sense of urgency driving us onward, we will not rest satisfied until we understand who this king is, and how to identify him when we encounter him. Our first endeavor is to identify him, and to locate him where he is to be found in the past, and then discover where and how he is to appear in the future, for he occupies both positions. The latter of the two will be his re-occupation of the lost dominion of the first.

Firstly then, let us catch him where the mighty angel, Gabriel, points to him entering the great spiritual battlefield on which the struggle between light and darkness continues. Of course, his original entry was when rebellion first appeared, in heaven, but we are looking for the specific time when the power represented by the little horn would arise. This would take place, as we are informed, toward the latter end of the four kingdoms into which the Grecian kingdom had become divided. Their doing so fulfilled these words of the prophecy:

Daniel 8

²³ And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes.

The question is:

“What king so great and terrible is described here, who trampled God's people in the dust, and stood up against the Prince of princes?”

The answer is that it could only be Rome, firstly in her pagan form, secondly in her papal form, and in turn, by the most terrible manifestation of all, in the coming healing of the deadly wound, the resetting of the beast, and the universal establishment of

the image of the beast. This locates us today between the two manifestations of the beast and his image.

Her Rise and Fall

There, in the past, is the very long dominion of the midnight darkness imposed on the world by the man of sin, the papacy, which was broken up by the mighty impact of the gospel of Jesus Christ during the Protestant Reformation. So effective was the counter-attack by the agencies of light and truth, that the papacy vanished from sight for a time, and it was correctly seen that she had received a mortal wound as in *Revelation 13*, it was prophesied that she would.

But, from the deadly wound, exactly as predicted, the man of sin is being revived and will be healed.

Revelation 13

³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound will be totally healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

But, what has been in the past, is to recur in the future.

The Great Controversy, p. 343:

The work of God in the earth presents, from age to age, a striking similarity in every great reformation or religious movement. The principles of God's dealing with men are ever the same. The important movements of the present have their parallel in those of the past, and the experience of the church in former ages has lessons of great value for our own time.

For one time more, the little horn power will become so strong that she will rule the entire world and no man will dare to make war with her. But, once more, she will suffer a deadly, or mortal wound, and this time there shall be no recovery, no healing whatsoever. There can be no mistaking either the finality, or the totality of Babylon's ultimate fall. For her it will be the end.

Revelation 18

²¹ Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.

²² The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore.

²³ The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.

²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.

Thus, by studying the way in which the king with the fierce features rose to power and fell away again, we are given the opportunity to learn what is so soon to come upon an unsuspecting, unprotected world. We are *not* to feel:

- that there is no point in studying the rise of Babylon to power;
- that we need not become conversant with the character of the man of sin; and
- that we do not require the ability to identify this great enemy of His people.

Facing, as we do, the greatest test ever to be imposed on any human being, apart from that successfully endured by our Saviour, we need every possible advantage available to us, in order to assure us of the ultimate victory. If God took the trouble to reveal these things, He certainly did so because He understood how essential such knowledge is, in order to assure every believer in His Son that Babylon will fall, never to rise again.

In the light of these considerations, how much more earnestly and immediately should we concentrate our efforts on acquiring the knowledge provided for our learning and instruction. As was Daniel, so we are to have understanding...

Daniel 1

¹⁷ ...in all visions and dreams.

We are to become the people who know and can accurately teach the gospel as it is contained in the prophecies. We must be able to expose the man of sin without fear or favor.

The Weapons of Deceit and Force

That which makes this responsibility a difficult one to perform is that the antichrist is not limited to any weapons whatsoever. He has no scruples and is utterly merciless. Therefore he is free to lie, steal, murder, extort, misrepresent, torture, deceive, and so forth. Furthermore, he is fully disposed to use any or all of these weapons, as he actually does.

Marvelous are the skills developed through what are now close to six thousand years of the most relentless practice by which he is preparing himself for what he knows is coming. It is clear to him that, having lost all of the battles of the past, he is facing up to the last great decider, the one which will settle every question of truth and error forever.

The Great Controversy, 1888 Edition, Author's Preface:

The great controversy between good and evil will increase in intensity to the very close of time. In all ages the wrath of Satan has been manifested against the church of Christ; and God has bestowed His grace and Spirit upon His people to strengthen them to stand against the power of the evil one. When the apostles of Christ were to bear His gospel to the world and to record it for all future ages, they were especially endowed with the enlightenment of the Spirit. But as the church approaches her final deliverance, Satan is to work with greater power. He comes down,

Revelation 12

¹² ...having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time.

He will work...

2 Thessalonians 2

⁹ ...with all power and signs and lying wonders.

For six thousand years that master-mind that once was highest among the angels of God, has been wholly bent to the work of deception and ruin. And all the depths of Satanic skill and

subtlety acquired, all the cruelty developed, during these struggles of the ages, will be brought to bear against God's people in the final conflict. And in this time of peril the followers of Christ are to bear to the world the warning of the Lord's second advent; and a people are to be prepared to stand before him at His coming,

2 Peter 3

¹⁴ ...without spot, and blameless.

At this time the special endowment of divine grace and power is not less needful to the church than in apostolic days.

Strange as it may be, these great religious destroying powers believe that they are serving God when they leave no weapon unused in these struggles of the ages. They know just how to twist the truth so as to make it appear to be the grossest error, while giving error the appearance of truth.

Not everyone who falls into this category is aware of the real nature of the policies he is following. There are those who are honestly deceived, and these will have the light of truth laid out before them in such clear lines, that they will have no excuse for walking in darkness any longer. Reference to the sad deception in which the Laodiceans are locked, confirms that this situation prevails to a considerable extent.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 252-253:

What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right when they are all wrong! The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception. They know not that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God. While those addressed are flattering themselves that they are in an exalted spiritual condition, the message of the True Witness breaks their security by the startling denunciation of their true condition of spiritual blindness, poverty, and wretchedness. The testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake, for it is the True Witness who speaks, and His testimony must be correct.

But, by far the more dangerous of our foes in the final conflict will be those individuals who are determined to establish their wills no matter what the cost to others might be. They are actu-

ated by the spirit of their master the devil. Having adopted a religious guise, they go forth devouring the entire world. Woe to those who are unable to identify the wolf in the sheep's clothing when the great final test shall be brought to bear upon mankind.

Not everyone will adopt the weapons of cunning and deceit, but will defiantly repudiate the divine principles without resorting to any form of disguise. Such indeed will be the policies of the King of the South who, without pretense, makes...

The Great Controversy, p. 269:

...open, avowed war upon the word of God.

In this attitude, we see exhibited the bold defiance of Atheism against the Lord. However, in the end these too will have surrendered their ways in favor of the king with fierce features, which will be the papacy, the overruling power which is the subject of this prophecy.

By the time this king having fierce features achieves world dominion for the last time, the King of the South and his unsuccessful way of achieving world dominion will have ceased from following his own methods of gaining the predominance. His power will be handed over to support the King of the North, of whom we shall learn much more from the closing verses on *Daniel* 11.

This is not to say that the king with the fierce features totally excludes his use of the weapons of coercion for this would not be true. The threatened use of force is always there, but it is drawn on only as a last resort when used by Babylon as the following statement declares:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 976:

Trial and persecution will come to all who, in obedience to the Word of God, refuse to worship this false sabbath. Force is the last resort of every false religion. At first it tries attraction, as the king of Babylon tried the power of music and outward show. If these attractions, invented by men inspired by Satan, failed to make men worship the image, the hungry flames of the furnace were ready to consume them. So it will be now. The papacy has exercised her power to compel men to obey her, and she will con-

tinue to do so. We need the same spirit that was manifested by God's servants in the conflict with paganism (ST May 6, 1897).

This means that one difference existing between the King of the North, and that of the South, is that while the former pretends loyalty to God, and zeal for the cause of the Almighty, the latter, casting aside all pretense and openly ridiculing religion, use force as their first and only means of warring against the truth of God.

When therefore, in the period during which the King of the South shall, with all the other great powers of the earth, have fully yielded to the sovereignty of the King with the fierce features, they will surely have become converted to his way of kingdom-building. That way includes the use of deception at first, and, only when that fails, to resort to the weapons of coercion. To have established his image, and to have received his mark, can only mean that he, and all those who will support her, will wage war exactly as this prophecy foretold that he would:

Daniel 8

²⁵ Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper in his hand.

At this point we would do well to consider an important question, which is:

“How does it come about that these vast hordes of people who are assembling for the final battle of the ages against Him who goes to war only in righteousness, do not realize that their cause is unrighteous when they can establish it only by using deceit and compulsion?”

How was it, for instance, that the religious leaders in the trial and condemnation of John Huss, firstly paraded before the people in their beautiful robes, their behavior patterns seemingly above approach, and their expressions of deepest concern for the spiritual welfare of both the church and the man they were condemning to death?

Then, when he was not won over by their cunning, deceit, and subtle arguments, they took him by force and buried him in a most miserable prison cell, fed him on a very unhealthful diet,

shut him away from sunlight and fresh air, and left him to almost perish from cold during the long winter months.

Surely, no man can treat his fellowmen with such terrible cruelty in order to convert them into loyal citizens of God's kingdom, without being themselves unfit to enter that kingdom. Christians professedly are loving and lovable:

Galatians 5

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.

When our reactions to a situation, are not a manifestation of these characteristics, then the person claiming a Christian experience, has at hand an infallible test whereby he can know whether he is a child of God or not. Yet, to the contrary, men actually look upon this behavior on their part as meriting God's approval and assuring them a place in God's kingdom.

But God's true people will understand that God does not work after this manner. Cunning and compulsion are weapons which will never be seen in God's hands nor in the hands of His people once they have been truly delivered from false ideas in regard to God's true character. All others who live and teach the living word of God especially when the awesome power of the Holy Spirit is mightily present, can expect bitter persecution.

2 Timothy 3

¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 79:

The disciples were not intimidated or cast down by this treatment. The Holy Spirit brought to their minds the words spoken by Christ:

John 15

²⁰ The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

²¹ But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not Him that sent me.

John 16

² They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time comes, that whosoever kills you will think that he does God service.

⁴ These things have I told you, that when the time shall come, you may remember that I told you of them.

The End Justifies the Means

What is the incredible false logic by which they arrive at these un-Christian conclusions? It is all summed up in these few words:

“The end justifies the means!”

This belief does not become the determined conviction immediately a new movement becomes established, but comes as the fruit of long-developed apostasy. A fresh movement, provided it is one called of God as was the great Second Advent Movement, the Apostolic Church, or the Sabbath Rest Advent Church, has no need to resort to the weapons of coercion, for it depends entirely on the power of the Holy Spirit, and the winning power of truth and love.

But, as time passes and the first love wanes and dies, the disposition to compel men to believe and worship becomes more and more pronounced. It is incredible to what lengths men will go as persecutors, torturers, and the like. Pressure will be added to pressure until the victim either surrenders his principles and yields to the will of the persecutors, or nature, passing beyond the limits of endurance, finds merciful deliverance in death.

The living truth is that the end does not justify the means used to achieve the desired result. There will be countless opportunities provided during the loud cry to falsify the living truth of God, and great and pressing demands will be urged upon us to do so. Compromise will become the order of the day as men act from policy instead of from principle.

God's Army Equipped

There will be two great operational procedures in conflict with each other when the man of sin shall have fully recovered from his mortal wounds:

1. One, the perfect and complete expression of righteousness and of the character of the Most High, will confront the other with the weapons of truth and love.
2. The other side in the conflict will be equipped with deception and force.

The results will be so terrible, so violent, so final, that evil will appear in the end so totally unmasked that mankind will see for themselves what the angels saw of Satan when Christ was crucified. To achieve that, the church of God must be as spotless in righteousness as is her divine Head and Leader.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 50:

God has a church on earth who are lifting up the downtrodden law, and presenting to the world the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. The church is the depository of the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ, and through the church eventually will be made manifest the final and full display of the love of God to the world that is to be lightened with its glory. The prayer of Christ that His church may be one as He was one with His Father will finally be answered. The rich dowry of the Holy Spirit will be given, and through its constant supply to the people of God they will become witnesses in the world of the power of God unto salvation.

A depository is a place such as a bank in which items of great value are placed for safekeeping. But no matter how securely they are locked away in earthly strongholds, time after time, expert safe-breakers have proved that most if not all of the security systems can be penetrated. But here is one which cannot be robbed of its treasures.

And what treasures are they which shall be deposited in the church? Nothing less than...

“...the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ.”

To have the grace of Christ credited to our account in the heavenly depository, will be wonder and glory enough specially when it is realized that the church is within the true believer, that is, in

his heart. It is an experience known to him alone who has been truly born again.

To deposit *the grace of Christ* within the believer, is the placing of the life of God within him. That is wonder and glory enough, but the Lord purposes more than that. He makes His church within the believer to be the depository of *the riches of the grace of Christ*. Even that is not enough for the Lord to desire for His church, but He will deposit *the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ*. The total effect of those deposits will be that through the church will be manifest the full and final display of the love of God.

That full and final display of the love of God will be righteousness at its shining, radiant, purest best. This is how the church will be equipped when she finally meets the king with the fierce features, and time will inevitably tarry until the standard of fitness to meet our terrible foe has been attained. Today we are deep into the training period which will produce in us the glory of “the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ.” Heaven is concentrating its resources on this work which will soon be finished, and the final triumph shall be gained.

The Great Controversy, p. 425:

Says the prophet:

Malachi 3

² Who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appears? for He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap:

³ And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary,

there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of *Revelation* 14.

When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing.

Malachi 3

⁴ Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

Then the church which our Lord at His coming is to receive to himself will be a...

Ephesians 5

²⁷ ...glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Then she will look...

Song of Solomon 6

¹⁰ ...forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.

This is God's glorious answer to the man of sin, the king with fierce features, the beast and his image, and all those who shall receive the mark of the beast either in his hand or in his forehead, or both.

47. Special Strengthening

Messenger and News Review, February 1998

Daniel 10:1-19

I HAVE already made the point in a previous chapter that each prophecy in the book of *Daniel* is divided into two parts. Firstly, the vision was revealed in its entirety, after which each symbol was provided with its matching interpretation. Thus there is an interpretation for every part of the vision and its symbols.

In *Daniel* 8, the vision is contained between *Daniel* 8:1-14, and the interpretation of its symbols is given between *Daniel* 8:19-25. The interpretation, however, covers only the first 12 verses of the vision. This means that the final two verses of this vision lack an interpretation—that is the part concerned with the time element of the prophecy,—for good reason as we shall shortly see.

Actually, *Daniel* 8 contains the last prophetic vision recorded in the entire book. None of the succeeding revelations which are communicated to us through this prophet, contain messages in the form of symbols. Each is only an explanation or an interpretation of the symbolic representations already given in chapters 2, 7 and 8. Let us keep this point in mind, for it is quite important in the development of our understanding of the overall message of the book of *Daniel*.

The Effect on Daniel

Gabriel had been instructed to...

Daniel 8

¹⁶ ...make this man understand the vision.

The mighty angel who had been commissioned to present the interpretation to the prophet, immediately complied. The result was only partially successful. Daniel, instead of receiving a complete explanation of the vision, fell into a deep faint after which he was so sick that he was confined to his bed for quite a number of days. He spoke of the effect of the vision upon him in these words:

Daniel 8

²⁷ And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.

Skilled even as he was in the understanding of visions and dreams, Daniel needed clarification of the message contained in what he had so far been shown. Due to his weakness he had not been able to receive the complete explanation, and when a few days later he rose and took up his duties to the king again, he was astonished at the vision and encountered no one who understood it.

But why had he fainted? Why had he become sick for days? The answer is that his fainting and his being prostrated with illness were caused by what he had been shown of the vision and its interpretation so far. Daniel himself attributed his stricken condition to what the vision had revealed to him. He said to his personal instructor:

Daniel 10

¹⁶ And suddenly, one having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength.

We know that Daniel was a very healthy person with a sound mind in a sound body who would have been able to cope successfully with tremendous emotional stress. That this attack on his nervous system had proved capable of plunging him into a deep state of unconsciousness and of causing him to be laid low with sickness for days on end, is a clear indication of how absolutely terrible to his mind must have been the awful revelations of the nature of the prince of darkness, as he was to be exposed when the final victory shall be won. But at what a fearful cost to Christ and His church would the forces of righteousness triumph!

The Spirit of Babylon

Daniel and his three friends lived for one reason—the termination of sin's reign, and the everlasting establishment of the kingdom

of perfect righteousness. Very precious in their sight was the spiritual and general prosperity of the church, and its effectiveness in exposing the true characters of both God and the evil one. Daniel felt no hatred for any person in Babylon, but his whole being was filled with an indescribable loathing of the spirit which was the spring of every action of the man of sin.

During the destruction of Jerusalem, Daniel had seen the spirit of unrestrained fury, hatred, and violence,—the evil passions which brought about the ruin of that beautiful city,—and he had seen the connection between this spirit and the erasure from history of the magnificent temple which had been built during the early part of King Solomon's reign, and dedicated to the worship of the true God and the instruction of Israel.

Daniel and his three friends had already lived through one period during which they had seen the kingdom of Judah ravaged by war, destruction, and bloodshed. They, themselves had then been exiled to Babylon where they were at the time that the beautiful temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. Daniel saw the destruction as being the fruit of the evil Babylonian spirit.

So Daniel knew by personal experience what it meant to be persecuted, despised, exiled, tempted, hated, and parted forever from family and friends. But terrible as all that suffering was, it was but the expression of the evil which is in the man of sin, otherwise known as Babylon, the antichrist, the king with the fierce features, the power symbolized by the little horn, the beast and his image, the King of the North, and other designations. No matter by what name it was identified, or sought to escape being recognized, Daniel hated that iniquity, the sight and sound of which he could not bear.

Yet, he was called upon to receive in vision and then expose the king with the fierce features as he will be in that day when he will finally be revealed at his very worst and when righteousness will be shining forth at its most powerful best.

This revelation of what the king with the fierce features would be, and consequently what he would do, as reported in *Daniel*

8:23-25, was too agonizing for Daniel to bear, with the result that he fainted and was sick for days.

The very definite effect which Daniel experienced may be cause for wonder on our part, until we too come to realize how indescribably repulsive to the pure mind of a true child of God is evil, when it has come to full maturity and is discerned to be what it really is. It will make us just as sick as it did Daniel. The purer the child of God, the greater the effect it will have on him.

Strengthened by the Revelation of Christ

If this is so, then why did he not faint and become ill when the same powerful light later shone on him with even greater force from *Daniel* 11, and why did not John likewise faint and become ill when the powerful portrayals of coming woes on the Christians were given to him on the Isle of Patmos?

There was a definite reason why, at the second attempt, Daniel received the instruction Gabriel had been appointed to give him, without fainting or becoming sick for days. The secret was, that before Gabriel attempted to reintroduce the prophecy from the point where he had been obliged to discontinue the revelation, God had been able to strengthen Daniel so effectively, that the prophet was able to receive the instruction God had designed he should. We are informed in *Daniel* 10 that this strengthening came principally in the form of a special revelation in the person of Christ.

Daniel 10

¹ In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision.

² In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks.

³ I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

⁴ Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris,

⁵ I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz!

⁶ His body was like beryl, His face like the appearance of lightening, His eyes like torches of fire, His arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of His words like the voice of a multitude.

⁷ And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

⁸ Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength.

⁹ Yet I heard the sound of His words; and while I heard the sound of His words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

Let us note the very different reactions of the men who were with him from Daniel himself. The others, to the last man, fled from the divine presence. Daniel alone had the power which enabled him to remain. Even so, he had spent the previous twenty-one days in fasting and most earnest prayer. That developed in him the capacity to stay in the presence of the wonderful Being before whom the remainder ran away. It was Christ in Person who visited Daniel.

The Review and Herald, February 8, 1881:

No less a personage than the Son of God appeared to Daniel. This description is similar to that given by John when Christ was revealed to him upon the Isle of Patmos. Our Lord now comes with another heavenly messenger to teach Daniel what would take place in the latter days. This knowledge was given to Daniel and recorded by Inspiration for us upon whom the ends of the world are come.

At first, his being in Christ's direct presence divested the prophet of his physical strength. He testified that:

Daniel 10

⁸ Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength.

Being stripped of his physical powers was a preparation for the great strengthening he was to receive. While he was in a deep sleep on the ground, a hand touched him which brought him up on his hands and knees. He was then instructed to “stand upright” and to hear the messages that Gabriel was about to bring him.

In obedience to that command, and no doubt by the power in that spoken word, he stood trembling but upright declaring that he could not communicate with his Lord, for he was speechless and divested of all strength. In order to solve this problem,

¹⁸ ...one having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me.

Then followed a most remarkable development. Again, the one with the appearance of a man spoke thus to him:

¹⁹ O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong.

Daniel now found himself so powerfully strengthened that he could face the future and the revelation of it with confidence and without fear. Thus he was able to testify:

¹⁹ So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.

Then follows the much more detailed revelation of light which is recorded in *Daniel* 11 and 12. There are no further symbols in these two chapters, which present only greater details of the prophetic revelations already given in *Daniel* 2, 7, and 8. But the more detailed they are, the more dreadful they must have appeared to be, and therefore, the greater the reaction on Daniel's part.

But once the prophet had received his special strengthening, there were no further problems with the reception of the message. Daniel was able to receive the contents of Chapters 11 and 12 without any more interruptions, and he was also able to stand erect in the presence of Gabriel and of the person of Jesus.

The Effect on John

A similar pattern of cause and effect is seen in the experience of John to whom God gave *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. Like Daniel, John had passed through a powerful spiritual experience. He had been persecuted and immersed in a cauldron of boiling oil, yet he had emerged unscathed from the cruelty of his persecutors as had the three Hebrews who were cast into the fiery furnace. He experienced the fulfillment of the promise:

Isaiah 43

² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you.

From his lonely island home where he was living in exile, John was commissioned to record the great truths embodied in the closing developments of the titanic struggles of the ages. This was the same light that he was directed to bear to the seven churches. Having received the directive to do so, by a voice coming from behind him, John turned to see the Person who was speaking to him, and found it to be...

Revelation 1

¹³ ...One like the Son of Man.

John's reaction on seeing Christ, was the same as Daniel's had been under similar circumstances. John testified,

¹⁷ And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.

As was the case with Daniel, so John too required great strengthening before he could endure the great light which shone upon him. The heavenly Messenger laid His hand on John, as had been done to Daniel, and spoke the word of power to him in the might of which word he had no further difficulty in receiving and recording *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*.

Revelation 1

¹⁷ And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

¹⁸ I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

¹⁹ Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

In unencumbered obedience to that command and in full possession of the fresh endowment of great strength then in his possession, John proceeded to write what he saw and heard. Thus, we who live when the books of *Daniel* and the *Revelation* are most needed, can be assured that these two books are absolutely just what are needed now. And not only now but increasingly so as the issues become more and more fiercely contested and when the storm finally bursts upon the shelterless, unprotected heads of unrepentant, rebellious humanity. Then the Lord will again especially strengthen His messengers on earth.

John's ministry of prophecy in the New Testament was the counterpart of Daniel's ministry of prophecy in the Old Testament. They are parallels, the one of the other. The experiences through which John found himself passing, Daniel also passed through, and we know that those in the last days who...

Revelation 14

¹² ...keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus...

—will find themselves locked, as John and Daniel were, in deadly final conflict with the powers of evil. We know nothing as yet of the anguish we shall suffer when the time comes. It could easily be that some of us will literally faint and be sick for days, so great will be the intensity of this last decisive conflict.

The Sinfulness of Sin

God earnestly desires that we shall, as far as is possible, be blessed with a clear conception of how truly evil and loathsome sin actually is. It is difficult to acquire such an appreciation, espe-

cially for those who have lived in a sinful environment for so long, that they have become familiar with it.

But there is coming a time when, in the light of the message of the fourth angel, sin's mask shall be torn away and its true character shall stand fully exposed for what it is. When that time arrives, the true people of the Lord will truly hate sin because it is the enemy of God and man. Then the following paragraph will be fulfilled:

Prophets and Kings, p. 590:

In the time of the end the people of God will sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. With tears they will warn the wicked of their danger in trampling upon the divine law, and with unutterable sorrow they will humble themselves before the Lord in penitence. The wicked will mock their sorrow and ridicule their solemn appeals. But the anguish and humiliation of God's people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin. It is because they are drawing nearer to Christ, because their eyes are fixed on His perfect purity, that they discern so clearly the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Meekness and lowliness are the conditions of success and victory. A crown of glory awaits those who bow at the foot of the cross.

Note the strength of the language used in this paragraph. In the second sentence it is stated that with "unutterable" sorrow God's people will humble themselves in penitence. Sorrow is an emotion, which must be experienced in order to be understood. There is sorrow for sin, and sorrow for the results of sin. There is sorrow which can be expressed, and there is unutterable sorrow. The latter is the most powerful of them all, for it is a sorrow in the heart of longings so great that they are beyond expression, or description. That is the unutterable sorrow with which we will walk in total humility before our God in penitence for all our sinfulness.

It will be a season of great and terrible anguish which will correspond to the sufferings of Daniel. But it will result in souls saved by a ministry so power-filled that it will belt the entire

earth with the glory of the Lord. That this anguish will do a marvelous work in the hearts of those who will be loyal to God will be seen in the results achieved. In consequence of their need, the people of God will draw nigh to Christ.

Prophets and Kings, p. 590:

It is because they are drawing nearer to Christ, because their eyes are fixed on His perfect purity, that they discern so clearly the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

Being able to discern the exceeding sinfulness of sin, involves the ability on the believer's part to actually penetrate sin's subtle disguises and lay bare its deadly power to deceive and destroy. But it is an exceedingly wicked heart which was opened to Daniel's view and will be opened to view again and which will be too repulsive for the purified mind of a true child of God to look upon with any joy or happiness whatsoever. This is why, when given a prophetic preview of the development of evil in the king with the fierce features, Daniel recoiled with horror from what he saw, fainted, and was stricken with sickness.

Every Ray of Light Needed

In Daniel's day there was more truth revealed than there was understood, but there was also vast areas of prophetic truths which needed to be unfolded then. In John's day, the need was much greater, and, in these last days, it will be the greatest of all. Let none of us suppose that we have almost all of the truth yet to be unfolded, for the earth is yet to be flooded with great light. In 1890, Ellen White wrote that:

Selected Messages, vol. 1, p. 401-402:

The question has been asked me, "Do you think that the Lord has any more light for us as a people?" I answer that He has light that is new to us, and yet it is precious old light that is to shine forth from the Word of truth. We have only the glimmerings of the rays of the light that is yet to come to us. We are not making the most of the light which the Lord has already given us, and thus we fail to receive the increased light; we do not walk in light already shed upon us.

The light to which reference is being made, is the light of present truth, not just truth in general. And this is also the light which is “yet to come,” which is still future. Under the mighty ministry of the fourth angel, the whole earth is to be lightened with awesome power, truth, and love. Heights, depths, lengths, and breadths of the divine character are to be revealed with a glory of which the present light is but the faintest glimmering.

It will be a combination of the darkest apostasy, such as caused Daniel to be faint and be sick, side by side with the full revelation of righteousness at its shining best. While the saints will be crying and sighing for the fearful abominations which are in the land, the wicked will be sinking into the deepest apostasy.

Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 414-415:

The coming of the bridegroom was at midnight—the darkest hour. So the coming of Christ will take place in the darkest period of this earth’s history. The days of Noah and Lot pictured the condition of the world just before the coming of the Son of man. The Scriptures pointing forward to this time declare that Satan will work...

2 Thessalonians 2

⁹ ...with all power...

¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.

His working is plainly revealed by the rapidly increasing darkness, the multitudinous errors, heresies, and delusions of these last days. Not only is Satan leading the world captive, but his deceptions are leavening the professed churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. The great apostasy will develop into darkness deep as midnight, impenetrable as sackcloth of hair. To God’s people it will be a night of trial, a night of weeping, a night of persecution for the truth’s sake. But out of that night of darkness God’s light will shine.

The people of the Lord who will carry the light of the fourth angel’s message to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, must be charged with power equal to the sheer magnitude of the task appointed them. When we consider what it will cost for so few to warn so many, we can begin to assess the enormity of the task before us. But, as with Daniel, the Lord spoke the living word

of power, and the task was no longer a formidable obstacle to its accomplishment.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 984:

As the members of the body of Christ approach the period of their last conflict, “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” they will grow up into Christ, and will partake largely of His Spirit. As the third message swells to a loud cry, and as great power and glory attend the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble. Their faces will shine with the glory of that light which attends the third angel.

Without the outpouring of the latter rain, there can be no successful preparation for either the carrying of the light of the gospel to warn a perishing world, or of being strengthened and prepared to successfully pass through the time of Jacob’s trouble. It will be an experience unsurpassed by any people prior to this time, as it is written:

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 16:

Satan is a diligent Bible student. He knows that his time is short, and he seeks at every point to counterwork the work of the Lord upon this earth. It is impossible to give any idea of the experience of the people of God who shall be alive upon the earth when celestial glory and a repetition of the persecutions of the past are blended. They will walk in the light proceeding from the throne of God. By means of the angels there will be constant communication between heaven and earth. And Satan, surrounded by evil angels, and claiming to be God, will work miracles of all kinds, to deceive, if possible, the very elect.

Both Daniel and John demonstrated that our present resources include very little capacity for driving back the mighty current of evil. The prospect for achieving this was so far distant from Daniel that he lost consciousness and was sick for days,⁷¹ and both of them in their turn, lost all strength when Christ appeared to them.⁷²

⁷¹ *Daniel* 8:27.

⁷² *Daniel* 10:8-9; *Revelation* 1:17.

Thus their great need was demonstrated before the mighty hand transmitted power into them, and the command to stand upon their feet was spoken to them. Then, endowed with power from on high, they were well able to fulfill their commission.

So it will be with us in the rapidly approaching final battle in the great controversy. The church will go forth conquering and to conquer, after being specially strengthened to endure the revelations of the appearances of heavenly beings on the one hand, and the fearful nature of fully-matured evil on the other.

48. Daniel's Prevailing Prayer

Messenger and News Review, March 1998

Daniel 9:1-19

THE vision of *Daniel* 8, with its incomplete interpretation, was given in the third and final year of the reign of King Belshazzar, the very year in which literal Babylon fell, never to rise again. World supremacy then became centered in Medo-Persian hands under the kingship of Darius the Mede. How much time elapsed during this transition of power from fallen Babylon, we do not know exactly. It would have been about a year more or less.

It would have taken some time at least for government officials to have settled into their new and enlarged positions of power and great glory, but this would not have been the most important official appointment to have been organized by the king. There remained the positioning of Daniel as the highest official in the realm.

Daniel 6

¹ It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom;

² And over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss.

³ Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.

So, Daniel was a very busy man who, after the king, occupied the highest position in the world, and from it administered the vast, universal empire of the Medo-Persian kingdom. Such a position would make Daniel's work very trying, and even dangerous, yet there is no question about his giving the highest quality of service as the king's chief administrator, no matter how much time and energy it required.

Daniel Keeps His Aim on God's Work

But he never permitted himself to forget the captivity of his people, and their need to be released according to the purpose and the promise of God. Wealth, power, honor, and glory were freely bestowed upon him, but they possessed no capacity to lead him to forgetfulness of God. Likewise, temptations to sin could not allure him, nor could he be induced to deviate from the strict principles of God's holy law. Like Joseph before him, he moved among the idol-worshippers of his day,

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 214:

...as one who saw and heard not.

So it was that while the citizens of the recently founded world-empire of the Medo Persians were rejoicing in their newly established power, wealth and glory, Daniel was poring over the prophecies of *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah* which related to the liberation of his people, and their once more taking up their divinely appointed work of filling the earth with the righteousness of God. Here is Daniel's personal record of this singular disinterest in the things of this earth, and of his all-consuming devotion to the restoration of Jerusalem, the rebuilding of the temple, and the re-establishment of the sacrificial system.

Daniel 9

¹ In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—

² In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

In addition were the comforting predictions passed down by God through Isaiah who actually named King Cyrus as the authority who would overcome Babylon and provide for the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. With these Daniel was very familiar, but he found himself unable to understand just how all these predictions would fit together and come to pass. Though he himself was

a prophet, he still found himself unable to interpret the two thousand three hundred day prophecy, especially as it related to the seventy years of Babylonian supremacy, until it had been explained to him. It was a struggle for him to align what had been foretold with what was actually happening.

Prophets and Kings, p. 554:

Through another vision further light was thrown upon the events of the future; and it was at the close of this vision that Daniel heard...

Daniel 8

¹³ ...one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spoke, How long shall be the vision?

The answer that was given,

¹⁴ Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed,

—filled him with perplexity. Earnestly he sought for the meaning of the vision. He could not understand the relation sustained by the seventy years' captivity, as foretold through Jeremiah, to the twenty-three hundred years that in vision he heard the heavenly visitant declare should elapse before the cleansing of God's sanctuary. The angel Gabriel gave him a partial interpretation; yet when the prophet heard the words,

²⁶ The vision...shall be for many days,

—he fainted away.

²⁷ I Daniel fainted, [he records of his experience,] and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

The prophecy which had become a chief object of Daniel's interest, reads as follows:

Jeremiah 25

¹² Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, says the Lord; and I will make it a perpetual desolation.

The Conditional Nature of Prophecy

With the fall of Babylon, the time had come for the release of the Jews from their captivity, but why was there such considerable anxiety on the part of Daniel? Surely, it should have been a time for calmly resting in implicit faith that all things were moving according to schedule, and that therefore there was no cause for concern?

But, there was cause for concern in view of the conditional nature of the prophecies, as well as of the promises and curses of God. The Almighty has made this truth very clear in these words:

Jeremiah 18

¹ The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying:

² Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear my words.

³ Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel.

⁴ And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.

⁵ Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying:

⁶ O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter? says the Lord. Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel!

⁷ The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it,

⁸ If that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.

⁹ And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it,

¹⁰ If it does evil in my sight so that it does not obey my voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.

God does not arbitrarily either punish or bless. The outworking of the laws of cause and effect is:

Galatians 6

⁷ Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.

All nature testifies to this. Sow the seeds of a thorn bush, and from them will most certainly spring forth none other than the same kind of thorn bushes. At the same time a plant, be it an evil or a good one, once it has sprouted its first leaves, will either thrive or put forth only stunted growth, depending on whatever cultivation is given to it.

Again and again through their entire history, the Jews had been instructed on these principles, but again and again, they had ignored the solemn warnings and loving appeals sent to them by God's messengers, with disastrous consequences.

Now, another day of opportunity was before them in which God had promised to restore their position and their work on conditions of true repentance, leading them to a fresh revival and a true and lasting reformation. Should they fail to fulfill these conditions, they would fail to receive the blessing of the Lord. The question was:

“Would they repeat the sad pattern of their past, characterized as it was by good beginnings, followed by such terrible apostasies as placed them under the entire control of their enemies; or would they at last stabilize themselves on the everlasting word of the living God, and remain free thereafter?”

The Timing of Israel's Release

Consider the situation. One would expect that the fall of Babylon and the release of the Jews would have been coincidental, but the fall of that great city did not immediately produce that much-desired result. As the following statement confirms, three years were to pass by before King Cyrus, the great warrior king who destroyed the city and kingdom of Babylon, issued the first of several decrees which granted the Jews their freedom.

Prophets and Kings, p. 556-557:

Daniel's prayer had been offered...

Daniel 11

¹ ...in the first year of Darius,

—the Persian monarch whose general, Cyrus, had wrested from Babylonia the scepter of universal rule. The reign of Darius was honored of God. To him was sent the angel Gabriel,

¹ ...to confirm and to strengthen him.

Upon his death, within about two years of the fall of Babylon, Cyrus succeeded to the throne, and the beginning of his reign marked the completion of the seventy years since the first company of Hebrews had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar from their Judean home to Babylon.

As this statement confirms, Darius only reigned over fallen Babylon for two years before his death, after which King Cyrus ascended to the seat of power. In *Ezra* 1:1 it is recorded that in the first year of the reign of King Cyrus, King of Persia, he wrote and signed the decree permitting the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. The two final years of waiting for the seventy years of the prophecy of God through Jeremiah had ended. Now Daniel and others who had studied the prophecies had their hopes confirmed, for faith had turned to sight.

But before the termination of those last three years, the witness of sight and circumstances had declared that the sins of God's people had been so grievous that they surely could not expect God to give them a favorable remission of their transgressions. This has been one of Satan's most successful means of tempting the children of God into the unbelief which leads to sin. But to whatever degree Satan might have pressed the discouraging outlook upon Daniel, he turned to God in prayer to meet the peril.

The result was that we have on record one of the truly great prayers ever uttered. Others in the same class are:

- Jacob's midnight to dawn anguished pleadings at the Brook Jabbok;
- King Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple;
- Elijah's importunate pleadings on Mount Carmel which brought both fire and rain in their turn;
- And the truly greatest of them all, the petition of Christ in Gethsemane and its continuation on the cross next day.

Here is the transcript of Daniel's wonderful prayer in its entirety. I recommend that this prayer be studied repeatedly until your entire being is charged with heavenly light and power, for in it the principles of the true science of prayer are clearly laid down.

Daniel 9

¹ In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—

² In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

³ Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

⁴ And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments,

⁵ We have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from your precepts and your judgments.

⁶ Neither have we heeded your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land.

⁷ O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.

⁸ O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.

⁹ To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him.

¹⁰ We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets.

¹¹ Yes, all Israel has transgressed your law, and has departed so as not to obey your voice; therefore the curse and the oath writ-

ten in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.

¹² And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.

¹³ As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand your truth.

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice.

¹⁵ And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made yourself a name, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly!

¹⁶ O Lord, according to all your righteousness, I pray, let your anger and your fury be turned away from your city Jerusalem, your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people are a reproach to all those around us.

¹⁷ Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause your face to shine on your sanctuary, which is desolate.

¹⁸ O my God, incline your ear and hear; open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of your great mercies.

¹⁹ O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for your own sake, my God, for your city and your people are called by your name.

Prayer Changes People

It is written that,

Prophets and Kings, p. 554-555:

With faith founded on the sure word of prophecy, Daniel pleaded with the Lord for the speedy fulfillment of these promises.

This seems like an unnecessary exercise, and would be, except that the kind of prayer which Daniel prayed, greatly changes the one who petitions the throne of grace. The word of God does not need changing: it is infallibly correct. His promises need no modification, for they too are utterly reliable, and every prophecy will be fulfilled exactly as spoken, provided that the appropriate conditions have been met.

We need to realize better than we do the awesome truth that prayer does change people in as powerful a way as is necessary to solve whatever problem from the least to the greatest that may present itself to us. Consider the following paragraph in order to gain confirmation of this. The message it contains is such as will instill great, living faith in those who grasp the reality of the light.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 452-453:

Those who have access to God through Christ have important work before them. Now is the time to lay hold of the arm of our strength. The prayer of David should be the prayer of pastors and laymen:

Psalm 119

¹²⁶ It is time for You, Lord, to work: for they have made void your law.

Let the servants of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar, crying:

Joel 2

¹⁷ Spare your people, O Lord, and give not your heritage to reproach.

God has always wrought for His people in their greatest extremity, when there seemed the least hope that ruin could be averted. The designs of wicked men, the enemies of the church, are subject to His power and overruling providence. He can move upon the hearts of statesmen; the wrath of the turbulent and disaffected, the haters of God, His truth, and His people can be turned aside, even as the rivers of water are turned, if He orders it thus.

Prayer moves the arm of Omnipotence. He who marshals the stars in order in the heavens, whose word controls the waves of

the great deep, the same infinite Creator will work in behalf of His people if they call upon Him in faith. He will restrain the forces of darkness until the warning is given to the world and all who will heed it are prepared for the conflict.

Let none make the mistake of subscribing to the popular concept that the activities of nature once set in motion, are programmed to operate within fixed lines of operation for evermore. If this were so, then the Creator would have become the slave of His own creation. The creatures would be lords of the Creator. Such can never be!

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 96-97:

The world before the Flood reasoned that for centuries the laws of nature had been fixed. The recurring seasons had come in their order. Heretofore rain had never fallen; the earth had been watered by a mist or dew. The rivers had never yet passed their boundaries, but had borne their waters safely to the sea. Fixed decrees had kept the waters from overflowing their banks. But these reasoners did not recognize the hand of Him who had stayed the waters, saying,

Job 38

¹¹ Hitherto shall you come, but no further.

As time passed on, with no apparent change in nature, men whose hearts had at times trembled with fear, began to be reassured. They reasoned, as many reason now, that nature is above the God of nature, and that her laws are so firmly established that God himself could not change them. Reasoning that if the message of Noah were correct, nature would be turned out of her course, they made that message, in the minds of the world, a delusion—a grand deception.

They manifested their contempt for the warning of God by doing just as they had done before the warning was given. They continued their festivities and their gluttonous feasts; they ate and drank, planted and built, laying their plans in reference to advantages they hoped to gain in the future; and they went to greater lengths in wickedness, and in defiant disregard of God's requirements, to testify that they had no fear of the Infinite One. They asserted that if there were any truth in what Noah had

said, the men of renown—the wise, the prudent, the great men—would understand the matter.

The Creator is in complete command of all the forces of nature which He has called into existence.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 417:

The mechanism of the human body cannot be fully understood; it presents mysteries that baffle the most intelligent. It is not as the result of a mechanism, which, once set in motion, continues its work, that the pulse beats and breath follows breath. In God we live and move and have our being. The beating heart, the throbbing pulse, every nerve and muscle in the living organism, is kept in order and activity by the power of an ever-present God.

God Does Not Limit His Power

What did all this mean to Daniel as he began his prayer to the Almighty Creator of the heavens and the earth? What does it mean to us as the basis of our attitude in prayer before the Almighty? It means that when we petition the Lord for deliverance, we know that His hands are not tied by His own natural laws, placing himself where He cannot help us. Instead, we are to bow low before Him, knowing that:

The Ministry of Healing, p. 416:

God is constantly employed in upholding and using as His servants the things that He has made. He works through the laws of nature, using them as His instruments. They are not self-acting. Nature in her work testifies of the intelligent presence and active agency of a Being who moves in all things according to His will.

Psalms 119

⁸⁹ Forever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven.

⁹⁰ Your faithfulness is unto all generations: You have established the earth, and it abides.

⁹¹ They continue this day according to your ordinances: For all are your servants.

Psalms 135

⁶ Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

Psalm 148

⁵ He commanded, and they were created.

⁶ He has also established them for ever and ever: He has made a decree which shall not pass.

Of course, the Lord does not work mightily for His people when they fail to fulfill the divinely appointed conditions. True repentance and heartfelt confession must precede deliverance. When this is not forthcoming, despite the multiplied warnings sent to the disobedient, the thankless, and the unholy, the threatened punishments will not be averted.

But when true repentance follows sinfulness, as it did in Jonah's day and might have done in the days of Noah, the multitudes whose lives are threatened with destruction will see instead the orderly continuation of the forces of nature obeying the will of their Creator.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 97:

Had the antediluvians believed the warning, and repented of their evil deeds, the Lord would have turned aside His wrath, as He afterward did from Nineveh. But by their obstinate resistance to the reproofs of conscience and the warnings of God's prophet, that generation filled up the measure of their iniquity, and became ripe for destruction.

So it was that Daniel, who was fully aware of these principles of operation, turned to God with his whole heart as he sought for total deliverance for his people. He knew the many promises recorded in *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, and even some addressed directly to himself such as in Chapters 2, 7, and 8 of his book which we are now studying.

Furthermore, he looked for the restoration of Israel to the favor and service of their supreme Commander. As he prayed, he identified himself as one of his people confessing their sins as if they were his own sins.

It may seem strange that Daniel, with a record of righteous living as spotless as his, would confess himself as guilty of the sins of Israel, as if he had committed them himself, along with the

people in general. Note the following statement which confirms this:

Prophets and Kings, p. 555:

Daniel 9

³ I set my face unto the Lord God,

–the prophet declared,

³ ...to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sack-cloth, and ashes:

⁴ And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession.

Though Daniel had long been in the service of God, and had been spoken of by heaven as “greatly beloved,” yet he now appeared before God as a sinner, urging the great need of the people he loved. His prayer was eloquent in its simplicity, and intensely earnest. Hear him pleading...

Throughout his wonderful prayer, he uses expressions such as:

Daniel 9

⁴ ...my confession,...

⁵ We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled...

⁶ Neither have we hearkened unto your servants the prophets...

⁹ ...we have rebelled against Him;...

¹⁵ ...we have sinned, we have done wickedly...

One would expect him to have said of the rest of Israel,

“They have sinned,”

“They have done wickedly,”

“They have refused to listen to the prophets.”

It would seem that when Daniel expressed himself in the way that he did, he would have been denying his Christian experience. But Daniel was praying on both his own and Israel’s behalf, in which case it was entirely proper for him to include his petition for both himself and Israel in the same words in the same prayer.

It was the mark of very great humility which he was manifesting by taking the stand which he did. If the spirit of pride had been reigning within him, he would have kept himself separate and aloof from his people. This would have been a denial of

Christianity in which Christ, the King and Saviour comes down and walks with us, as one of us.

49. The Power of Importunate Prayer

Messenger and News Review, June 1998

Daniel 9:1-19

BEFORE us looms the greatest battle ever to be fought in the annals of the past, the present, or the future. The final showdown of the great controversy will be waged until the alien armies from the realms of iniquity have come to a state of total self-destruction, and there will be no possibility for the forces of darkness to ever put anything onto a battle field again. Eternal peace will have supplanted unrest and suffering.

In this final and finishing conflict, our enemies will be the continuation of the same forces with which Daniel had to contend, and the better we understand his encounters with the rulers and potentates of his time, together with the prophetic revelations opened before him, the more certain we shall be of occupying our designated place in the coming kingdom.

The same issues will be at stake when the image of the beast shall have been formed as there were in Daniel's day and are to-day. The identical pressures will be exerted on us in order to break our hold on God. It will be the testing time of the ages, and only those who have made adequate preparation for it will stand. We are to learn to become truly competent in handling the weapons of righteousness, a major one of which is the true prayer of living faith—the kind which issued from the heart and lips of Daniel. With this in hand, the achievements possible to the Christian warrior are limitless.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 172-173:

The children of God are not left alone and defenseless. Prayer moves the Arm of Omnipotence. Prayer has...

Hebrews 11

³³ ...subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

³⁴ Quenched the violence of fire,

—we shall know what it means when we hear the reports of the martyrs who died for their faith—

³⁴ ...turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Prayer Moves the Arm of Omnipotence

The key sentence in the above paragraph is this one.

“Prayer moves the Arm of Omnipotence.”

An arm which is stationary, except when acting as a defensive shield, accomplishes nothing, but one which is in motion, is productive. In the case of the Arm of Omnipotence, when it is in motion it performs wonderful things for God’s work and people as listed above. Such was the character of Daniel’s prayer, and the reason for what it accomplished. But the practical question is:

“How does prevailing prayer set the Arm of Omnipotence in motion?”

Distance is not a factor, for God is instantly everywhere and can answer every sincere faith-filled prayer which is uttered on any part of the globe simultaneously. Nor is the use of force the means to be used in order to move the Arm of Omnipotence, for compelling power is found only under Satan’s kingdom, as it is written:

The Desire of Ages, p. 759:

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan’s government. The Lord’s principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God’s government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.

Daniel and his companions fought some great battles against mighty, military, political, and religious powers of their times, and were the ones who triumphed on every occasion, but never once did they wield a carnal weapon, such as armed troops would provide. As with their Commander, compelling power was not to be found among them.

Moving the Arm of Omnipotence then is accomplished in the following way. It is God's will for His people to be ever moving forward from one level to the next higher one.

Luke 9

⁶² No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

No matter what the difficulties may be which pile themselves across our pathway, God points only in one direction and that is to move forward. This principle of operation is applicable throughout God's kingdom, and nowhere is it better illustrated than when the Israelites, so recently embarked on their journey from Egypt to Canaan, came to an "impassable" obstacle to any further progress—the deep waters of the Red Sea. But to God, there was no problem. He simply said through Moses,

Exodus 14

¹⁵ Go forward!

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 290:

The people were weary and terrified, yet if they had held back when Moses bade them advance, God would never have opened the path for them.

In this short extract, the way in which the Arm of Omnipotence is moved, is clearly revealed. Here is the sequence:

1. A particular danger confronts the cause of truth, and the believers, be they only one or more, realize the need for the crisis to be met and the problem solved.
2. The Lord gives the command to go forward, apparently in ignorance of the magnitude of the problem awaiting solution. Then He waits. The Arm of Omnipotence does not move at this stage, for there is a certain condition which must be met before it can be set in motion.
3. That is the introduction of the prayer of faith. When that is exercised, the Arm of Omnipotence begins to take action.
4. It will continue to move so long as faith remains, but let this be withdrawn, and the Arm of Omnipotence will cease all forward movement, and defeat will follow.

A convincing example of this is supplied by Peter's walking on the stormy waters of Galilee. It was the Arm of Omnipotence, acting in response to Peter's faith, which kept him from sinking beneath those raging billows. While he kept his eyes fixed on his Saviour, the Arm of Omnipotence was more than enough to sustain him, but in the moment that he released his grip of faith, he started plunging down into the dark depths below.

In Daniel's case, the need to move the Arm of Omnipotence was just as great as it was when Israel departed from Egypt, and as it will be during our soon coming flight from Babylon. Daniel was fully aware of the prophecies which declared not only what was due to happen, but also when it would happen. His was a comprehensive faith which was founded, among other great gospel truths, on the sure word of prophecy. This motivated him to approach the throne of grace to move the Arm of Omnipotence.

Prophets and Kings, p. 554-555:

With faith founded on the sure word of prophecy, Daniel pleaded with the Lord for the speedy fulfillment of these promises. He pleaded for the honor of God to be preserved. In his petition he identified himself fully with those who had fallen short of the divine purpose, confessing their sins as his own.

Prophecies Conditional on Obedience

In his prayer, Daniel confessed the many sins of which Israel was guilty, and which had to be put away if they were ever to recover their freedom and fulfill their divine commission. A very important characteristic of the prophet's prayer was that there was in it not a single trace of self-justification.

Israel had disobeyed the Lord's expressed commandments delivered to them in either written or verbal form. They had ignored the warnings sent to them in love, and had persecuted and killed the Lord's messengers. Theirs was a fearful reaping springing from a wanton sowing. Rebellion marked every step they had taken. In order to reverse direction, so that the prayer of faith

would become actively effective once more, the people had to be led to see that the fault was with themselves and not with God.

Satan would have had them believe that their loss of health and wealth were due to the scourgings inflicted on them by an angry and offended God. Therefore, he constantly sought to convince them that God was a despot whose exacting laws were selfishly designed to exalt himself, while cruelly oppressing His subjects. By far the greater majority of Israel along with the heathen generally believed these falsehoods about our loving Redeemer and self-sacrificing Saviour.

Satan would also have us believe that God is the one who must accept full responsibility for all of the misery which exists. The real truth is that all the suffering and iniquity in the world are due to men, women, and children living in ignorance of the law of cause and effect. Despite the efforts on God's part to make this message truly clear, they stumble blindly on, reaping the multiplied fruits of their own sowing.

But this truth is iterated and reiterated over and over in Daniel's prayer. The people had not obeyed God's voice nor kept His commandments. Therefore, as a direct consequence, all these desolating disasters had come upon them. There was no point in arguing that all these crippling losses and impoverishing calamities were the act of God, for they had before them abundant evidence to the contrary.

The magnificent temple, for example, with its monetary value and unequaled glory was probably the greatest loss sustained, but it had been torched by the Babylonian soldiery and had become a blazing sacrifice for only one reason. The disobedient had refused to give up their willful spirit of rebellion. Adding sin to sin, they became ripe for destruction.

The people, especially at the leadership level, had persistently rejected the divine offers even though the mighty forces of the Babylonian kingdom were advancing and there was no hope of rescue apart from Heaven's intervention. In the remarkable deliverance of King Hezekiah and his subjects from the formidable

army of King Sennacherib, the Lord of the Assyrians, God truly revealed His infinite love for His people. In this thrilling demonstration of His love and power, God showed how He would always dwell among, and be at peace with them on condition of faithful obedience. They were to obey, not just because God required it, but because it was the only way to preserve the glorious treasure of everlasting life which God in Christ would win back for them on Calvary.

They had no excuse for not knowing this, for every part of it was pictured in detail in the sacrificial system. With the sacrifice of every victim, there sounded forth the living truth that God in Christ loved guilty sinners so much that He was prepared to die in their stead. Daniel knew that any restoration to God's favor depended on their firstly seeing and acknowledging their transgressions, followed by their putting away of all evil from their lives, and walking thereafter in the paths of righteousness alone. To this end he made supplication to God with great importunity, fearful that Israel would fail once more to measure up to the required standard.

Notice, as you repeatedly study Daniel's wonderful prayer, how clearly he understood the principle that only through strict obedience, springing from a pure heart, and filled with the presence of the Holy Spirit, could they succeed this time where they had failed in the past. If ever they needed the Lord, they certainly needed Him at this time when the seventy years of Jeremiah's prophecy were drawing to a close. Before them lay open the marvelous opportunities contained in the promised return to their own land and the extensive reconstruction of the city and sanctuary to be established there.

But Daniel also knew that, as surely as disobedience had robbed them of their prosperity, their health, their wealth, and every other blessing, there was no possibility of any of these treasures being restored to them while disobedience continued. It was not just a matter of a time having run out such as a prison term coming to its end. It is true that time periods were involved, but the

fulfillment of these were conditional on the restoration of righteousness in the lives of the people. When this was established within the saints of the Lord, to the point where righteousness had become their way of life, then the time period of the prophecy could certainly be fulfilled as predicted.

The encouraging truth is that the important time prophecies were being fulfilled exactly when and where God said they would be, which could only mean that the Jews, or at least a goodly proportion of them, were meeting the conditions Daniel, in harmony with God, was desirous of seeing develop among them. They were learning and accepting the eternal verity that sin and not God is the cause of death and all the woes which beset mankind, while obedience rendered through faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice, is the wonderful life-preserver. As this realization dawned on their minds, the priceless gift of true repentance became established in their hearts, and as a thoroughly chastened people, they mended their ways.

Influence of Daniel's Life and Prayer

In the meantime, God was working on a second aspect of their obtaining their deliverance—the collapse of the Babylonian kingdom. While this great universal power remained in command of the world, and was, at the same time, sinking into ever deeper apostasy and incurable rebellion, there was no hope of their permitting the Jews to return and rebuild Jerusalem. It was much more likely that the Babylonians would complete the destruction of the Jewish people, rather than to set them free with expenses paid.⁷³

In the destruction of Babylon, God employed only those weapons which were consistent with His character, and in harmony with His way of kingdom building. In this work, He employed both Darius the Mede, and Cyrus the Persian.

Prophets and Kings, p. 556-557:

Daniel's prayer had been offered...

⁷³ See *Ezra* 1:1-11; 6:8-10; 7:16-22; 8:24-34.

Daniel 11

¹ ...in the first year of Darius,

—the Median monarch whose general, Cyrus, had wrested from Babylonia the scepter of universal rule. The reign of Darius was honored of God. To him was sent the angel Gabriel,

¹ ...to confirm and to strengthen him.

Upon his death, within about two years of the fall of Babylon, Cyrus succeeded to the throne, and the beginning of his reign marked the completion of the seventy years since the first company of Hebrews had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar from their Judean home to Babylon.

Without question, Daniel's powerful prayer was a very real factor in making it possible for the remnant of the Jewish people to return to their homeland where the work of God centered on the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and the temple. This was a work which could only be accomplished under divine supervision, and in the power of almighty God. Such provisions were available only through the exercise of living faith, as is demonstrated by the life and ministry of the prophet Daniel. It was for restoration of the cause of truth and righteousness that Daniel prayed so earnestly and successfully.

The prayer of Daniel was designed to prepare him and the Jewish people for their new status as free men and women. It accomplished this most effectively. But his power-filled prayer was not the only measure adopted in order to gain this end. God also used notable events such as the deliverance of Daniel from the lions' den to reveal His power to execute His will. Another step in preparing the mind of King Cyrus for the return of the exiles to their homeland was accomplished by revealing to the king that he had been prophesied by name to be the one divinely appointed to thus serve the Ruler of heaven and earth.

To have achieved this result constituted a most remarkable victory. Let us note these decisive factors as they are summarized in the following paragraph:

Prophets and Kings, p. 557:

The deliverance of Daniel from the den of lions had been used of God to create a favorable impression upon the mind of Cyrus the Great. The sterling qualities of the man of God as a statesman of farseeing ability led the Persian ruler to show him marked respect and to honor his judgment. And now, just at the time God had said He would cause His temple at Jerusalem to be rebuilt, He moved upon Cyrus as His agent to discern the prophecies concerning himself, with which Daniel was so familiar, and to grant the Jewish people their liberty.

There were at least three reasons that an extra powerful influence needed to be exerted on the Medo-Persian kings to induce them to release their Jewish captives.

1. They were a great and valuable work force which the king would much rather employ in the building up of great works for his glorious reign and a strengthened kingdom.
2. A second reason for an ancient and very powerful monarch to keep his captives scattered far and wide was so that it would thus be much more difficult for them to organize a revolt against the empire. Those kings of ancient times lived in constant fear of losing both their thrones and their heads.
3. Israel had a great reputation for coming back from the dead. When, on certain occasions, it appeared that they had no hope, they had risen to achieve some of their greatest exploits. They had proven themselves a force to be reckoned with, and no king would lightly give them liberty.

Yet under the mighty influence emanating from Daniel, and strengthened by his wonderful prayer, the Medo-Persian kings were prepared to set them free. This was nothing short of a most remarkable development. Such is the mighty power of influence for good or evil.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 339:

Every soul is surrounded by an atmosphere of its own,—an atmosphere, it may be, charged with the life-giving power of faith,

courage, and hope, and sweet with the fragrance of love. Or it may be heavy and chill with the gloom of discontent and selfishness, or poisonous with the deadly taint of cherished sin. By the atmosphere surrounding us, every person with whom we come in contact is consciously or unconsciously affected.

A Man Greatly Beloved

Daniel 9

²³ ...you are greatly beloved.

Daniel 10

¹¹ O Daniel, a man greatly beloved...

¹⁹ O man greatly beloved...

Without question, the life of Daniel was an influence of the most positive kind, so much so that the angel Gabriel was able to tell him that he was a man greatly beloved in heaven. That which prompted the statement that Daniel was “greatly beloved,” was the sincerity, integrity, and power found in Daniel’s remarkable prayer, backed by a life wholly dedicated to God. This is a very wonderful level of esteem in which to be held, surpassing as it does any badges of excellence with which men might seek to decorate each other. At best these are only conferred according to fallible, transitory, human judgment which has but little, if any value. Those who pursue the praise of men at the cost of heaven’s approval will stumble to ruin sooner or later.

Daniel was greatly beloved not only because he was born again, as all true Christians are, and thus possessed within himself the life and spirit of Christ, His Redeemer, but also because he had lived a life of great usefulness to the cause of God. His was the spirit of self-sacrificing, self-renouncing, and self-abnegating love. There are many others who were beloved in heaven, such as all the martyrs who had sacrificed their lives for Christ’s sake. Some are described in the Bible, such as Dorcas, Lazarus, John (Christ’s youngest disciple), and Christ himself.

It is no secret as to how we may come to the place where the Lord will describe us as being “greatly beloved.” It is accomplished by devoting our lives to communion with God and self-

sacrificing service. Again, the great prayer of Daniel is a model of the kind of prayer which brings us into such closeness with the Father, that we will be like our Master in spirit and in life.

The Hour of Visitation

Daniel's great prayer of living faith was a vital factor in making certain that the way was opened for Kings Darius and Cyrus to order the release of their valuable captives, which in turn paved the way for the coming Messiah and His sacrificial death.

In the successful achievement of Israel's release from Babylonian bondage, a very important and significant development was realized. While only a remnant of about fifty thousand was dedicated enough to return, and while the plague of apostasy reappeared as in olden times, yet the foundations of many generations remained and upon them noble men, such as Ezra and Nehemiah and those who faithfully followed them, carried the work further. Though apostasy had robbed the Jews of the spirituality of the teachings of God's holy word, they were still the custodians of the truth. This they continued to be until the end of the seventieth week of the prophecy of *Daniel* 9.

Unfortunately for the majority, they mistook the Messiah for the enemy and were thus led to reject Him. With only seven years in which to achieve the infusion of living truth into the heart of His chosen people, before He and His faithful followers were separated from Judaism forever, Christ had no time to spare.

This pattern has been repeated by the Jews, the Apostolic Church, the Protestant Reformers, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. All of them proclaimed the present truth, the message for their hour. Unfortunately however, they did not go further and so fell short, despite the warning to be watchful against apostasy. But they left behind a precious heritage of ever advancing truth. The new light was always welcomed by those who were progressively following where God led the way, and periods of great darkness were relieved by the outshining of new and radiant revelations of truth.

Daniel was one of those who, in his time, was walking in the light of what was present truth for his day. At the same time, he understood the dangerous possibility of the hour of opportunity coming and going without the Lord's people knowing the hour of their visitation.⁷⁴ This produced in him an anxiety which drove him to his knees to plead with importunity that the children of Israel would not fail at this critical hour. He prayed that they would devote themselves to that strict obedience which would, if it came from a heart in which is the living spirit of obedience, guarantee that the work of God in the earth would advance from victory unto victory.

This work on Daniel's part will be paralleled by God's people in the finishing of the building on the foundations of many generations when,

Isaiah 58

¹² Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.

Once again, men and women of the hour will understand, according to the sure word of prophecy, just where the people of God stand. They will understand with deep conviction that the breaking of the law is the cause of all human suffering and loss. They will be as fully aware as was Daniel of their need to enter the deepest repentance. And they will be men and women who know how to fast and pray. Of them it is written:

Prophets and Kings, p. 588:

Those who are true to God will be menaced, denounced, proscribed. They will be...

Luke 21

¹⁶ ...betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends,

—even unto death. Their only hope is in the mercy of God; their only defense will be prayer. As Joshua pleaded before the Angel, so the remnant church, with brokenness of heart and unfaltering

⁷⁴ See *Luke 19:44*, *1 Peter 2, 12*.

faith, will plead for pardon and deliverance through Jesus, their Advocate. They are fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives, they see their weakness and unworthiness; and they are ready to despair.

Of that coming people, importunate in prayer as was Daniel, we will study more later.

50. The Matter and the Vision

Messenger and News Review, July 1998

Daniel 9:22-27

IT WAS with incredible speed that Heaven heard and answered Daniel's prayers in *Daniel* 9, for it seems that no sooner had he commenced to pray, than Gabriel came sweeping down from the heavenly courts with the answer, as it is written:

The Sanctified Life, p. 48:

As Daniel's prayer is going forth, the angel Gabriel comes sweeping down from the heavenly courts to tell him that his petitions are heard and answered. This mighty angel has been commissioned to give him skill and understanding—to open before him the mysteries of future ages. Thus, while earnestly seeking to know and understand the truth, Daniel was brought into communion with Heaven's delegated messenger.

We are not informed as to what speed angels are capable of flying, except that it must be exceedingly great. It seems that the greatest speed we can measure is the speed of light, which is close to 300,000 km/sec. A light-year is the distance light travels through a vacuum in one year. No person himself can move at such tremendous speeds through space. How many light-years there are between this earth and the heavenly courts we do not know, but they are certain to be considerable. What we are able to say is that Heaven was very prompt in flying down to the prophet with the answer which solved the questions that were troubling him.

This reminds us of the experience of Elijah who, with the same searching of heart, pleaded for Israel's deliverance from the terrible drought. Like Daniel, Elijah was a truly righteous man, who recognized that it was not God, but sin which had brought Israel into such desperate straits, and that only true repentance, followed by a return to strict obedience, could restore them to prosperity once more. On behalf of his beloved people, Elijah pleaded with the Almighty for a deep-rooted, permanent, Christian experience.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 2, p. 1035:

The servant watched while Elijah prayed. Six times he returned from the watch, saying, “There is nothing, no cloud, no sign of rain.” But the prophet did not give up in discouragement. He kept reviewing his life, to see where he had failed to honor God, he confessed his sins, and thus continued to afflict his soul before God, while watching for a token that his prayer was answered. As he searched his heart, he seemed to be less and less, both in his own estimation and in the sight of God. It seemed to him that he was nothing, and that God was everything; and when he reached the point of renouncing self, while he clung to the Saviour as his only strength and righteousness, the answer came. The servant appeared, and said,

1 Kings 18

⁴⁴ Behold, there arises a little cloud out of the sea, like a man’s hand.

When Elijah heard this announcement from his trusty servant, he knew his prayer was answered and he acted at once. In Daniel’s case, once the kingdom of Babylon had fallen, as he knew it would, he turned his attention more particularly to the study of the book of *Jeremiah*, which enabled him to understand that predicted events were in the process of being fulfilled. Of this experience he wrote:

Daniel 9

¹ In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

² In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord given through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

Daniel apparently had no difficulty in comprehending this part of the prophetic word, but he found it another matter to understand what was the relationship between the seventy years of this prediction and the two thousand three hundred days of the prophecy as recorded in *Daniel* 8:14.

Prophets and Kings, p. 554:

Through another vision further light was thrown upon the events of the future; and it was at the close of this vision that Daniel heard...

Daniel 8

¹³ ...one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spoke, How long shall be the vision?

The answer that was given,

¹⁴ Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed,

—filled him with perplexity. Earnestly he sought for the meaning of the vision. He could not understand the relation sustained by the seventy years' captivity, as foretold through Jeremiah, to the twenty-three hundred years that in vision he heard the heavenly visitant declare should elapse before the cleansing of God's sanctuary. The angel Gabriel gave him a partial interpretation; yet when the prophet heard the words,

²⁶ The vision...shall be for many days,

—he fainted away.

²⁷ I Daniel fainted, [he records of his experience,] and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

The Unexplained Portion of the Vision

With the arrival of Gabriel subsequent to the fall of Babylon, bringing with him the added light on the vision, Daniel was instructed to...

Daniel 9

²³ ...consider the matter, and understand the vision.

He was not told that the matter and the vision would be easy to comprehend, but that he would be given the skill or the increased capacity to understand them. Here is his announcement to that effect:

Daniel 9

²² And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.

As noted above, Daniel is instructed by the mighty angel Gabriel to consider the matter and to understand the vision. Although the “matter” and the “vision” are two different things, they are inseparably related. The “matter” can only be that which had troubled Daniel over a period of time—namely when and how the prophecy of *Jeremiah* 25:12 would be fulfilled. The “vision” must be referred back to the point where there was a vision or a portion of one which needed to be explained by God through Gabriel.

We can find such a portion of unexplained prophecy in *Daniel* 8:14, which reads:

Daniel 8

¹⁴ And he said to me, For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.

This definitely needed to be interpreted more fully. For when it had first been presented to Daniel, it proved to be a sorrow too great for him to bear, causing him to faint away, become ill over a period of time, and be confined to his bed for some days, as noted previously.

Now Gabriel had returned to supply the next portion of the interpretation, as recorded in the last four verses of *Daniel* 9.

Daniel 9

²⁴ Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

²⁵ Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.

²⁶ And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.

²⁷ Then He shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.

These verses do not contain a vision or even a part of one in need of an explanation or interpretation. Instead, they are themselves interpretations. Note too, that the portion of *Daniel* 8 for which an interpretation is needed, is the portion dealing with time. Accordingly, the interpretation deals with time.

Daniel 9:24-27 is the explanation of *Daniel* 8:14. Otherwise *Daniel* 9:24-27 has no connection to anything, and *Daniel* 8:14 has no explanation and no purpose or direction. Without the placement of the seventy weeks prophecy in its correct relationship to the two thousand three hundred years, all the force and power are diluted from the description of the climax to the great controversy.

The Reason for the Delayed Explanation

We might wish that Daniel had not fainted, but had instead been especially strengthened so as to leave us an undivided interpretation of *Daniel* 8. It might appear to us that it would be so much easier if *Daniel* 8, and what is now chapter nine, had been joined together in chapter eight. But a divine purpose underlies every word in the scriptures and there are no mistakes made in the administration of the plan of salvation. In that case, we need to understand that it is far better that the explanation of the time period was deferred until after the fall of Babylon.

Daniel could have been strengthened to the point where he would not have succumbed to such pressures as caused him to faint. As we have seen, an excellent example of God's capacity to strengthen His children to receive special revelations of himself is provided in the experience of John, the apostle who always loved to be nearest the Saviour.

The Sanctified Life, p. 78:

John, who has so loved his Lord, and who has steadfastly adhered to the truth in the face of imprisonment, stripes, and threatened death, cannot endure the excellent glory of Christ's presence, and falls to the earth as one stricken dead. Jesus then lays His hand upon the prostrate form of His servant, saying,

Revelation 1

¹⁷ Fear not...

¹⁸ I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore.

John was strengthened to live in the presence of his glorified Lord, and then were presented before him in holy vision the purposes of God for future ages. The glorious attractions of the heavenly home were made known to him. He was permitted to look upon the throne of God, and to behold the white-robed throng of redeemed ones. He heard the music of heavenly angels, and the songs of triumph from those who had overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.

Why was it then that by delaying the explanation of *Daniel* 8:14, a divine purpose was achieved? It was so that it could be clearly seen that there was no change in the work of the gospel to be accomplished in the hearts and lives of the children of God. The same work was to be done for those returning from Babylon in 457 BC, and at the end of the 2300 years. In both cases, the Lord brought them out in order to make an end of sins and to bring in everlasting righteousness.

But, as he looked back to the call of God to the original twelve children of Israel, Daniel viewed an unbroken pattern of good beginnings followed by a repetition of disobedience, apostasy, oppression, and enslavement. This cycle seemed to be repeated endlessly. Then had come the portrayal of future events dominated by further exhibitions of satanic oppression which were, it seemed, ever recurring and never ending. It was no wonder that the question was raised in *Daniel* 8:13, as to how long this would continue.

For the Jewish people as a nation, there was laid down a period of probationary time, for God foresaw that they would come to

the point of hopeless apostasy from which they could never return. That period of probationary time for them is specified in these words:

Daniel 9

²⁴ Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

There was no question of inevitability involved in all this. Both God and His faithful messengers strove to the utmost to save the Jewish people from the awful fate which, in their determination to do wrong, they had chosen.

Nor was the time period arbitrarily selected. God, knowing all the details of their future, and thus understanding all the factors which would be brought to bear on their case, knew beforehand exactly how much time would be consumed by them in their comings and goings for and against Him. Therefore, the time was not determined by human judgment, but was appointed by God as an announcement of when all these forces and counter-forces would come to full maturity. That would be at the end of the seventy weeks of prophetic time, or four hundred and ninety years of literal time.

The Identification of the Time Prophecies

In the books of *Daniel* and the *Revelation*, all the great symbolic time prophecies are to be interpreted according to the principle that one symbolic day is equal to one literal year. Thus the periods of 1, 7, and 62 weeks, and 490, 1260, 1290, 1335, and the 2300 days are all fulfilled as so many years.

With the complex inter-relationship of these specific time prophecies, it is essential that at least one example has an incontrovertible and clearly identified starting and ending point, as confirmation of the system. That is supplied within the prophecy of the seventy weeks or the 490 days, which are 490 literal years. The historical starting point is the completion of the command to

restore and rebuild Jerusalem. Similarly, there is a fixed historical ending point which is determined by the appearance of the Messiah at the beginning of the last week. The Messiah began His ministry exactly 483 years after the starting point, in 27 AD.

Both the starting and ending points of these 69 weeks are contained in:

Daniel 9

²⁵ Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.

There are three very significant events which took place in the mission of Christ at the beginning of His public ministry which marked the end of the 483 years. The first of these was His being anointed by the Holy Spirit as the anointed One or the Messiah. So it is written:

The Great Controversy, p. 327:

Daniel 9

²⁵ From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks;

—namely, sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years. The decree of Artaxerxes went into effect in the autumn of 457 BC. From this date, 483 years extend to the autumn of 27 AD. At that time this prophecy was fulfilled. The word “Messiah” signifies “the Anointed One.” In the autumn of 27 AD, Christ was baptized by John and received the anointing of the Spirit. The apostle Peter testifies that:

Acts 10

³⁸ God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power.

And the Saviour himself declared:

Luke 4

¹⁸ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

After His baptism He went into Galilee,

Mark 1

¹⁴ ...preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

¹⁵ And saying, The time is fulfilled.

Without the Holy Spirit's special anointing, it would have been impossible for Christ to have filled the office of the Messiah. But, tragically, even though the announcement that the Messiah was among them was so clear and so comprehensive that the Jews had no need to look any further, nor wait any longer for Him to appear, they knew not the day of their visitation.

The Desire of Ages, p. 112:

Of the vast throng at the Jordan, few except John discerned the heavenly vision. Yet the solemnity of the divine Presence rested upon the assembly. The people stood silently gazing upon Christ. His form was bathed in the light that ever surrounds the throne of God. His upturned face was glorified as they had never before seen the face of man. From the open heavens a voice was heard saying,

Matthew 3

¹⁷ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

That the event was not recognized for what it was, did not change its significance. The Messiah had come, He had been anointed to His office by the authority of the Holy Spirit, and He would accomplish the fullness He had come to achieve. There was nobody nor anything which could change those facts. The prophecy had declared that from the going forth of the decree to rebuild and restore the city of Jerusalem, the temple, and its services, until the arrival of Messiah the Prince would require 483 years, and exactly on time, in the autumn of 27 AD, He came to His anointing.

Christ's Gift

The second event which marked the beginning of His ministry as the Messiah, was the occasion of His working His first miracle, the changing of water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee. In describing the significance of that event it is written that:

The Desire of Ages, p. 144:

Jesus did not begin His ministry by some great work before the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. At a household gathering in a little Galilean village His power was put forth to add to the joy of a wedding feast. Thus He showed His sympathy with men, and His desire to minister to their happiness. In the wilderness of temptation He himself had drunk the cup of woe. He came forth to give to men the cup of blessing, by His benediction to hallow the relations of human life.

It would be impossible for us to find a more appropriate statement of what Christ had come to accomplish, than His miracle of changing water into wine at the wedding feast. This is emphatically true, for salvation is accomplished by the Father's making a marriage for His Son as stated in the parable of the wedding garment.⁷⁵ Every person without exception, who receives the gift of salvation is actually entering into a very real marriage relationship with Christ.⁷⁶

It becomes of the highest consequence that we grasp the actual reality of this relationship, for it is not a mere figure of speech, but a living, personal, experience. Divinity is one of the partners; humanity is the other; and the wedding garment is the robe of actual righteousness in which all must be dressed who shall qualify for a place in the home for the married.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 307:

The parable of the wedding garment opens before us a lesson of the highest consequence. By the marriage is represented the union of humanity with divinity; the wedding garment represents the character which all must possess who shall be accounted fit guests for the wedding.

Let us now briefly examine the truth which Christ acted out in the working of His first miracle. The validity of this lesson is based on the fact that in the plan of salvation, wine symbolizes life. Thus the life which God gave to Adam and Eve in Eden was

⁷⁵ See *Matthew* 22:1-14.

⁷⁶ See *Romans* 7:1-4.

symbolized by the wine at the wedding feast. The cessation of supply at the wedding feast signified the loss of life through sin.

So it was that Jesus came to a wedding, the scenario for the perpetuation of life, and found that the wine was finished. A fresh supply was needed. Jesus supplied that need at the wedding, by which He declared that He could and would give humankind another life to replace the one which it had lost. What they needed was a fresh supply of life such as Christ came to give. Symbolically, He did this by supplying a fresh quota at the wedding thus declaring what He, by covenant promise, would actually do.

But the message does not stop there. When the wine was sampled at the table, it was found to be of superior quality. In like manner, the life which Christ gives to us is superior to the life Adam possessed but lost through sin.

It must be remembered in this connection that the plan of salvation is designed to do more for us than provide us with forgiveness, vital and indispensable as that gift is. It is also designed to restore life in us. This must be so, for a forgiven dead man is no better or worse off than an unforgiven, dead man. He needs both forgiveness and life, as symbolized by the superior wine supplied at the feast at the wedding in Cana. Such was the promise made by Christ to produce righteous people from those once steeped in iniquity, and to present them faultless before the throne of grace.

The Desire of Ages, p. 790:

Jesus refused to receive the homage of His people until He had the assurance that His sacrifice was accepted by the Father. He ascended to the heavenly courts, and from God himself heard the assurance that His atonement for the sins of men had been ample, that through His blood all might gain eternal life. The Father ratified the covenant made with Christ, that He would receive repentant and obedient men, and would love them even as He loves His Son. Christ was to complete His work, and fulfill His pledge to...

Isaiah 13

¹² ...make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

All power in heaven and on earth was given to the Prince of Life, and He returned to His followers in a world of sin, that He might impart to them of His power and glory.

The Temple Cleansed

The third event that took place 483 years after the royal decree was issued by the Medo-Persian king in 457 BC, was the cleansing of the temple in Jerusalem. It happened when Jesus arrived at the national capital for the first time after His baptism, and after His having been thrice tempted in the wilderness by the devil. Alone and unassisted, He drove out the buyers and sellers, and all their birds and beasts. It was a dramatic achievement, the reports of which were soon being spread across the land. By this means Christ personally confirmed that He was the Messiah into whose work He was then entering.

The Desire of Ages, p. 161:

In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work.

He did not make a public speech detailing who He was, nor what He had come to accomplish. All those pieces of information had been sent ahead through the ministry of the prophets, had been portrayed in the marvelous rituals of the sacrificial system, and had been revealed in God's providential dealings with His people. Long before and right up until He came, the children of Israel should have been the best informed of all the peoples on the earth regarding God's way of salvation and life, but they had permitted a dark and heavy cloud of unbelief to rob them of the capacity to distinguish light from darkness, truth from error, and the voice of God from that of Satan.

In theory they were well versed in the scriptures, which meant that on the day that Christ emptied the temple of its unholy traffic, they should have been able to read the significance of His righteous actions. But they saw no light in them. Instead, they used them as a source of bitter hostility toward the Saviour. So it was that they and the Messiah became locked in a terrible battle

which raged with unrelenting fury throughout every day of His ministry as God's Anointed.

The power pitted against the Messiah and His followers was of no mean magnitude, as Paul and his fellow-laborers discovered on the battle field wherever they met the enemy. Paul therefore warned Christ's followers of the truth that they would face supernatural forces which could do them great harm, and could do away with them altogether. So he wrote:

Ephesians 6

¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Christ too understood with sharpest clarity the nature and strength of the forces aligned against Him, and that it would be impossible for any human being to successfully hold an argument with the devil.

The Review and Herald, September 6, 1909:

Bear in mind that it is none but God that can hold an argument with Satan. The sentiments of the enemy are to be met with a plain "Thus says the Lord." Human infirmity, I am instructed, will not be able to resist the devil.

The Review and Herald, March 15, 1898:

Christ carried the minds of His disciples to an eminence, and showed them the vast confederacy arrayed against Him who came as the light and life of men. He told them that they were to fight not merely against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the ruler of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. He reminded them that they were engaged in a warfare on which eternal results depended. In view of the heavenly universe, they were warring against principalities and powers. But they were not left to depend on human wisdom or human facilities. They were to work as seeing Him who is invisible.

The Need for Unlimited Power

In His third acted announcement that He had arrived at the beginning of His work as the Messiah, Jesus showed that He understood the forces with which He would have to contend, by giving a demonstration of His unlimited power to defeat the powers of darkness and put the enemy to flight. Let us briefly recapitulate the scene in the temple courtyard. For many years, it had been the accepted practice to use the temple courtyard as a market place where sacrificial animals and birds were sold to people who could not bring their offerings with them over long distances.

The Desire of Ages, p. 155:

A great number of sacrifices were offered at the time of the Passover, and the sales at the temple were very large. The consequent confusion indicated a noisy cattle market rather than the sacred temple of God. There could be heard sharp bargaining, the lowing of cattle, the bleating of sheep, the cooing of doves, mingled with the chinking of coin and angry disputation. So great was the confusion that the worshipers were disturbed, and the words addressed to the Most High were drowned in the uproar that invaded the temple.

The Jews were exceedingly proud of their piety. They rejoiced over their temple, and regarded a word spoken in its disfavor as blasphemy; they were very rigorous in the performance of ceremonies connected with it; but the love of money had overruled their scruples. They were scarcely aware how far they had wandered from the original purpose of the service instituted by God himself.

Without quoting every detail of the immense problem confronting Christ, and which would have faced any dedicated reformer entering the temple for the first time, it can be seen that a very serious situation prevailed which demanded a thorough solution.

The Desire of Ages, p. 157:

Christ saw that something must be done.

But, try to imagine the power required to dislodge those merchants of greed from their stations, separate them from their sin-

fully acquired riches, and enable the restoration of the presence of God in the temple and its environs. Those men were tough, unyielding, and ruthless, as their later persecutions of Christ confirmed. No one was permitted to stand in their way. It would require great power to beat down their defenses.

To appreciate what this would take, put yourself in the place where Christ saw that something must be done and try to evaluate your possibility, alone and unassisted, of cleansing the temple with the resources presently at your command.

It is clear that, in order for Christ to succeed in His mission as the Messiah, He had to be charged with power from on high, power so great that the results were visible even to those hostile to its ministry, and power which had the capacity to completely empty the sacred precincts of the temple of all those whose presence defiled the holy places.

Christ's powerful forthright command was very different from the quiet messages given both at His anointing, and at the marriage feast. This time the accent was on the presence of irresistible power which possessed the capacity to accomplish all that was required of it.

And a tremendous amount has been, still is, and will be required of this power, before the great controversy is over. Consider, for instance, that the earth today is carrying close to 5.4 billion passengers as it hurtles through space on its way to its final destiny, the minds of by far the greater proportion of whom are hardened beyond penetration. Yet the Saviour of humankind has assigned His children the incredible task of carrying the light of present truth to all of these inhabitants. Not a single person is to be bypassed. Every one of those billions is to have the message brought to his or her attention with such clarity and force as will prove necessary to persuade each of them to decide without reservation whom to follow thereafter forever.

Matthew 28

¹⁸ Then Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.

That is the statement that Christ made at the conclusion of His earthly sojourn, just before He ascended to His mediatorial ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Three and a half years before, by single-handedly cleansing the temple in Jerusalem, He had made the same pronouncement by a demonstration of the fact that His work would require unlimited, supernatural power in order to accomplish it. As the greedy merchants scattered wildly before Him, they needed no convincing that here was a Man of power, the like of whom they had never previously encountered.

From that time forward, throughout His ministry, Christ's power never betrayed Him, but was continually present to enable Him to do the deeds of Omnipotence. Furious men, men possessed by demons, wild beasts in the wilderness, raging storms, princes and potentates, all tested themselves against His infinite might, and found themselves captured in the arms of love, or bedded down in incurable rebellion, and hopeless apostasy.

51. The Beginning of the 483 Years

Messenger and News Review, August 1998

Daniel 9:24-25

AS WE learned in the last chapter, three great events marked the beginning of Christ's ministry as the Messiah which began 483 years after the decree for Jerusalem to be rebuilt was issued by the Medo-Persian king in 457 BC.

1. The first event was the endorsement of His Son by God the Father after His baptism;
2. The second event was the turning of water into wine at the marriage feast: and
3. The third event, which took place shortly afterwards, was the cleansing of the temple in Jerusalem.

It is now time to assemble the facts relating to the starting point of this period of 483 years, when the commandment to restore Jerusalem and the sanctuary was issued. This requires but little more than noting the appropriate events and when in history they occurred.

The Three Decrees

The starting point was the completion of the royal decree written and sealed in the autumn of 457 BC, which was 483 years before Christ announced His mission as the Messiah. In all there were three royal decrees which were issued before the specification for the fulfillment of the command to restore Jerusalem was complete. Those three decrees were as follows:

1. The first was written in the first year of King Cyrus as is recorded in *Ezra* 1:1-4, *Ezra* 5:13-17.

This pronouncement on the part of the king provided only for the rebuilding of the temple, and went into effect about 537 BC. This partly fulfilled the seventy-year prophecy of *Jeremiah* 25:11-12 and *Jeremiah* 29:10 and the prophecy of *Isaiah* 44:28 and *Isaiah* 45:13.

2. The second followed soon after 520 BC, during the reign of King Darius I, and is recorded in *Ezra* 6:1-12.

Again, this decree provided for building operations to proceed in respect to the temple in Jerusalem, but it did not restore the Jews as a free sovereign nation once more, in fulfillment of Jeremiah's and Isaiah's prophecies.

3. But the third decree did. It is recorded in *Ezra* 7:1-26, and went into effect in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes which was 457 BC.

This decree provided for the full restoration of the freedom of the Jews who had been taken into Babylonian captivity. Once more they were a nation with all the sovereign rights of a kingdom. Once again they were entering into a fresh day of opportunity during which they were expected by God to fulfill their true destiny as His chosen people.

Reluctance to Return

God's set purpose for them was ordained for one reason, which was that they were to understand the issues of the great controversy in this world, and learn to fulfill their role as God's ministers in terminating the evil, while establishing God's righteousness in its place.

But, although there were a faithful few who lived for the day when they would be again set free, by the time that King Cyrus, and later, Kings Darius and Artaxerxes ascended the throne of world dominion, there were too many who, consulting their own ease, convenience, and material advantages, chose to rate God's interests as only second in importance to those of their own.

One reason was that the Israelites preferred to continue living in the land of their captivity rather than to face the long journey home, and upon arrival there, the reconstruction of their ruined houses and cities. Many had been born in captivity, and had never seen their homeland.

A person, for instance, who had been born when the armies of the Babylonians finally defeated the forces of the Jews, would be

close to seventy years of age by the time of their release. During their lifetime they could have seen two or three generations springing forth, to each of whom the effort and expense of returning home would have been increasingly unwelcome. The later generations would never have been homesick for the land they had never known. And so it was that only a remnant of fifty thousand elected to take the pathway of obedience.

Prophets and Kings, p. 598:

Under the favor shown them by Cyrus, nearly fifty thousand of the children of the captivity had taken advantage of the decree permitting their return. These, however, in comparison with the hundreds of thousands scattered throughout the provinces of Medo-Persia, were but a mere remnant. The great majority of the Israelites had chosen to remain in the land of their exile rather than undergo the hardships of the return journey and the re-establishment of their desolated cities and homes.

Those exiles who declined to make the personal sacrifice involved, felt they could justify their decision on the basis that they were receiving considerable blessings from the Lord day by day and were prospering under the kindly rulership of the Medo-Persian kings. They would have interpreted these indications to mean God approved of their course of action. But in this they were mistaken. True, the Lord is continually pouring out His blessings on all human beings as it is written:

Matthew 5

⁴⁵ He makes His sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

It is also true that effort wisely expended in accordance with the laws of diligence and industry brings its own rewards, even for unbelievers. This is not to say, though, that God approves of their courses of action.

The Call to Flee from Babylon

The kingdom of Babylon, which had taken God's people captive, had fallen. Its power was broken so that the way of escape was opened for the believers. Except for special cases, to follow the

will of God meant to escape from the country just as soon as the opportunity presented itself.

Jeremiah 51

⁶ Flee from the midst of Babylon, and every one save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; He shall recompense her.

The call to flee from Babylon is echoed in the New Testament, where its spiritual application concerns us today.

Revelation 14

⁸ And another angel followed, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Revelation 18

⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.

When a church organization has apostatized from God to the point where it cannot be reformed any more, God calls His people out of it. He gives the church the opportunity to hear His word before He calls the faithful to "Come out of her, my people."

Prophets and Kings, p. 715:

No longer have the hosts of evil power to keep the church captive; for:

Revelation 14

⁸ Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, [which has] made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication;

—and to spiritual Israel is given the message,

Revelation 18

⁴ Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues.

As the captive exiles heeded the message,

Jeremiah 51

⁶ Flee out of the midst of Babylon,

—and were restored to the Land of Promise, so those who fear God today are heeding the message to withdraw from spiritual Babylon, and soon they are to stand as trophies of divine grace in the earth made new, the heavenly Canaan.

In the cases of the widely scattered tribes, made so by the conquests of Assyria followed by Babylon, the Lord was so very much in earnest about their forsaking the land of their captivity and returning to Judea and Jerusalem that He...

Prophets and Kings, p. 599:

...inspired Zechariah to plead with the exiles to return.

They were urged to make the business of God's kingdom the first consideration of their lives, their supreme interest, and the subject of every waking thought. They were to carry forward the work of building God's kingdom on earth as it is advanced in heaven. Such dedication, such singleness of purpose demands a level of self-sacrificing love which God, from the beginning, has been working to establish within every believer. When He has finally succeeded, then will be fulfilled these wonderful words:

The Review and Herald, December 23, 1890:

The end is near! We have not a moment to lose! Light is to shine forth from God's people in clear, distinct rays, bringing Jesus before the churches and before the world. Our work is not to be restricted to those who already know the truth; our field is the world. The instrumentalities to be used are those souls who gladly receive the light of truth which God communicates to them. These are God's agencies for communicating the knowledge of truth to the world.

If through the grace of Christ His people will become new bottles, He will fill them with the new wine. God will give additional light, and old truths will be recovered, and replaced in the framework of truth; and wherever the laborers go, they will triumph. As Christ's ambassadors, they are to search the Scriptures, to seek for the truths that have been hidden beneath the rubbish of error. And every ray of light received is to be communicated to others. One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other,—Christ our righteousness.

When that glorious day arrives, every one of God's true people will be found streaming out of the lands of their captivity—from bondage to freedom. Even now there are those who are prepared to turn their backs on the life which seems to offer, though only

temporarily, monetary and material advantages superior to the eternal riches. We must hear God's voice calling us as He called on the scattered remnant and we must obey it as they ought to have done. Failure to do so will certainly lead to terrible, and eventually incurable, apostasy.

Prophets and Kings, p. 599:

Zechariah 2

⁶ Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north,
—was the message given the scattered tribes of Israel who had become settled in many lands far from their former home.

⁶ ...I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven,
says the Lord.

⁷ Deliver yourself, O Zion, that dwells with the daughter of Babylon.

⁸ For thus says the Lord of hosts; After the glory has He sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that touches you touches the apple of His eye.

⁹ For, behold, I will shake my hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me.

God's Long-Suffering

Israel, though totally undeserving of God's constant efforts to have them form a correct evaluation of the everlasting realities of living righteousness, continued to be the subject of Jehovah's invitation to return to Him. Any other ruler, with a character lacking the infinite virtue of God, would have dismissed them without further delay, but while there was still some hope, another opportunity provided the necessary time and space, where, with the lessons of the captivity learned, victory could be achieved.

Dark with apostasy as was the history of ancient Israel leading up to their restoration subsequent to the fall of Babylon, yet God was not prepared to abandon them. When they emerged from Babylonian captivity,

Prophets and Kings, p. 599:

It was still the Lord's purpose, as it had been from the beginning, that His people should be a praise in the earth, to the glory

of His name. During the long years of their exile He had given them many opportunities to return to their allegiance to Him. Some had chosen to listen and to learn; some had found salvation in the midst of affliction. Many of these were to be numbered among the remnant that should return. They were likened by Inspiration to...

Ezekiel 17

²² ...the highest branch of the high cedar, [which was to be planted] upon a high mountain and eminent:

²³ In the mountain of the height of Israel.

So long-suffering was God toward His chosen people, so lavish were His gifts to them, so great their prosperity under His all-powerful rulership, and so many were His glowing promises of their being the first and not the last, the best and not the worst, that there are those who conclude that they, for some mysterious reason were accorded the position of being heaven's unconditional favorites. The most mistaken of all those who labored under this delusion were the Jewish leaders themselves during the time Christ ministered among them on the earth.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 294:

The Jewish people cherished the idea that they were the favorites of heaven, and that they were always to be exalted as the church of God. They were the children of Abraham, they declared, and so firm did the foundation of their prosperity seem to them that they defied earth and heaven to dispossess them of their rights. But by lives of unfaithfulness they were preparing for the condemnation of heaven and for separation from God.

But every promise made to the Jews, every position into which they were installed, and every manifestation of the divine character granted them was on the basis of divinely laid out conditions which not one among them could change in the least degree. If, and only if, those conditions were met, every promise, no matter how great, far-reaching, or glowing, would be met in all its fullness.

But if the conditions were not received, believed, and obeyed, they would be the means of Israel's destruction. There would be a

terrible hardening of heart such as would prevent them from ever accepting and being protected by the message.

So it had been in the destruction of Sodom. Lot and his family were to flee without casting a single longing look behind them. The one person who did look back,—Lot's wife,—lost her life, there and then. The Israelites who failed to grasp the opportunity to return to Jerusalem suffered the same fate. Having spiritually died, they remained unresponsive to any later appeals.

Prophets and Kings, p. 599-600:

It was those "whose spirit God had raised" (*Ezra* 1:5) who had returned under the decree of Cyrus. But God ceased not to plead with those who voluntarily remained in the land of their exile, and through manifold agencies He made it possible for them also to return. The large number, however, of those who failed to respond to the decree of Cyrus, remained unimpressible to later influences; and even when Zechariah warned them to flee from Babylon without further delay, they did not heed the invitation.

In such a way the marks of apostasy began to surface around the very time that God was opening doors for His people to return to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. In *Daniel* 9:24 God warned His people that only 490 years were given them to fulfill their divinely appointed purpose. If they did not grasp this opportunity, they would sink into an apostasy so incurable that nothing and nobody could save them.

52. Days of Opportunity

Messenger and News Review, September 1998

Daniel 9:24-25

THE specific day of opportunity which began for the Jews in 457 BC, was not the first, though certainly it was the last to be provided for them as a people, a nation, or a church, to enable them to fulfill their destiny.

This does not mean that the door of mercy is closed against every individual Israelite simply because he or she is of Hebrew descent. On the contrary, salvation is available to each Jew on an individual basis—which is what counts in the end. There is no racism with God, no favoritism according to special election, no partiality in awarding exclusive gifts to a chosen race.

Today, in the vital matter of salvation from sin and the reward of eternal life, these provisions are just as available to Jewish people who lay hold on God's salvation, as they are to any other section of earth's inhabitants.

John 3

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Isaiah 55

¹ Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

This invitation is wide open to individual Jews today. Furthermore, we are informed that converted Jews will fill an active role in the going forth of the final proclamation of the truth. Their Jewish origin will in no way debar them from serving God on an individual basis. Thus we read:

Evangelism, p. 579:

There will be many converted from among the Jews, and these converts will aid in preparing the way of the Lord, and making straight in the desert a highway for our God. Converted Jews are to have an important part to act in the great preparations to be

made in the future to receive Christ, our Prince. A nation shall be born in a day.⁷⁷ How? By men whom God has appointed being converted to the truth. There will be seen...

Mark 4

²⁸ ...first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

The predictions of prophecy will be fulfilled.

Throughout the scriptures, the door of mercy is pictured as being wide open to those who would enter therein so long as their probationary time continues. Every single person is urged to enter before it is forever too late to do so. Noah preached for 120 years of warning while the door of opportunity to be saved was held open.

However, this was an individual matter and quite different from the responsibility resting on a whole people as a body to accept God's warning. Here a clear distinction must be made. Note the words describing the period of opportunity for the acquirement of personal salvation as distinct from the work to be accomplished by a body of people during a designated period. Sometimes, though not always, there is spelled out the duration of time during which the opportunity to accomplish the divinely commissioned task is to remain open.

Daniel 9

²⁴ Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city...

According to A. T. Jones,

The word "determined" signifies "limited," "restricted within bounds," "to mark off and fix the bounds."⁷⁸

Seventy weeks or 490 years marked out the duration of the final day of opportunity allotted to the Jewish people. The work to be accomplished by the nation as a whole within that time frame was clearly specified, though spelled out to different generations in different words. For instance, in *Revelation* 10:7 although not

⁷⁷ *Isaiah* 66:8.

⁷⁸ *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, p. 108.

referring to the Jews by name, the same work is said to finish, “the mystery of God,” whereas in *Daniel*, it is...

Daniel 9

²⁴ ...to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

Other Historical Days of Opportunity

There have been a number of very real days of opportunity down through history when the work of God might have been finished quickly and decidedly. Beginning with the wilderness wandering, which Paul directs our attention to in *Hebrews* chapter 3, as the first day of opportunity for the Jews, there were a number of days of opportunity that followed when the issues at stake were the same. Each of these was a time when an end could have been made of sins and everlasting righteousness brought in, but instead of this, unbelief and disobedience invariably became the controlling forces.

Without making a closed list, let us identify most of the days of opportunity, starting with those that Paul points to in *Hebrews* 4.

Hebrews 4

¹ Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

² For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

³ For we which have believed do enter into rest, as He said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

⁴ For He spoke in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works.

⁵ And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

⁶ Seeing therefore it remains that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

⁷ Again, He limits a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time; as it is said, Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.

⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.

After the rebellion in the wilderness the next opportunity came under Joshua, then under David.

The next opportunity after David was the 490 years commencing in Daniel's day in the year 457 BC, and ending in 34 AD with the stoning of Stephen. In this case, there was a specific period of probationary time appointed to the Jews.

Without a doubt, the era of the Apostolic Church was a period of the greatest opportunity for bringing the work to its conclusion and to open the doors for the great second coming of Christ. But tragically, once again, the sad pattern of the past continued, with the result that the church descended into the darkest spiritual condition, moral decadence, and material ruin, ever experienced by it until that time. Apostasy became deeply rooted, and seemingly impossible of eradication.

Certainly, the Lord's work came closest to being blotted from the face of the earth at this time, when it fell to the lot of the Waldenses and other isolated, dedicated, individual Christians, to preserve God's sacred truths through the dark papal period of great sacrifice and suffering. Again and again it appeared that the church was doomed to destruction from both within and without, but after each purging it emerged purer and stronger than before.

In this transition period, the role of these faithful Christians was to hold on to the truth until a better day should dawn. Once their work of priceless value was concluded, then a new day began with the first rays of light which produced the great Protestant reformation. At that time another precious day of opportunity arrived to make an end of sins and to bring in everlasting righteousness. Then the church of Christ surged ahead and through her mighty deeds gave promise of great things. But that which was blessed with a wonderful beginning, petered out so

badly that the witness against it as the Sardis church, was that she had a name that she was alive, but that she was dead.⁷⁹

Next came the great second advent movement of which the Spirit of Prophecy witnesses that the work could have been finished. Never since the days of the apostles had the promise of the blessed hope seemed closer to fulfillment, yet, once again, the precious day of opportunity passed.

Then from 1888, came the messages of living, everlasting righteousness to the advent people at Minneapolis, Minnesota. Though these messages were lost for a period of time, they were revived again in the 1950's and have been spreading over the length and breadth of the earth ever since. Once again, for what we ardently hope will prove to be the last time, we are living in another day of opportunity.

A Time of Apostasy

The question now arises as to what constitutes a new day of opportunity. It is crucial that we have a clear understanding of this question, for it takes time for God to set one up. Time is needed because, for any day to qualify, certain conditions must be met and established both among God's people and among the nations around them.

The period leading up to the arrival of a typical day of opportunity, is a time of ever-deepening apostasy among the enemies of God's people. The outcome is a corresponding increase in the likelihood of ruin, which usually eventuates suddenly in the end. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the fall of ancient Babylon, the plagues of Egypt, the captivity of the papacy, and others are examples of this process. But we may rest assured that none of these peoples ever suffered unlimited ruin without having come to a state of total apostasy first.

It was in the light of these principles that God explained to Abraham that his seed could not possess the Promised Land until the iniquity of the Amorites was full. Their probationary period

⁷⁹ See *Revelation* 3:1-6.

would continue until then, and as long as their iniquity was not yet complete God would not lead His people in their conquest of them. The time for their destruction came when the Israelites invaded the land shortly after their arrival at Kadesh-barnea for the second time. Thus it was in the following words that God revealed to Abraham why He would lead them to occupy the Promised Land at that time:

Genesis 15

¹⁶ But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.

The Review and Herald, October 18, 1906:

By studying the story of the Amorites, we may learn a lesson regarding God's dealings with the transgressors of his law. God promised Abraham and his posterity the land of Canaan; but centuries passed by before this promise was fulfilled. One reason given was that the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. Though practicing idolatry, they had not yet reached the full measure of guilt that was to bring upon them the vengeance of God. Finally, when their period of probation was ended, the command was given for their destruction.

The day inevitably dawned when disobedience towards God increased to the point where the Amorites reached their lowest level of weakness and immorality. This led to their national ruin.

A further example is provided by the Egyptians, whose power was broken by the plagues. Their total separation from God led to the devastation of their country, which in turn provided the Israelites with the opportunity to gain their freedom.

In David's time, the bondage was of a different character. The Israelites were firmly committed to building God's kingdom by the use of force. They believed that it was their responsibility to purge the land of promise by using the sword to slay all the inhabitants of the country until none were left, except for any who had repented. Their minds were locked into the concept that the kingdom was to be won, developed, strengthened, and fortified by the use of force.

So while they were physically free, and were conquerors of the nations around about, they were by no means free from the error that the kingdom of righteousness was to be established by the weapons of unrighteousness. They were trying to build God's kingdom in man's way. Yet David and his people were deeply religious.

- David wrote inspired psalms, and led the people in singing them.
- They loved their Lord, and rejoiced in His salvation.
- They lived for the day when the Messiah would appear, and sweep all their enemies from the face of the earth.
- They faithfully performed every typical ceremony pointing to the coming Saviour, and they concentrated all their resources and energies on building, at prodigious expense, the temple for the worship of the true God.
- Faithfully they observed the seventh-day Sabbath.
- They were careful to do all that the Lord commanded them according to their understanding.

One would expect that here was a day of opportunity which could not fail. But, though they were blessed with so much light, the Israelites still failed to enter into God's rest, as is witnessed by their retention of the weapons of bloody warfare that they imagined were the means of building His righteous kingdom.

Let us become eternally established on the principle that it is absolutely impossible to bring in everlasting righteousness and to make an end of sins by resorting to the use of such weapons. It is like trying to use dirty water to wash clothes in and claiming that the result is spotlessly clean garments. Such a day of opportunity had to fail unless the spiritual darkness enslaving their minds could be penetrated, the deficiency made up, and the fault corrected.

But, unbelief and disobedience prevailed. This was especially the case for all the kings who succeeded David right down to

Zedekiah and Jehoiachin, the last of them. Even Nehemiah used the sword during the restoration.⁸⁰

By the time Christ appeared on earth to die for humankind, His people had moved much further from light into darkness, while the Romans possessed the greater amount of might and force of arms enabling them to enforce their government on the people. So then what was the problem?

Romans 9

¹⁴ What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!

No fault can be found with God who is very, very anxious that this sorry situation be terminated as soon as possible. The fault lay in their failure to recognize the absolute, life-giving righteousness present in every command of the Lord. Without this conviction, they found themselves destitute of that confidence by which faith brings the sure and certain victory.

A Time of Education

Once the Lord has delivered His people from their oppressors, He proceeds to enlighten their minds with the very truths needed for their growth and the building of another day of opportunity.

During this phase of operation, God locates or relocates them in places where they will be as isolated as possible from all influences detrimental to their preparation for making an end of sin and bringing in everlasting righteousness.

What is needed at this stage are places where they can be made ready by a process of education to bring the light of saving truth to every nation on the earth. A place of obscurity, hardship, and austerity, such as the wilderness area of Mt. Sinai, was just the setting for God's purpose at the time of Israel's release from bondage. So it was that the great Teacher led His people through the desert for forty years of arduous schooling where the great lesson they had to learn was that of faith and obedience; the les-

⁸⁰ See *Nehemiah* 4:13.

son they had such great difficulty in grasping and which they were so prone to forget.

The Desire of Ages, p. 121:

When Christ said to the tempter,

Matthew 4

⁴ Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God,

—He repeated the words that, more than fourteen hundred years before, He had spoken to Israel:

Deuteronomy 8

² The Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness...

³ And He humbled you, and suffered you to hunger, and fed you with manna, which you knew not, neither did your fathers know; that He might make you know that man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live.

In the wilderness, when all means of sustenance failed, God sent His people manna from heaven; and a sufficient and constant supply was given. This provision was to teach them that while they trusted in God and walked in His ways He would not forsake them.

The Saviour now practiced the lesson He had taught to Israel. By the word of God succor had been given to the Hebrew host, and by the same word it would be given to Jesus. He awaited God's time to bring relief. He was in the wilderness in obedience to God, and He would not obtain food by following the suggestions of Satan. In the presence of the witnessing universe, He testified that it is a less calamity to suffer whatever may befall than to depart in any manner from the will of God.

Thus Christ, as an individual, demonstrated by His being finished with transgression, His making an end of sins, and making reconciliation for iniquity in himself, that everlasting righteousness can be brought into the life experience of everyone who will believe and obey from the heart the living principles of the divine laws forever. It also demonstrates that once such everlasting righteousness has been collectively established in the lives of the

people individually, then they are ready to possess the kingdom, at first on this earth and very soon thereafter in heaven.

In the days of the Israelites' departure from Egypt, the nation began its trek to Canaan with high hopes of speedy possession of the promised land. But when they discovered that they first had to have a comprehensive education in making an end of sins and bringing in everlasting righteousness, they rose up in rebellion. They made it very clear that they had not left Egypt in order to go to school, but to become rich, and they hardened their hearts when they should have chosen to have God soften them, and fill them with the spirit of a learner.

If they had seen how strongly their hopes and aspirations were at variance with the purity of God's ways, it would have been more than enough to alert them to the deadly peril lying in the course upon which they had determined they would walk. Their personal attitude against the will of God ought to have brought them deep conviction of their need to be changed in themselves, until the spirit within them was a true reflection of the perfect and holy law of God.

Know Yourself

This is the pressing need facing every child of God who is determined to enter into God's day of opportunity. It is to know what we are in ourselves. We must seriously ask ourselves if, since we have embraced the message of living righteousness, it has literally and actually wrought changes in us. Do we find that within ourselves, we have become kind, loving, gentle, merciful, and patient, or is it still the sad truth that such qualities have not really become our personal experience? Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit strongly advises each one of us to see for ourselves whether we are in the faith. He writes:

2 Corinthians 13

⁵ Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? unless indeed you are disqualified.

The Review and Herald, November 16, 1886:

Let heads of families look into their home life. Is this love exemplified in the family circle? Go farther in your self-examination: in your association with your brethren in church capacity, do you find unkindness, selfishness, or even dishonesty? Be sure that you examine and prove yourselves as Paul has directed:

2 Corinthians 13

⁵ Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith: prove your own selves.

In the light of God's word, search carefully whether you truly have the love of God in the heart.

John 15

¹² This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

1 John 2

⁹ He that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now.

Selected Messages, vol. 1, p. 89:

2 Corinthians 13

⁵ Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves.

Closely criticize the temper, the disposition, the thoughts, words, inclinations, purposes, and deeds. How can we ask intelligently for the things we need unless we prove by the Scriptures the condition of our spiritual health?

Let us remember that we are studying the going forth of a movement, not an isolated individual here and there. This is evident from the words of Paul where he referred to those whom God was leading, but who rebelled against Him by saying,

Hebrews 3

⁹ Where your fathers tested me...

And again, Paul speaks of...

¹⁰ ...that generation.

These words refer to the fathers of a specific generation who were in rebellion and therefore were ill disposed to make a complete end of all sin and sinning, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. The members of that generation who were alive on the

earth in the time of the apostles were no better than those who had transited from Egypt to Canaan. Paul powerfully appealed to them not to harden their hearts, as had been the case with all those who had gone before. Here are the words of his solemn appeal:

Hebrews 3

⁷ Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: Today, if you will hear His voice,

⁸ Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness,

⁹ Where your fathers tested me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

¹⁰ Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways.

¹¹ So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter my rest.

As Paul asserts, theirs was a day of opportunity which failed as others had before it. God said,

¹⁰ I was angry with that generation.

And so He was, for He rejected every one of them except for Caleb and Joshua, and the unnumbered tribe of Levi. As a body or a movement, they were a failure, with the result that thereafter God turned to another day of opportunity,

Hebrews 4

⁷ ...saying in David, Today, after such a long time, as it has been said: Today if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.

⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.

The Combined Effort of Church Members

Certain individuals were saved during these periods when the various movements were walking in the darkness of unbelief and disobedience, but the work could not be finished by those individuals. That will require the combined effort of all the members of the church working together, each endowed with power from on high by the unlimited outpouring of the latter rain.

In the life of each individual, transgression will be finished, sin will be ended, and everlasting righteousness will have been brought in. But no matter how perfectly each one of these scattered few reveals the character of God in word and deed, none of them can leave the church and go to heaven in advance of their fellow-believers.

The whole of *Hebrews* 11 is a wonderful honors list of the great achievements of those who, by exercising faith and obedience, vanquished the enemy, yet, apart from several special cases such as Enoch, Moses, Elijah, and the firstfruits raised with Christ, none of these was taken to heaven when his lifework ended. Nor was it expected of any one of them that, alone and unsupported, they would fill the entire earth with everlasting righteousness to end all sinfulness forever. So Paul wrote:

Hebrews 11

³⁹ And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,

⁴⁰ God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Paul made one of his great appeals to the people of God not to destroy their day of opportunity, no matter in which phase they might stand, when he wrote:

Hebrews 3

¹² Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

¹³ But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

¹⁴ For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,

¹⁵ While it is said: Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.

¹⁶ For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses?

¹⁷ Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness?

¹⁸ And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?

¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

The day referred to by Paul, was the day of opportunity which was first given to the Jewish people, beginning with their journey from Egypt to Canaan. In his warnings, Paul spoke about their failure to meet the specifications that God designed should be accomplished in a day of opportunity. Of course those, as we have seen, were...

Daniel 9

²⁴ ...to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

These components must necessarily have been firstly established in their own hearts and lives before they could be installed in the hearts and lives of the world in general, that is, if they were to become the experience of the souls still outside of the church of God.

But, according to Paul, the two most dominant deficiencies which marked the failure of that generation, were unbelief and disobedience. Because of the presence of these two evils, they could not enter into God's rest. God's rest shall have been achieved when:

1. All sinfulness has been totally and permanently eliminated from the lives of every one of God's people.
2. In addition, the lives of those who have rejected the gospel of Jesus as their Saviour and are therefore transporting sin wherever they go, must have been destroyed with their sins.
3. Also, the confessed sins of those who fully qualify for salvation must have been laid upon the scapegoat and borne by him into a place from which he can never return—the bottomless pit in which he will be chained for one thousand years.
4. And finally, Satan and the sins of the righteous of all ages, with which he will be loaded, must pass into oblivion.

When all this has been accomplished, transgression will be finished, sin will be ended, reconciliation will be made for iniquity, everlasting righteousness will be brought in, the vision and the prophecy will be sealed, and the Most Holy anointed.

Everlasting righteousness, remember. Not a righteousness for today and sin tomorrow, and righteousness again and sin again. That is not everlasting righteousness. Everlasting righteousness is righteousness that is brought in and stays everlastingly in the life of him who has believed and confessed, and who still further believes and receives this everlasting righteousness in the place of all sin and all sinning. This alone is everlasting righteousness; this alone is eternal redemption from sin. And this unspeakable blessing is the gracious gift of God by the heavenly ministry which He has established in our behalf in the priesthood and ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.⁸¹

When we realize as we must, the significance and necessity of entering fully and finally into the last day of opportunity which will ever be made available to humankind, we will most heartily respond to the terribly solemn appeal of the Holy Spirit:

Hebrews 4

¹ Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

⁸¹ *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection* by A. T. Jones, p. 123.

53. Important Changes in the Situation

Messenger and News Review, October 1998

Daniel 8:13-14

AS WE saw in the last chapter, the great Second Advent movement was an important day of opportunity given to God's people to finish His work and bring in everlasting righteousness.

Unfolding of Daniel 8:14

The Great Controversy, p. 409:

The scripture that above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration:

Daniel 8

¹⁴ Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

These had been familiar words to all believers in the Lord's soon coming. By the lips of thousands was this prophecy repeated as the watchword of their faith. All felt that upon the events therein foretold depended their brightest expectations and most cherished hopes.

These prophetic days had been shown to terminate in the autumn of 1844. In common with the rest of the Christian world, Adventists then held that the earth, or some portion of it, was the sanctuary. They understood that the cleansing of the sanctuary was the purification of the earth by the fires of the last great day, and that this would take place at the second advent. Hence the conclusion that Christ would return to the earth in 1844.

Only those who were living on the earth when those momentous, prophesied events were taking place, could really appreciate the depth, and height, and breadth of Christian experience to which the believers were brought by the unfolding of the light contained in that one short verse of *Daniel* 8:14.

Behind them was a series of waymarks showing them the point to which they had come in their journey through history, from the fall of man to his final restoration in the earth made new. Four great world empires had come and gone, followed by ten king-

doms which soon lost three of their number to make room for the little horn power that dominated the entire world with the utmost oppression and cruelty through the long dark ages.

The believers living in the time when *Daniel* 8:14 was soon to be fulfilled, saw the administering of the deadly wound upon the beast (correctly identified as the papacy), right on time in 1798. They had witnessed Pope Pius VI being taken captive in France by Napoleon's general, Berthier, in 1798 and had matched it with the correct prophecy, namely, the ending of the time, times and half a time of *Daniel* 7:25.

Once this prophecy had been identified and fulfilled when the 1,260 years ended, the Holy Spirit had then directed their minds to the Scripture,

Daniel 8

¹⁴ And he said to me, For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.

LeRoy Edwin Fromm notes this change in the following words

Around the turn of the century, (the 18th), two remarkable yet closely related shifts in study and emphasis occurred in the field of prophetic interpretation—a shift of interest from *Daniel* 7, with its 1260 years, over to *Daniel* 8 and the great 2300-year period; and second, from *Revelation* 13 to *Revelation* 14.⁸²

As we know from our studies, the 2300 years, that longest of all the prophetic time periods, commenced in the autumn of 457 BC and terminated on October 22, 1844. The event that marked its beginning was the completion of the decree signed into law by a succession of Persian kings as recorded by Ezra, the scribe. As might be expected, the attention of Bible students on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean was next turned to the work of understanding the prediction that the 2,300 years would end in 1844. Under the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, the people of God became aware that this is a prophecy of great significance.

⁸² *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Volume 4, p. 207.

It is not enough to merely understand when the time began, nor when it finished, though careful students will make sure they do understand just when these events were due to take place, or actually passed into history. The beginning of that period was marked by God's people coming out of Babylon under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah.

Although the Babylonian Empire had already fallen, it was only the military power, which enforced and supported her policies and principles, that had passed away. The real Babylon, which continued on despite the rise and fall of great nations, was next embodied in the Medo-Persian despotism. It was in the early part of the sovereignty of that kingdom, as God's people were returning to their own land to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and the sacred temple, when that long period of 2,300 years began.

The Central Role of the Sanctuary

In some vital respects, the ending of that period, 2,300 years after it began, was marked by the parallel movement of God's people coming out of spiritual Babylon in 1844. God's eternal purpose in leading His people out of darkness into His light is to make salvation freely available to all. It is also the means whereby the character of God will stand fully revealed and vindicated along with the utter and final exposure of Satan.

To thus end the great controversy requires the unrestricted flow of divine light and creative energy from the sanctuary in heaven to God's people. For, in the soul-saving light shining forth from Him who dwells between the cherubim above the mercy seat in the heavenly sanctuary, is stored all that Christ won for us on Calvary. Therefore,

The Great Controversy, p. 489:

The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. We must by faith enter within the veil,

Hebrews 6

²⁰ ...whither the forerunner is for us entered.

There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected. There we may gain a clearer insight into the mysteries of redemption. The salvation of man is accomplished at an infinite expense to heaven; the sacrifice made is equal to the broadest demands of the broken law of God. Jesus has opened the way to the Father's throne, and through His mediation the sincere desire of all who come to Him in faith may be presented before God.

Essentially, salvation is the restoration of everything lost through sin. That restoration is available through the ministry of the heavenly priesthood in the heavenly sanctuary, and the application of it to each repentant soul. Therefore, any effective effort to turn the church of God on earth into an invincible army must involve the elevation of the sanctuary to its rightful place in the hearts of God's people, so that it will be established there forevermore. In addition, it will require the reversal of the work of the man of sin, who continually seeks to take away the daily and to cast down the place of Christ's sanctuary to this earth.⁸³

Therefore, when a great new movement is formed on earth for the purpose of making all things new, the re-institution of the sanctuary and its services will occupy a predominant place in the entire program from beginning to end.

Three Essentials

Consider the exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt. The Lord brought them out of the land of bondage by His mighty power and could have marched them fairly quickly over the relatively short distance up the coastline into Canaan. Instead, He firstly encamped them in the desert to provide time to establish the sanctuary and its services on the earth once more. Only when that work was complete, did the guiding pillar of cloud signal the recommencement of their journey to the Promised Land.

⁸³ See *Daniel* 8:11.

God led them according to this plan because there are three factors that must be given full freedom of operation if the Lord's work is to go successfully forward. He needs:

1. A people set free,
2. The temple or sanctuary elevated to its high and holy place, and
3. The daily returned to its appointed role where it is fully operational.

For verification of this, we will survey some of the great movements that God has called to come out of Babylon and receive His promises. In doing so, we shall not define "great movements" as being necessarily great in numerical count, but those which are great in spiritual power.

The First Earthly Altars

Our survey begins with the first introduction of the sacrificial system. This was when the loyal among the family of Adam were physically free, and theirs was the simplest of temples—an altar of stone erected wherever they tarried. But the daily services of the morning and evening sacrifices were faithfully observed, thus fulfilling all three of the required conditions.

God's Amazing Grace, p. 55:

The very system of sacrifices was devised by Christ, and given to Adam as typifying a Saviour to come, who would bear the sins of the world, and die for its redemption.

On this side of the flood, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants followed the practice of erecting the family altar upon which they offered the daily sacrifices.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 128:

Abraham, "the friend of God," set us a worthy example. His was a life of prayer. Wherever he pitched his tent, close beside it was set up his altar, calling all within his encampment to the morning and evening sacrifice. When his tent was removed, the altar remained. In following years, there were those among the roving Canaanites who received instruction from Abraham; and whenever one of these came to that altar, he knew who had been

there before him; and when he had pitched his tent, he repaired the altar, and there worshiped the living God.

Note that up till this stage in the history of God's church, no temple building had been erected, nor even a tent pitched as the dwelling place of the Lord. Not yet had the command gone forth in terms as explicit as this:

Exodus 25

⁸ And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.

The divine intention was that a much larger and more substantial structure should be erected. That could not be done in Egypt for at least two reasons. In the first case, God's people were in bondage, where they were compelled to do their masters' bidding. However, the ruling class in Egypt had no interest in lifting up the sanctuary, performing the daily sacrifices, or protecting the freedom of the Israelites. In fact, the interests of the rulers were quite the opposite.

In the second case, Egypt was already littered with temples, none of which were in any way suitable for the worship of Jehovah. They would need to have been torn down and replaced by a true antitype of the sanctuary in heaven. Such a move was not beyond possibility, providing that it involved the thorough conversion of Pharaoh and enough loyal subjects holding positions of power in order for the mighty king to remain as the decision-maker in the realm.

While such an eventuality could have developed, it did not, and as the kingdom of Egypt rejected the gospel delivered to them by God via Moses and Aaron, they suffered stroke after stroke until reduced to national ruin. This marked the termination of the period of fearful suffering imposed on God's people by the rulers of Egypt and their subjects, during which the place of God's sanctuary was cast down, the Israelites lost their freedom, and the daily sacrifices were discontinued.

The First Earthly Sanctuary

The time came when Egypt's power was broken, which provided God with the freedom to lead the Israelites wherever He desired. He took them to a location where, as a matter of immediate priority, the three prerequisites for making an end of sin and bringing in everlasting righteousness could be re-established. He led them through the Red Sea, and into the wilderness before Mt. Sinai, a free people.

There God instructed them to build the sanctuary so that He could dwell among them. The people willingly obeyed the divine command and built the sacred structure without one thread of human devising woven into the structure as we read:

The Desire of Ages, p. 208:

When Moses was about to build the sanctuary as a dwelling place for God, he was directed to make all things according to the pattern shown him in the mount. Moses was full of zeal to do God's work; the most talented, skillful men were at hand to carry out his suggestions. Yet he was not to make a bell, a pomegranate, a tassel, a fringe, a curtain, or any vessel of the sanctuary, except according to the pattern shown him. God called him into the mount, and revealed to him the heavenly things. The Lord covered him with His own glory, that he might see the pattern, and according to it all things were made.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 349:

A period of about half a year was occupied in the building of the tabernacle.

This was the temporary, portable version that was dismantled every time they were to spend the day marching onward. They carried it during all their wilderness wanderings, and, once they had come into possession of the Promised Land, it was set up at Shiloh. There it remained for the next three hundred years, after which it was transferred to Jerusalem.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 514:

The ark remained at Shiloh for three hundred years, until, because of the sins of Eli's house, it fell into the hands of the Philistines, and Shiloh was ruined. The ark was never returned to

the tabernacle here, the sanctuary service was finally transferred to the temple at Jerusalem, and Shiloh fell into insignificance.

The era of the judges from the death of Joshua until the people clamored for a king like the nations around them, was a time noted for its dreary repetition of terrible backsliding. The following paragraph sums up the story of their rising and falling time after time.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 545:

Judges 2

¹² They forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt,

Psalms 78

⁵² ...and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

⁵⁸ They provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their graven images.

Therefore the Lord...

⁶⁰ ...forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among men;

⁶¹ And delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand.

Yet He did not utterly forsake His people. There was ever a remnant who were true to Jehovah; and from time to time the Lord raised up faithful and valiant men to put down idolatry and to deliver the Israelites from their enemies. But when the deliverer was dead, and the people were released from his authority, they would gradually return to their idols. And thus the story of backsliding and chastisement, of confession and deliverance, was repeated again and again.

This was the pattern that needed to be stabilized before God's plan of salvation could be brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Sin had to be ended and everlasting righteousness brought in, without anymore fallings away such as continually beset God's people.

Incredible were the sufferings endured by the apostate people who found no prosperity in their adopted course of action. Every time they turned away from the truth, the services in the sanctuary were discontinued, the idols of Baal were worshiped on a

daily basis, and the people of God were deprived of their freedom. Consider the awful picture of deprivation of even the most basic needs that the people needlessly endured because of their disobedience. They must have been brought very close to death by starvation.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 545-546:

The Amalekites on the south of Canaan, as well as the Midianites on its eastern border, and in the deserts beyond, were still the unrelenting enemies of Israel. The latter nation had been nearly destroyed by the Israelites in the days of Moses, but they had since increased greatly, and had become numerous and powerful. They had thirsted for revenge; and now that the protecting hand of God was withdrawn from Israel, the opportunity had come.

Not alone the tribes east of Jordan, but the whole land suffered from their ravages. The wild, fierce inhabitants of the desert, “as locusts for multitude” (*Judges 6:5, RV*), came swarming into the land, with their flocks and herds. Like a devouring plague they spread over the country, from the river Jordan to the Philistine plain.

They came as soon as the harvests began to ripen, and remained until the last fruits of the earth had been gathered. They stripped the fields of their increase and robbed and maltreated the inhabitants and then returned to the deserts. Thus the Israelites dwelling in the open country were forced to abandon their homes, and to congregate in walled towns, to seek refuge in fortresses, or even to find shelter in caves and rocky fastnesses among the mountains.

For seven years this oppression continued, and then, as the people in their distress gave heed to the Lord’s reproof, and confessed their sins, God again raised up a helper for them.

So the Lord called deliverers such as Gideon and Samson through whom, on condition of the repentance of the people, He worked to re-establish the sanctuary, the daily, and the people, to their rightful places.

If only the people had become stabilized at a rallying point from which they would never again know retreat, the sanctuary

would never have needed cleansing again, its place would never have been cast down anymore, and the daily would never again have been trodden underfoot. But centuries were yet to pass before such a condition of things could be established.

The First Earthly Temple

As we continue our survey, we see a righteous king on the throne of Israel—King David, a man after God’s own heart.⁸⁴ Despite his terrible mistakes in yielding to temptation, he wielded a mighty influence for good in Israel, so much so that during his reign and that of his son, Solomon, Israel reached the pinnacle of her greatness. None of the surrounding nations dared to go to war with her.

1. The sanctuary occupied its rightful place;
2. The daily was in continual operation; and
3. The people were free.

What an incredible history would have developed if only both David and Solomon had lived in perfect righteousness, instead of sowing the evil seed that sprung up with the good seed they had planted during their lives!

Accordingly, though it was a time of great promise, and a marvelous day of wonderful opportunity, the evil seed sown multiplied to produce its harvest of evil fruit, the effect and power of which began to manifest itself as soon as Solomon’s son mounted the throne. Rehoboam proved himself to be arrogant and overbearing to the extent that the nation was soon divided into two kingdoms, the northern consisting of ten tribes, and the southern comprising the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Thus, after the reign of King Solomon, the situation followed the same pattern as before David came to the throne. In both cases, the nation showed a lack of the vital capacity to learn to

⁸⁴ See *1 Samuel* 13:14.

trace from cause to effect. As a result, Israel sank steadily deeper and deeper into darkness and destruction.

If there had been a trend in the opposite direction, we would see hope where all appeared dark with despair. It was true of course that there were reversals of direction from time to time, but they were so temporary and so often related to escape from their sufferings, that their effectiveness was short-lived.

At the same time, there were scattered throughout the kingdom, souls who were true and loyal to God, and for their sakes the Lord protected the nation as long as it was possible for Him to do so.

A detailed study of the period between David's day and the Babylonian captivity once more reveals that when God's people turn from loyalty to Him, they...

1. Lose their freedom,
2. Terminate the daily services, and
3. Cast down the place of His sanctuary.

Up until the destruction of Jerusalem, the desolation of the land of Israel, and the razing of the temple that the Lord had built through King Solomon, Babylon had never done such terrible things against God, His people and His sanctuary.

The Beginning of the 2300 Years

In our survey, we have arrived at the point in time when Daniel lived. Behind him lay the history that we have so briefly covered on these few pages. To us it is also history. In addition, we have much more than he had, for time has not stood still. That which was prophecy in his day, is history in our day. Beyond the present, into the future, both for Daniel and ourselves, that which is yet to happen can be known only by the sure word of prophecy.

Daniel was truly conversant with the history of the past and the prophecies of the future, and he was well able to understand the significance of their relation to each other. He grasped the

awesome portent of the future coming forth of the man of sin who would once more attempt to cast down the place of the true sanctuary from its place in the minds and hearts of God's people.

Subsequent to the rise of the papacy, during the period known as the dark ages, the church of God suffered fearful persecution. This began at the hands of the Romans and the Jews, and it extended to many lands especially in Europe, only ceasing shortly before the end of the 1,260-year prophecy in 1798. It was during those dark ages more than any other period in the past, that:

1. The sanctuary was cast down,
2. The daily removed, and
3. The people of the Lord trodden underfoot.

There is yet to come the final showdown when, in the very near future, the beast will be returned to power with far more dreadful torture weapons at his command than he has ever had before. For the last time he will use every means at his disposal in his final desperate determination...

1. To cast down God's sanctuary from its rightful place,
2. To terminate the daily services, and
3. To utterly do away with the true people of the Lord forever.

Let us not underestimate his capacity to bring matters to the place where victory for him will be but a hair's breadth away.

The visions given to the prophet Daniel can be rightfully looked upon as discouraging and alarming. This is so because, after almost six thousand years of struggling to learn and live His truth, God's people have not yet succeeded in making an absolute end of sin in their lives nor in establishing everlasting righteousness.

The disturbing thought is that if the Almighty were so handicapped by the weakness of human nature that He could not achieve these critical objectives through it in all that time, how can we ever hope that He will do better in the future? Considered from this point of view, the prospects are indeed both alarming and discouraging.

The Ending of the 2300 Years

But there is another point of view which is designed to fill us with living faith—a faith based upon the promise of God which cannot fail. It is our privilege to seek and find that promise, which comes to light as a result of our survey of history.

It was because that survey painted so distressing a picture, and called for so positive an answer, that a natural question arose. After Daniel had been shown the incredible loss and suffering which would constantly befall God's people, there arose the very significant question:

Daniel 8

¹³ Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, How long will the vision be, concerning the daily [sacrifices] and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?

This question is concerned with only one thing—how long would the daily be trampled underfoot and the transgression of desolation continue? The clear answer given was as follows:

Daniel 8

¹⁴ And he said to me, For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.

From the question asked, and the reply given, it is clear that there would come a successful conclusion to the reign of the man of sin. He would not be able to go forward forever casting down the sanctuary, taking away the daily, and robbing God's people of their freedom. That time would be terminated at the end of the 2,300 years, from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem.

After October 22, 1844, never again could God's people be ignorant of the existence, purpose, and ministration of the sanctuary in heaven. Neither could the daily ministrations be cut off from the church, nor could the saints be trodden underfoot again. In the past, Satan has been able to deny those seeking salvation the facilities needed, but in these final days the children of God will

have unlimited access to all the light and power necessary to triumph gloriously.

In all this we find a wonderful source of encouragement for those occasions when Satan presents before us a gloomy picture in which he argues that the end will never come. As soon as he does this, we can turn our attention to this scripture of *Daniel* 8:14 and be greatly comforted, for it is not a doubtful statement but a most positive one. God's word does not say,

“If the sanctuary were to be cleansed,”

—or,

“The sanctuary *might be* cleansed,”

—but it simply declares that:

“The sanctuary *shall be* cleansed.”

When those words are read just as they are written, we can know for sure that the sanctuary will be cleansed, the end will come, the conditions will be met, and the victory will be obtained.

Nor do we need to rest on faith alone, for an ever-increasing witness of sight is being added, so that less and less faith is being needed to verify the certainty of the question and answer contained in *Daniel* 8:13-14. The witness of sight shows that there exists a definite difference between the situation in the church before and after October 22, 1844. The differences to be expected are that:

1. Before that crucial date the sanctuary would be cast down, but that afterwards it would be restored to its rightful place.
2. Beforehand, the daily would be taken away from God's people, but after 1844 they would be blessed by its continual ministry.
3. Whereas before 1844 there would have been relentless persecution, this would have dried up by the time the change came.

Evidence to show that these changes have in fact taken place ever since the ending of the 2,300 year period will be detailed in the next chapters.

54. No More Treading Underfoot

Messenger and News Review, November 1998

Daniel 8:13-14

IN THE last chapter, we closed with the thought that the end of the 2300 years in 1844 was the beginning of a new era in which there would never again be any casting down of the sanctuary, taking away of the daily, or the treading down of the people of God.⁸⁵

In order to confirm the truth of this, we will begin by observing the accuracy of Bible prophecy as it applied first to the termination of the earthly services of the earthly tabernacle, and then to the change in the heavenly services of the heavenly sanctuary.

The End of the Earthly Sanctuary Services

As revealed by prophecy, the earthly services were due for termination on the day of the Passover, in the year 31 AD. This was three and a half years after Christ began His ministry as the Messiah, or the anointed One, in 27 AD. The time schedule supplied by Gabriel to Daniel and recorded in *Daniel* 9:24-27 said that in the middle of the final week, the Messiah was to...

Daniel 9

²⁷ ...bring an end to sacrifice and offering.

From that point of time forward, the earthly sanctuary and its services were no longer of any validity except as a means of revealing the gospel of Christ. The Messiah's death would bring to an end all observances of sacrifices and offerings. Type would be replaced by antitype forever.

There was no ambiguity about the timing for the fulfillment of this prophecy. It did not happen haphazardly sometime during that year at some other locality, but type met antitype at a precise point in time and location. It was exactly at the hour of the evening sacrifice on the day on which Christ was crucified, that the time came for the termination of the ceremonial system of

⁸⁵ See *Daniel* 8:10-14.

sacrifices, offerings, and ordinances. Jesus died outside the gates of Jerusalem, and in the temple the termination of the ceremonial system was made obvious to all.

The Desire of Ages, p. 756-757:

When the loud cry, "It is finished," came from the lips of Christ, the priests were officiating in the temple. It was the hour of the evening sacrifice. The lamb representing Christ had been brought to be slain. Clothed in his significant and beautiful dress, the priest stood with lifted knife, as did Abraham when he was about to slay his son. With intense interest the people were looking on.

But the earth trembles and quakes; for the Lord himself draws near. With a rending noise the inner veil of the temple is torn from top to bottom by an unseen hand, throwing open to the gaze of the multitude a place once filled with the presence of God. In this place the Shekinah had dwelt. Here God had manifested His glory above the mercy seat. No one but the high priest ever lifted the veil separating this apartment from the rest of the temple. He entered in once a year to make an atonement for the sins of the people. But lo, this veil is rent in twain. The most holy place of the earthly sanctuary is no longer sacred.

All is terror and confusion. The priest is about to slay the victim; but the knife drops from his nerveless hand, and the lamb escapes. Type has met antitype in the death of God's Son. The great sacrifice has been made. The way into the holiest is laid open. A new and living way is prepared for all. No longer need sinful, sorrowing humanity await the coming of the high priest. Henceforth the Saviour was to officiate as priest and advocate in the heaven of heavens.

It was as if a living voice had spoken to the worshipers: There is now an end to all sacrifices and offerings for sin. The Son of God is come according to His word,

Hebrews 10

⁷ Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of me,) to do your will, O God.

Hebrews 9

¹² By His own blood [He enters] in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Though this event brought an end “...to all sacrifices and offerings for sin,” its significance was not immediately discerned, as evidenced in the early church by the struggles over the question of the need to observe the ceremonial law. This sad disunity with the living truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ was eventually replaced with the light which penetrated the darkness of error.

Paul was the great champion through whom God was able to realign the thinking of the believers in his day. To the Colossians he was able, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to write:

Colossians 2

¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

¹⁴ Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

¹⁵ Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

¹⁶ Therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths.

The Change in the Heavenly Sanctuary Services

The same accuracy is found to exist in the timing of the events scheduled for the termination of the 2300 years. The major event, as we are aware, entailed the transfer of the ministry of our great High Priest from the first to the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary on the antitypical day of atonement. This transfer took place exactly on October 22, 1844. Satan obviously understood this, for he is a very keen Bible student who knows and understands the Scriptures, as it is written,

The Desire of Ages, p. 124:

He still appears as an angel of light, and he makes it evident that he is acquainted with the Scriptures, and understands the import of what is written.

Let us now study those same Scriptures, so that we, too, understand the message of precise timing for the occurrence of these

critical events. In *Daniel* 8:14 we find the information given by the angel Gabriel, that 2300 years were to elapse before the cleansing of the sanctuary would take place. Despite such a long period of time being involved, it in no way weakened the certainty of the event. The 2300 years commenced and finished right on time as scheduled, and then the sanctuary was cleansed.

Although we know that October 22, 1844 is the precise date when the cleansing began, we do not know, nor will we know, the finishing point until after the close of probation. When this work began exactly on time, as it was due to, the believers were strengthened by this confirmation of God's infallible ability as the ultimate Problem Solver, at the very time that they most needed it.

On the other hand, the enemy worked with determination to frustrate the divine plan for man's restoration, by diverting the attention of God's children from the place of God's sanctuary to another place altogether.

During the Dark Ages, for instance, the papacy taught the people to behold in every Roman Catholic Cathedral or church, an antitype of the Old Testament Sanctuary. By this means, access to the one place where the truth of God's holy word could be found was denied, and the masses believed what they were told.

Although the Word of God speaks clearly of a heavenly sanctuary, the view that the temple of God is found on this earth became so established that it clouded the thinking of the advent believers, both in the ranks of Protestantism and Adventism. This error proved to be the cause for a very perplexing disappointment.

When we look back in history to the point when the great apostasy developed after the falling away of the Christian Church, it is obvious that Paul saw the terrible darkness approaching. One very real aspect of this was the loss of the understanding of the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Paul sought to supply that great need through the ministration of the Holy Spirit in the writing of the book of *Hebrews*. In the clearest

terms possible he declared that Christ and His temple are not on this earth, but very decidedly in heaven. What words in this respect could be plainer than these:

Hebrews 8

¹ Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

² A Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

This is again confirmed in these words:

Hebrews 1

¹ God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,

² Has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

³ Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

After His resurrection, Christ did not take up the office of High Priest in the temple in Jerusalem or any other temple on earth, but ascended to heaven where He took up His official position as High Priest at His Father's right hand—the heavenly High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. He was appointed to minister in this office, in the first apartment, until the 2300-year period came to its termination. This He did faithfully according to all that the Father had assigned Him, so that the event prophesied actually took place on the very day specified in the prophecy.

The End of the 2300 Years

It all came about according to the following sequence. We will begin with the closure of the 490 years of probationary time for the Jews as a nation, and as a church, which ended with the stoning of Stephen.⁸⁶ The Apostolic Church, which was at that time com-

⁸⁶ See the 70-week prophecy of *Daniel 9:24-27*.

posed of God's people, later descended into the Papal Church of the Dark Ages. Then the mighty revival of the Protestant Reformation brought the people of the Lord closer and still closer to the precise ending of the 2300 years.

As this time drew nearer, the first angel arrived on the scene heralding that the hour of God's judgment had come, calling on people everywhere to accept the everlasting gospel and to worship God as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Those who responded to this call became known as the First Angel's Movement whose members cherished the expectancy of Christ's imminent advent. They looked for this event between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844, not knowing exactly when the Lord would arrive within that time frame. This approximation did not measure up to the precision we have learned to expect in connection with the fulfillment of the 2300 year prophecy.

Once the spring of 1844 had come and gone, the believers found themselves in the tarrying time with no definite date to look forward to, until Samuel S. Snow re-awakened the movement by convincingly presenting the truth that October 22 was the exact day on which the 2300 days would end. The believers accepted this light, though they were still mistaken in regard to the event to take place at that time. They expected Jesus to return on that day, whereas He actually entered the Most Holy Place to continue the next stage in the work of the atonement.

Let us consider the closing hours of the history of those events as they wound down to the exact moment of time when the 2300 years came to their end: It was in August of 1844 that Samuel Snow arrived at a camp meeting at Exeter in Maine with the startling announcement that the second advent of Christ would take place on October 22, 1844, which was just over two months away. A sense of great and powerful urgency marked the response of the believers who hastened from that place to carry the news as fast and as far as they were able. Every opportunity was eagerly seized upon to spread the light, and wonderful were the results. Thus each day was one day nearer the moment of destiny.

October 22, 1844

On October 22 came the last day of the 2300 years. Hour after hour passed by until evening came with no sign of Christ's glorious appearing. The prophecy could not be fulfilled as long as any part of the 2300 years remained, which lasted until the evening of October 22.⁸⁷

By the next morning it was clear that Christ had not come on October 22, for that day had come and gone without His appearing visibly to all. L. E. Froom tells what happened next:

After breakfast Edson said to one of his companions, "Let us go and see and encourage some of our brethren." (According to Loughborough, the second man was Crosier). They shunned the road, for Edson did not want to meet people, as he did not yet know what to say to them. So they struck off across Edson's field, where the corn was still in the shock and the pumpkins on the vine. They walked along silently, with bowed heads and meditative hearts more or less oblivious of each other.

Suddenly Edson stopped, as if by a hand laid upon his shoulder. He stood, deep in meditation, his face upturned wistfully toward the mottled gray skies, praying for light. He pondered the Bible evidence on the ministering Priest, Christ Jesus, in God's antitypical sanctuary in heaven, and how they had expected Him to emerge, on that antitypical Day of Atonement, to bless His waiting people. Edson was waiting for an answer to his perplexity.

Suddenly there burst upon his mind the thought that there were two phases to Christ's ministry in the heaven of heavens, just as in the earthly sanctuary of old. In his own words, an overwhelming conviction came over him—"that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, He for the first time entered on that day the second apartment of that sanctuary and that He had a work to perform in the Most Holy before coming to this earth."⁸⁸

⁸⁷ For verification that a day begins at the evening of the previous day, see *Genesis* chapter 1, where we read "So the evening and the morning were the first day...So the evening and the morning were the sixth day."

⁸⁸ *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers*, Volume 4, p. 881.

The great moment of time had arrived, but the advent believers remained in ignorance of the event to transpire at the close of the 2300 years until October 22 had passed. Instead of Christ's entering the second apartment to complete the work of final atonement, they had imagined Him coming down to this earth to cleanse it by fire. But this misconception was corrected and the prophecy properly understood.

By faith, Christ's faithful servants followed Him into the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary as He presented himself before His Father. Then commenced the cleansing of the sanctuary, or the restoration of the sanctuary to its rightful state.

The End of the Trampling of the Host

The specific question asked and answered in *Daniel* 8:13-14, concerning this event, was:

“How long would the sanctuary and the host be trodden underfoot, and the daily taken away?”

As we have seen, the treading underfoot of the sanctuary means that its rightful place in heaven was usurped by a popular error. In the early hours of the October 23, 1844, this erroneous concept was dethroned which was a great comfort and joy to all those who had passed the test imposed on them by the disappointment. Now they knew that the sanctuary in question, the one to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 year period, was the sanctuary in heaven in which the Lord, our great High Priest, ministered His blood for their salvation. This is the sanctuary which the Lord pitched and not man.

That sanctuary and that host, we are promised, will never again be trodden underfoot after October 22, 1844. But the questions remain:

“Who are the host and who is treading them down?”

The word “host” describes a large number of people. It is not difficult to see that these people are righteous because in *Daniel* 8:10 we read:

Daniel 8

¹⁰ And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them.

This statement from the vision given to Daniel and recorded in verse 10 above refers to the actions of the little horn of verse 9 and is explained in more detail in verse 24 (speaking of the king with the fierce features):

²⁴ His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; he shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people.

These verses show that the little horn, or the king with the fierce features, is a destroyer who tramples down the holy people of God. But this treading down of the host could not continue forever, for, if it did, those atrocities would surely have annihilated God's people. Therefore, the time was shortened as promised by the greatest of the Prophets.

The Desire of Ages, p. 630-631:

From the destruction of Jerusalem, Christ passed on rapidly to the greater event, the last link in the chain of this earth's history, the coming of the Son of God in majesty and glory. Between these two events, there lay open to Christ's view long centuries of darkness, centuries for His church marked with blood and tears and agony. Upon these scenes His disciples could not then endure to look, and Jesus passed them by with a brief mention.

Matthew 24

²¹ Then shall be great tribulation, [He said,] such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

²² And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

For more than a thousand years such persecution as the world had never before known was to come upon Christ's followers. Millions upon millions of His faithful witnesses were to be slain. Had not God's hand been stretched out to preserve His people, all would have perished.

²² But for the elect's sake, [He said,] those days shall be shortened.

Future Persecution

We have no difficulty in understanding by whom and to whom these things happened in the past. But we also need to understand that there will be a repetition of similar events in the future. This is most plainly prophesied in the Scriptures which foretell a buy and sell decree, and a death decree, as it is written:

The Great Controversy, p. 581:

God's word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare. She is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men. She is piling up her lofty and massive structures in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions will be repeated. Stealthily and unsuspectedly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike. All that she desires is vantage ground, and this is already being given her. We shall soon see and shall feel what the purpose of the Roman element is. Whoever shall believe and obey the word of God will thereby incur reproach and persecution.

A further witness that there will yet be martyrs is provided in these words:

Revelation 20

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Here is a class of believers who obviously will have lived on earth during the testing time imposed on the Lord's people by the beast and his image. It is witnessed that they will have become martyrs because they, at the cost of their lives, will have refused

to worship the beast or his image. As the image to the beast is not set up before the termination of the 2300 years, the trials referred to in this verse belong to the last period in this world's history.

In the following statement, we are informed that many in these last days will be martyrs for the truth's sake:

Selected Messages, vol. 3, p. 397-398:

The two armies will stand distinct and separate, and this distinction will be so marked that many who shall be convinced of the truth will come on the side of God's commandment-keeping people. When this grand work is to take place in the battle, prior to the last closing conflict, many will be imprisoned, many will flee for their lives from cities and towns, and many will be martyrs for Christ's sake in standing in defense of the truth....You will not be tempted above what you are able to bear. Jesus bore all this and far more.

We understand that no more martyr blood will be shed once probation is closed, for this would no longer yield any profit for the cause of truth.⁸⁹ But we are plainly taught that, after the close of the 2300 years right up until the close of probation, there will be many martyrs—men, women and children who will sacrifice life itself for God.

A Contradiction?

As we have seen, neither the sanctuary nor the host was to be trodden underfoot after the termination of the 2300 years. Daniel heard the question,

Daniel 8

¹³ How long will the vision be, concerning the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot?

The answer was 2300 years. We have also seen that the treading down of the host refers to the persecution of God's people. Therefore, some might conclude from this that, after 1844, the specified time having run out during which the sanctuary and the host could be trodden underfoot and the daily taken away, we will see no such further attacks against God's people.

⁸⁹ See *The Great Controversy*, p. 634.

This will not be so, for the sufferings yet to be endured are beyond description. How then are we to understand this scripture? The cleansing of the sanctuary is not an event limited to only a very short period of time. Instead, the work to be accomplished in this cleansing has already required 154 years and has not yet stopped—in fact, it will still take an undetermined amount of time before Christ can say,

The Great Controversy, p. 613:

“It is done.”

Only when the sanctuary is completely cleansed will the treading down of the people of God and the sanctuary, and the taking away of the daily, be finished forever.

Still there is a difference between the martyrs of the past and of the future—the great dividing line between the two is located at the point when the 2300 years came to their end. The truth revealed at that time did mark a decisive change in the history of the great controversy. At that point, God’s people experienced a deliverance from which they will nevermore return.

The understanding that our heavenly High Priest is mediating for us in the heavenly sanctuary through the merits of His own blood is the foundation for everlasting righteousness. Only on the basis of this cleansing, can the work of the Lord be finished and the continuous pattern of apostasy and repentance cease forever.

55. Before and After the End of the 2300 Years

Messenger and News Review, December 1998
Daniel 8:13-14

AS WE have learned, the ending of the 2300 year prophecy was on October 22, 1844, a point in time of very great significance. From that day on, the church of God had attained a place in her escape from the thralldom of the sin master, from which she would never regress. This was revealed in the following question:

Daniel 8

¹³ How long will the vision be, concerning the daily...and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?

And the answer:

¹⁴ For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.

There can be no mistaking the fact that the 2300 years terminated with the passing of October 22, 1844. Just as Christ's sacrifice made an end to the sacrificial system on earth precisely at the time of the evening sacrifice on the Passover day—for the lamb escaped from the startled priest and the veil was torn at the very moment when Christ died—so the 2300 years ended exactly at the beginning of the second last feast in the Jewish year, on the tenth day of the seventh month, the day of atonement.

God works in the fulfillment of His predictions with extreme accuracy and carries forward His wonderful works exactly as scheduled. The 2300 years prophecy is a vital waymark in the ongoing conflict between righteousness and iniquity, as is revealed by the fact that Christ died precisely in the middle of the 70th week as predicted in *Daniel* 9:27, a short time before the 490 years which were appointed to the Jews ended. Given that the crucifixion occurred precisely at the time prophesied, we would expect

the ending of the 2300 years to be similarly fulfilled with the same accuracy. And so it was.

The Condition Before 1844

The taking away of the daily and the giving of the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot were conditions that had to be changed if the work of God was to be finished. These were obstacles to the final cleansing of God's children and the heavenly sanctuary, so they had to be removed without the least delay. Once the 2300 years had passed and the new order had been established, God's people were not promised an end of persecution, for the battle is not yet done. But throughout the remaining years of the great controversy, the precious gift of truth can no longer be taken away.

The condition before 1844 was marked by recurrent backsliding to such an extent that the work of God was frustrated in every single case. Each day of opportunity dawned with a wonderful morning when the divine power was poured out on God's people in rich currents.

But, as we know, despite the many promising beginnings, no movement has yet finished the great controversy. Even the apostolic church, which began so extremely well, lost her zeal in an astonishingly short period of time and fell into unbelievable apostasy. Worst of all, the place of Christ's sanctuary was cast down, the daily was taken away, and the host was trampled underfoot. While these conditions prevailed, there was no possibility of the work of God being finished.

Satan perceives this connection and consequently labors to maintain this disorder, a feat at which he has proved himself to be all too successful. Thus, down through human history, every revival has been opposed by him, and instead of the expected reformation a fearful apostasy has followed. These backslidings appear to have continued since 1844, because it was not long before the Adventists too had to battle against the signs of apostasy. So in

what sense has the condition of the work of God changed since the termination of the 2300 years?

A Comparison

In a certain sense, the pattern of apostasy has changed, as we can see by comparing the different conditions which existed before and after 1844. Like the movements before it, the great Second Advent movement began very strongly and propitiously. The members attracted to the fold were loyal, faithful, and true. They loved the Lord and longed for His appearing. They were zealous for the truth, the law, the gospel and the movement. The intensity of their personal experience was an inspiration to those to whom they unselfishly ministered. Of the advent believers during the time immediately preceding the close of the 2300 years, it is written:

Early Writings, p. 239:

A spirit of solemn and earnest prayer was everywhere felt by the saints. A holy solemnity was resting upon them. Angels were watching with the deepest interest the effect of the message, and were elevating those who received it, and drawing them from earthly things to obtain large supplies from salvation's fountain. God's people were then accepted of Him. Jesus looked upon them with pleasure, for His image was reflected in them. They had made a full sacrifice, an entire consecration, and expected to be changed to immortality.

Despite their great disappointment when Christ did not appear in 1844 as they had expected, those with a pure and active faith continued to prepare for translation.

The Great Controversy, p. 425-426:

But the people were not yet ready to meet their Lord. There was still a work of preparation to be accomplished for them. Light was to be given, directing their minds to the temple of God in heaven; and as they should by faith follow their High Priest in His ministration there, new duties would be revealed. Another message of warning and instruction was to be given to the church.

It was a wonderful beginning, but like all those before it, the advent movement all too soon began to slide into apostasy. Prior to that time, such backslidings of the church had resulted in the faithful being placed in a position of bondage so cruel, powerful and effective, that at least in some respects they were forced to pattern their lives according to the dictates of deeply apostate rulers.

In the dark ages, for instance, the Sabbath was replaced by Sunday observance, the doctrine of an ever-burning hell, the immortality of the soul, and other false teachings became established in the church, and thus idol-worship took up its abode in the temple of the Lord. That was the condition of the church until shortly before the end of the 2300 years.

But after 1844 the situation was changed. Despite the backsliding of the church, the faithful were not subjected to physical bondage. Furthermore, at least the theory of the truth was retained. Thus the great doctrines such as the Sabbath, the state of the dead, the prophetic revelations of the future, the exposure of the true character of the man of sin, and the opposing character of God, were freely promulgated.

What made the difference? It was the breaking of the power wielded by the man of sin. This mystery of iniquity was already at work in the days of John and Paul, and was labeled by them:

1 John 4

³ The spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

2 Thessalonians 2

⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.

The Exposure of the Man of Sin

To unmask and dethrone the man of sin is no simple task. It has been a project which has already cost literally millions of lives. Countless believers were persecuted for righteousness' sake during the Old Testament period. Then in the time of Christ, the tor-

tures and slaughter continued under the Romans with their fearful spirit of rebellion. This reached great intensity under the cruel reign of the Emperor Nero.

The Great Controversy, p. 40:

These persecutions, beginning under Nero about the time of the martyrdom of Paul, continued with greater or less fury for centuries.

Christians in those days had to bear their witness for Christ under the most inhumane conditions. While these prevailed, it was impossible for the work of God to be finished. Their faith was proscribed, restricted, and locked away from living truth. All the Christians could do was to survive. The truth and those who treasured it had to be liberated. The spiritual windows and doors of the church had to be opened wide so that a mighty flood-tide of radiant light could fill every space in the building, and God's great church on earth would wake to finish the work.

This transition from the depths of apostasy to the heights of gospel truth has cost not only the lives of millions and effected a very long delay in the Lord's second coming, but has also taken 2300 years to happen. Even so, we have great cause for rejoicing over the ground gained which will never now be lost.

Prophets and Kings, p. 714-715:

Today the church of God is free to carry forward to completion the divine plan for the salvation of a lost race. For many centuries God's people suffered a restriction of their liberties. The preaching of the gospel in its purity was prohibited, and the severest of penalties were visited upon those who dared disobey the mandates of men. As a consequence, the Lord's great moral vineyard was almost wholly unoccupied. The people were deprived of the light of God's word. The darkness of error and superstition threatened to blot out a knowledge of true religion. God's church on earth was as verily in captivity during this long period of relentless persecution as were the children of Israel held captive in Babylon during the period of the exile.

But, thank God, His church is no longer in bondage. To spiritual Israel have been restored the privileges accorded the people

of God at the time of their deliverance from Babylon. In every part of the earth, men and women are responding to the Heaven-sent message which John the revelator prophesied would be proclaimed prior to the second coming of Christ:

Revelation 14

⁷ Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.

No longer have the hosts of evil power to keep the church captive; for:

⁸ Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, [which has] made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication;

—and to spiritual Israel is given the message,

Revelation 18

⁴ Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues.

As the captive exiles heeded the message,

Jeremiah 51

⁶ Flee out of the midst of Babylon,

—and were restored to the Land of Promise, so those who fear God today are heeding the message to withdraw from spiritual Babylon, and soon they are to stand as trophies of divine grace in the earth made new, the heavenly Canaan.

The Development Since 1844

It was shortly after the great disappointment in 1844, that the advent people lapsed into the Laodicean condition, though they did not realize how great was their loss. Despite their apostasy, they did retain the truth, although in theory only. Instead of being totally impoverished, spiritually and morally, and returning to captivity, they enjoyed a relative theological freedom.

This was a period during which the word of God was tested and proved true. Daniel had declared that almost until the end of the 2300 years, God's true people would be subjected to terrible tribulation. Once the 2300 years were past, however, it would be a very different story. So it was, has been ever since, and will continue to be until the end. We know this will be the case, for although the man of sin will succeed in casting some of us into prison and

slaying others, he will lose the power to hide his true character. We will no longer be enslaved in ignorance and falsehood.

Decades came and went during which the advent people remained Laodicean—rich and increased with goods. But because of the precious gift of truth they thought they had plenty and were unable to evaluate their actual poverty. During the General Conference held at Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the year 1888 the Lord offered them the complete cure for their wretched apostasy—white raiment, refined gold, and eye-salve. These three gifts corresponded to the spotless righteousness of Christ, the faith which works by love, and spiritual discernment.

Thus in 1888 the fourth angel brought to the attention of the advent people the third angel's message in verity—the most fearful warning ever transmitted to humanity.

The Great Controversy, p. 449-450:

The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the third angel's message. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. Men are not to be left in darkness concerning this important matter; the warning against this sin is to be given to the world before the visitation of God's judgments, that all may know why they are to be inflicted, and have opportunity to escape them. Prophecy declares that the first angel would make his announcement to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." The warning of the third angel, which forms a part of the same threefold message, is to be no less widespread. It is represented in the prophecy as being proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and it will command the attention of the world.

Despite the urgency and the solemnity of the heaven-sent warning, their Laodicean blindness obscured the light so successfully, that the delegates present at the General Conference in 1888 failed to understand just what glory was being offered them. They only saw that which they considered dangerous and, greatly alarmed, they arose up in opposition to the treasures of light. There is hardly a more heaven-daring crime than such a disregard

of truth. The fearful warning of the third angel went unheeded by all except for a faithful few, and regardless of the diligent efforts of God's servants, the light was not comprehended. From that point on, the members of the third angel's movement were in the gravest trouble as they added apostasy to apostasy.

But still, in spite of such blatant rejection, this did not deliver the Adventists into bondage again, deprive them of the light of present truth, nor subject them to a long period of relentless persecution. The Lord's great moral vineyard was not emptied because of the freedom gained at such immense cost prior to the end of the 2300 years. This freedom will never now be lost, nor can it be, for it is guaranteed to remain open by the Lord himself.

Revelation 3

⁷ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens: I know your works.

⁸ See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept my word, and have not denied my name.

Over 150 years have passed since 1844. Throughout all those years, the truth that the place of Christ's sanctuary would not be cast down, nor the daily taken away, nor the host trodden underfoot, has been steadfastly maintained no matter what pressures have been brought to bear upon it by apostasy.

An Experience

Thinking back over the years during which my knowledge of Bible prophecy broadened and deepened, I remembered how through certain circumstances I was enabled to gain a full picture of the great controversy. At that time, the awareness began to dawn on my mind of how the ending of the 2300 years ushered in a new era of freedom for God's church. It happened as follows:

Throughout the year 1964, I had been corresponding about the message with a brother in Nigeria. The interest grew until there was quite a group involved who kept calling on me to visit them.

So it was eventually decided that I should make the visit in 1966 on my way to meetings scheduled for Germany. My flight was planned via Egypt, but on my arrival in Cairo, I was informed that my flight onward to Lagos in Nigeria had been canceled due to the aircraft needing servicing, and the next flight would not depart from Cairo until a week later. This was frustrating, but, as I was to learn, not without its blessings.

At first, I enquired if an alternative flight was available, but this proved to be a fruitless endeavor. So I settled into a cheap hotel reconciled to the week's delay. I spent the first two days looking over the city, the museum, the pyramids, the sphinx, and whatever else I could find to do. Then I remembered that I had a copy of *The Great Controversy* with me. So it was that I felt moved to read it through cover to cover, a project on which I immediately embarked. What a revelation that proved to be!

Previously, I had read it in portions both large and small, and had thereby gained valuable information from the topics covered in its pages. But this approach of reading it straight through gave me a wonderful overview of the great controversy. The opening two chapters exposed to my view the fearful power in the hands of the deadly enemies of God's people. This power was expressed in the intense hatred of, and determination to eliminate, the true and faithful forever. As it appeared that no power on earth could save God's people, a feeling of depression settled on me.

I looked again, not lower but higher, and there I saw the children of God, stronger, purer, more resolute, and whose knowledge of the truth had grown considerably. At the same time, the man of sin had aged, lost support, and had weakened. It had cost him great effort in his attempts to destroy God's people, but the expenditure was proving to be ineffectual, for the more he attacked them, the more heavily he lost. Now, a feeling of joyful confidence filled my entire being as I saw the enemy losing ground.

But my joy was tempered with the realization that there would follow another setback so serious as to threaten to end the church of God forever. At times it seemed that the church had disap-

peared never to rise again, but always it reappeared, with increased strength, more light, power, unity and faith. So it was that the man of sin who had the power to burn John Huss, was unable a century later to harm Martin Luther. Although the man of sin was even more determined to destroy God's people, he could not succeed in even imprisoning the Lord's messenger.

And so I read on, page after page. As I did so, the picture became ever clearer. With each assault made by the mystery of iniquity against the people of the Lord of Hosts, it was forced lower, while the seemingly weak and helpless members of Christ's body grew stronger. By the time my reading brought me down to the beginning of the great Second Advent movement, the Pope was in exile, the papal throne was vacant, and the greatest and most glorious light to shine on humanity so far was opening up. It was a time of great emancipation for God's people and His truth. And just ahead was the ending of the 2300 years.

I saw then what I have seen even more clearly since, that just as each battle was fought and won or lost, so the war itself must also be fought to its final conclusion. In harmony with this, I saw how God's forces had been gaining progressive triumphs with every victory, each of which was reducing Satan's capacity to effectively wage war on them. I saw the prophesied rise to power of the first, second, third and fourth angels' movements. And I could see how the accumulated light and power of all the victories won by the church of the Lord would be combined under the ministry of those mighty movements to bring the great, final, and absolutely certain triumph over the reign of sin and death.

By the time that week in Cairo was over, I had finished the book, but the mighty inspiration of its powerful life-infusing truths lived on in me. The question,

Daniel 8

¹³ How long will the vision be, concerning the daily...and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?

—was completely answered for me in the words:

¹⁴ And he said to me, For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.

There is no question about the message of these two verses. Let us be glad and rejoice that the end of sin's short day of apparent victory will soon pass into the glorious light of the eternal day of righteousness. Let the very spirit of praise find its truest expression of gratitude in the confidence that we will soon see our Saviour, and the passing away of sin, sickness and death forever.

56. The Sanctuary to Be Cleansed After the 2300 Years

Messenger and News Review, January 1999
Daniel 8:13-14

AS RECORDED in *Daniel* 8:13, a certain holy one asked how long had been allotted to the treading down of the sanctuary and the host.

Daniel 8

¹³ How long will the vision be, concerning the daily [sacrifices] and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?

The answer given might not seem directly related to the question.

¹⁴ For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.

It seems to be referring to the state of the sanctuary rather than to its treatment and that of the host. But our faith in the integrity of the angelic messengers does not permit us to draw that conclusion. Instead, as we saw in the previous chapter, the question, “How long?” is answered by the declaration of the 2300 year period which was to pass by before this bitter bondage would be ended. *Daniel* 8:13-14 informs us that there is a close connection between the termination of the treading down of the host and the sanctuary on the one hand, and the cleansing of the sanctuary on the other.

This immediately raises several questions such as:

“What is the sanctuary?”

“Where is it located?”

“What is its cleansing?”

“Why does its cleansing take place after the 2300 years have ended, and not before?”

This is a vast subject, but an essential one for those who will successfully achieve a fitness for heaven. The importance of the

question and answer provided in *Daniel* 8:13-14 cannot be overstressed. Careful consideration must be given to its solemn warning and instruction before it is forever too late to do so.

The Great Controversy, p. 488:

Those who would share the benefits of the Saviour's mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God. The precious hours, instead of being given to pleasure, to display, or to gain seeking, should be devoted to an earnest, prayerful study of the word of truth.

The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill.

Every individual has a soul to save or to lose. Each has a case pending at the bar of God. Each must meet the great Judge face to face. How important, then, that every mind contemplate often the solemn scene when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, when, with Daniel, every individual must stand in his lot, at the end of the days.

This solemn call to daily self-examination should not be lightly esteemed. Instead, it must become a well-established habit if we want it to provide us with an accurate, daily evaluation of our personal, spiritual condition. Then we shall understand what the sanctuary means to us, and how it provides us with the means whereby all that Christ won at Calvary is brought to us. We shall understand the necessity for every sin to be forgiven and forsaken each day, and we will faithfully ensure that they are, as advised:

The Great Controversy, p. 489-490:

We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days

of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery.

The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Where is the Sanctuary?

So then,

“Where is the sanctuary which was to be cleansed in 1844 at the end of the 2300 years?”

It cannot be the cleansing of the earthly tabernacle erected under God’s command when Israel abode at Mount Sinai in the desert. That sanctuary had ceased to exist long before 1844.

Nor was it the magnificent building erected by King Solomon, destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar, and rebuilt on the return of the Jews from their Babylonian captivity. This reconstructed building lacked the magnificence of Solomon’s temple though it became very grand and beautiful after Herod the Great had lavished on it both Roman wealth and Jewish treasure.⁹⁰ It was finally destroyed in 70 AD.

There is still another sanctuary which the cleansing can refer to, and this is the one located in heaven.⁹¹ The question now arises:

“How did uncleanness find a place in heaven, and how is it cleansed out of and away from that pure and holy place?”

⁹⁰ See *The Great Controversy*, p. 24-25.

⁹¹ See *Hebrews* 8:2, 5; 9:11, 23.

In answering those questions, we shall arrive at the knowledge of how the ministrations of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary provide us with just the grace needed to obtain eternal redemption from sin.

We need to see and believe that there is uncleanness in the sanctuary in heaven, and at the same time, understand just how it came to be there. Then we will have no difficulty in accepting that the heavenly sanctuary, which the Lord pitched and not man, must be cleansed. A brief examination of the building and of the distinctive services performed therein will reveal God's comprehensive way of dealing with the problem of sinfulness in the human race.

The Purpose of the Earthly Sanctuary

God's work on earth did not always have an actual building in which to demonstrate the plan of salvation. This was first provided for God's people when the Israelites were at Mount Sinai, where God said to them through Moses, the prophet:

Exodus 25

⁸ And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.

⁹ According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.

So the direct purpose of God in having His people build a sanctuary was that He might dwell in the midst of them. This divine purpose was not satisfied by His merely taking up residence in a construction located in the middle of their campground. The eternal One would not be satisfied with anything less than His being personally and individually located within each one of them. And so it is written by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul, who gathered this treasure of truth from God through Moses:

2 Corinthians 6

¹⁶ As God has said: I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

¹⁷ Therefore, Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.

¹⁸ I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.

The Jewish people cherished great comfort from the presence of the tabernacle in the midst of their campground, while missing the point that the tabernacle *within them* determined the fruit springing from them.

Similarly today, men and women rest satisfied with their being surrounded by all the activities and teachings of the church of God, without ensuring that the very spirit of the life of righteousness is rooted and grounded within them. Thus they feel qualified to claim that they are born again on the basis of their having taken their place in the camp of the church, instead of making certain that God's spirit of life and love are filling them.

Any person filled with the divine attributes, the chief of which is the active love of God, has no space within for hatred and pride. The "No Vacancy" sign has been lit and there is no further accommodation available. Each member of God's church needs therefore to study the responses springing from his or her own heart whenever buffeted by temptation, ever remembering that:

Psalm 119

¹⁶⁵ Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.

These words simply mean that the reaction of the true believer who loves God's law is to render good for evil and good for good. The truly born again will give expression to the spirit of life within them, which, in turn, is to manifest the true spirit of their Saviour. This can be achieved at all times, because the true Christian's life is a combination of humanity and divinity, of the flesh and of the spirit, of...

Colossians 1

²⁷ ...Christ in you, the hope of glory,

—and of earthen vessels filled with heavenly treasure. So crucial is this provision for our daily spiritual needs, that we cannot live

victoriously over sin and sickness without it. Therefore, the Lord supplies many and varied illustrations each one of which is designed to reveal aspects of this marvelous gift.

An Object Lesson

The most comprehensive of these object lessons provided for our redemption was the tabernacle, the original details of which were revealed to Moses on the mountain overlooking the Sinai campground. Each part of the actual structure of the tabernacle was designed to teach lessons necessary for the salvation of God's people, as did the High Priest's garments and the services. The latter also revealed how the pattern of services in the heavenly sanctuary bring the blessing of the atonement to the individual believer. Let us first make a brief survey of the building as an object lesson.

The earthly tabernacle was designed of God to be the dwelling place of the Most High. But this in turn was to be a picture of His purpose to enter into the heart of every believer and abide there as well. If God were to limit His presence to the sanctuary only, so that His spirit was not found in His followers, what a contradiction that would be!

Unfortunately that was often the case as His people, through unbelief, failed to see beyond the symbol to the spiritual reality. As a result, we can see the contrast between the life of Christ and the lives of the Jewish leaders at that time. Love and peace shone from Christ's life while the hearts of the Jews were filled with hatred and unrest. What a collision there was between the two of them!

John 10

³¹ Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

³² Jesus answered them, Many good works I have shown you from my Father. For which of those works do you stone me?

³³ The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a man, make yourself God.

³⁴ Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, You are gods?

³⁵ If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),

³⁶ Do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, You are blaspheming, because I said, I am the Son of God?

³⁷ If I do not do the works of my Father, do not believe me;

³⁸ But if I do, though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in Him.

³⁹ Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.

There can be no peace with God whenever and wherever the Spirit of God differs in any way from the spirit which is in His people. Both must be alike as, for instance, the spirit of father and son when they have been born of God.

However, earthly relationships inadequately illustrate this principle, which is best revealed in the bond between the everlasting Father in heaven, and His Son while He was on this earth. That was a truly flawless relationship, the perfection and power to which Christ constantly testified both by His words and His works. It will be of the greatest power and glory for the church of God when we too can testify of our oneness with the Spirit of the Father as powerfully as Jesus did.

The Desire of Ages, p. 161:

In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator.

Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity,

and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple.

God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul. But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,—from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul.

Malachi 3

¹ The Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in: behold, He shall come, says the Lord of hosts.

² But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

³ And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver.

When we finally enter into the earth made new we will fully understand and appreciate this principle of unity with our Creator, the application of which will fill each redeemed soul with indescribable joy and gladness.

Bible Training School, December 1, 1903:

It is not additional evidence that we need, but the impression of the truth that we already understand made deep and thorough by a faithful impartation of it to others. Every one is first to attend to his own individual case. Then he is to act in perfect unity with his brethren. The hearts of the believers are to be as the heart of Christ. Every pulse is to beat in harmony with the heart of Christ. We are to be one with Christ, and one with each other, that the world may believe that God has sent His Son into the world.

The Structure of the Earthly Sanctuary

Though there was a great difference between the grandeur, glory, and temporary structure of the tabernacle in the desert on the one hand, and the magnificent temple built by King Solomon on the other, the design was for the most part, essentially the same. In each case there was a building divided into two rooms or apartments. Each of these rooms was furnished according to the need of the sanctuary services to be carried out in that room. Around the whole was a courtyard which also contained its particular articles of furniture.

There were many services conducted in these three areas, but we will focus particularly on those involved in the actual cleansing of the sanctuary, for this is the work that is happening at this moment of time in the heavenly sanctuary. As we have seen, this work began with the termination of the 2,300 years in 1844.

The two apartments of the actual tabernacle or temple and their furnishings are described in *Exodus* chapters 25-30 in great detail, but there is a briefer version which is summed up by Paul in these words:

Hebrews 9

¹ Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary.

² For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary;

³ And behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All,

⁴ Which had the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant;

⁵ And above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

Thus it is most clearly stated that there were two apartments in the sanctuary on earth. They were designated the holy and the holiest or most holy places. The first apartment or holy place con-

tained three articles of furniture. As one entered the tabernacle, the table of showbread was positioned to the right. On the opposite side was the seven-branched golden candlesticks which lit the room with a soft golden glow.

Finally, the altar of sweet incense stood against the far wall, though Paul located it as belonging to the most holy place. This is quite understandable, for the altar is the symbol of mediation between God and man. While this will be needed throughout the entire length of probationary time, the greatest necessity for it will be during the closing up of the great day of atonement. Hence, the incense as the symbol of mediation is shown in type to supply protection throughout the ministry of both the first and second apartments of the sanctuary.

There was just one piece of furniture in the second apartment—the ark over which were the cherubim, and in which were Aaron’s rod that budded, the pot of manna, and the two tables of stone.

As there were two apartments, so the services of the sanctuary were divided into two different categories. The first one involved the priests daily entering into the first apartment to perform the various daily atonements, and the second was the yearly service performed by the High Priest’s entry into the most holy place to minister the benefits of the final atonements to His waiting children. Paul directs our attention to this as follows:

Hebrews 9

⁶ Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services.

⁷ But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance.

In the courtyard, outside the entrance to the actual tabernacle, stood the altar of sacrifice, which was also used in the daily services.

We no longer perform either the daily or the yearly rituals, but they are of indispensable value in understanding the meaning of each step required to perfect and complete our salvation. Though only a type, they were rich in saving truth. This means that the better we understand the typical services, the more clearly we shall understand and be blessed by the reality.

Hebrews 10

¹ For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.

² For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purged, would have had no more consciousness of sins.

³ But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

⁴ For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

Thus Paul who understood these principles with great power and clarity, declared that although the earthly rituals served God's cause very well as an educator, they possessed no value as an actual Saviour.

Acts 4

¹² Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Nonetheless, the blood of bulls and of goats was a very important way of revealing to the people the cost and the steps of salvation by which alone we can be reconciled to God. Accordingly, it is recommended that the chapter, "What is the Sanctuary?" beginning in *The Great Controversy*, p. 409, be carefully studied before proceeding with the next chapter of this series.

57. The Cleansing of the Heavenly Sanctuary

Messenger and News Review, March 1999

Daniel 8:14

THERE is no doubt that the heavenly sanctuary will have to be literally cleansed before the ministry of the plan of salvation shall be completed and all the saints are gathered to their long lost home. It will not be merely a symbolic action, but will be a true cleansing in reality.

A careful study of God's word will confirm this truth. For instance, Paul stated that while the earthly things were symbolically purified with the blood of animals, the heavenly things themselves were to be purified with better sacrifices than these, even the sacrifice of our great High Priest.

Hebrews 9

²³ Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

The copy, the earthly tabernacle, was cleansed symbolically, while the heavenly itself is to be an actual cleansing. The source of uncleanness in the heavenly sanctuary is sin. But to understand this truth we need to hold a correct, adequate definition of sin. When we speak of the actions of sin, the guilt of sin, and the record of sin, we are not referring to the sinfulness itself, but merely to a result of sin. When we sin, we incur not only the responsibility and guilt for our sinful actions, but we are also made unclean. What we need is forgiveness for our sin.

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 114:

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He "will abundantly pardon," He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend:

Isaiah 55

⁸ My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed,

Psalm 51

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

And again he says,

Psalm 103

¹² As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

The Transference of Sin to the Sacrificial Victim

Unless we are cleansed of the actual sinfulness itself, we are not forgiven. The guiding principle is that the responsibility for sin rests with whoever bears it. Therefore if we are still carrying our own sinfulness, then it has not been forgiven, even if we suppose that it has. True forgiveness involves transferring the responsibility from the sinner to another person or agent. That other agent is the sacrificial victim as shadowed forth in the Old Testament rituals. The procedure was as follows:

1. When the sinner was convicted of sinfulness, resulting in genuine sorrow for sin, he or she became truly repentant, and desired to be forgiven.
2. Next the sinner selected a sacrificial bird or beast and led it to the door of the sanctuary.
3. There, in the presence of the priest, the sinner confessed his sin over the head of the innocent victim, and slew it with his own hand.
4. The blood was caught and taken into the sanctuary where it remained until the cleansing of the sanctuary.

There were several stages in the full and final eradication of sin, from the confession of the sinner to the eventual disposal of it in the fires of eternal destruction. As we have seen,

- Firstly, the sin is transferred from the sinner to the sacrifice,
- Then from the sacrifice to the sanctuary,
- And lastly, from the sanctuary on to the scapegoat who will bear it away into the utter oblivion of everlasting death.

At every stage, the cleansing agent used is blood, without which there can be no remission of sins. This is because it is only by the blood of Jesus that sin can be put away. In His blood resides all the power necessary to solve any problem right through to the final annihilation of sin, as it is written:

Hebrews 9

²² And according to the law almost all things are purged with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

The Great Controversy, p. 417-418:

The cleansing, both in the typical and in the real service, must be accomplished with blood: in the former, with the blood of animals; in the latter, with the blood of Christ. Paul states, as the reason why this cleansing must be performed with blood, that...

Hebrews 9

²² ...without shedding of blood is no remission.

Remission, or putting away of sin, is the work to be accomplished. But how could there be sin connected with the sanctuary, either in heaven or upon the earth? This may be learned by reference to the symbolic service; for the priests who officiated on earth, served...

Hebrews 8

⁵ ...unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.

The Transference of Sin to the Sanctuary

Once the sinner had, by the laying on of hands, made a truly acceptable confession of his sin, and completed the first stage of the remission of sins, the way was prepared for the application of the blood of the sacrifice. This was carried by the priest into the first apartment and sprinkled before the veil which separated the first and second apartments.

The Great Controversy, p. 418:

The broken law of God demanded the life of the transgressor. The blood, representing the forfeited life of the sinner, whose

guilt the victim bore, was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred in figure to the sanctuary. In some cases the blood was not taken into the holy place; but the flesh was then to be eaten by the priest, as Moses directed the sons of Aaron, saying:

Leviticus 10

¹⁷ God has given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation.

Both ceremonies alike symbolized the transfer of the sin from the penitent to the sanctuary.

Whatever sin touches, it defiles. Therefore, by the same act of cleansing the sinner from the defilement of his sinfulness, the sanctuary is made unclean. It is the second stage, the transfer of his sin from the sinner to the sanctuary, which brings about the need for the sanctuary to be cleansed.

An exceedingly large amount of sinfulness has accumulated in the heavenly sanctuary since the first sinner—our father Adam—was forgiven and his sin transferred to the heavenly sanctuary. This is true even though the wicked have never confessed their sinfulness and asked for it to be transferred to the sanctuary. Instead of being amassed in the sanctuary above, their sin with all its pollution remains upon them. Thus they have no part in the cleansing of the sanctuary, for they themselves have never experienced cleansing.⁹²

The successful transference of the sinner's iniquity to the sanctuary, depends upon the stage before it having been successfully completed. The process is a series of steps in a logical sequence. Until, in the first stage, the death of the sacrifice has taken place, there can be no blood to transfer to the sanctuary. That transfer is necessary before the repentant sinner can obtain pardon for his sinfulness.

⁹² *Leviticus 23:27-29.*

The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

Just as the blessings of the daily or continual atonement are conditional, so too is the atonement in the most holy place. There, through the sprinkled blood upon and before the mercy seat, the way is provided by which the sanctuary as a whole is cleansed. This process removes the sinfulness which is stored there, just before its eventual transfer to the scapegoat, the devil. That is the ultimate objective—a cleansed sanctuary in heaven, and a paradise from which every trace of impurity has been washed away eternally.

But there can be no such purification of the heavenly sanctuary until the continual tide of sinfulness, which has its source in the hearts of the people, ceases. This must be obvious to every spiritually enlightened believer in Jesus, for if there were a constant inflow of sin from the people, then no sooner would the sanctuary in heaven be cleansed than it would be defiled again. This would mean that neither the sanctuary nor heaven would ever be totally cleansed, which in turn would never result in the saints being gathered home. Elder A. T. Jones spelled out this principle with clarity and force:

The service in the earthly sanctuary shows also that in order for the sanctuary to be cleansed and the course of the gospel service there to be finished, it must first be finished in the people who have a part in the service. That is to say: In the sanctuary itself, transgression could not be finished, an end of sins and reconciliation for iniquity could not be made, and everlasting righteousness could not be brought it, until all this had been accomplished in each person who had a part in the service of the sanctuary. The sanctuary itself could not be cleansed until each of the worshipers had been cleansed. The sanctuary itself could not be cleansed so long as, by the confessions of the people and the intercessions of the priests, there was pouring into the sanctuary a stream of iniquities, transgressions, and sins.

The cleansing of the sanctuary, as to the sanctuary itself, was the taking out of and away from the sanctuary all the transgressions of the people which, by the service of the priests, had been taken into the sanctuary during the service of the year. And this

stream must be stopped at its fountain in the hearts and lives of the worshipers, before the sanctuary itself could possibly be cleansed.

Therefore the very first work in the cleansing of the sanctuary was the cleansing of the people. That which was preliminary and essential to the cleansing of the sanctuary itself, to the finishing of the transgression and bringing in everlasting righteousness, there, was the finishing of transgression, and the making an end of sins, and making reconciliation for iniquity, and bringing in everlasting righteousness in the heart and life of each one of the people themselves. When the stream that flowed into the sanctuary was thus stopped at its source, then, and then alone, could the sanctuary itself be cleansed from the sins and transgressions which, from the people, by the intercession of the priests, had flowed into the sanctuary.

And all that “was a figure for the time then present”—a “figure of the true.” Therefore by this we are plainly taught that the service of our great High Priest in the cleansing of the true sanctuary must be preceded by the cleansing of each one of the believers, the cleansing of each one who has a part in that service of the true High Priest in the true sanctuary. It is plain that transgression must be finished, an end of sins and reconciliation for all iniquity must be made, and everlasting righteousness must be brought in, in the heart’s experience of every believer in Jesus, before the cleansing of the true sanctuary can be accomplished.

And this is the very object of the true priesthood in the true sanctuary. The sacrifices, the priesthood, and the ministry in the sanctuary which was but a figure for the time then present, could not really take away sin, could not make the comers thereunto perfect, whereas the sacrifice, the priesthood, and the ministry of Christ in the true sanctuary does take away sins forever, does make the comers thereunto perfect, does perfect “forever them that are sanctified.”⁹³

The cleansing of the sanctuary is therefore not the work of a moment, but occupies quite a period of time. It began back in October, 1844, but today is still incomplete due to the fountain of sin not yet being dried up in our lives. Instead, the stream of iniquity

⁹³ *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, p. 117-119.

is still flowing from us into the sanctuary, making it impossible for the cleansing of the sanctuary to take place.

The cases of those who have died in the Lord in the faith of Jesus are different. From each of them, the stream of sinfulness has been truly stopped at its source, and because the dead can do nothing, no longer can their sins be transferred within the veil.

Therefore, ever since the termination of the 2300 years in 1844, the work of cleansing the sins of the righteous dead from the sanctuary has been in progress. These sins will eventually be placed upon Satan, our great enemy, who will then have no choice other than to bear them into utter and eternal destruction and oblivion.

The Great Controversy, p. 490-491:

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:

Mark 13

³³ Watch and pray: for you know not when the time is.

Revelation 3

³ If therefore you shall not watch, I will come on you as a thief, and you shall not know what hour I will come upon you.

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:

Revelation 22

¹¹ 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.

¹² And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Christ Confesses the Sins of His People

There is a statement in *Early Writings* describing events in the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary which has been misread, and therefore misunderstood. It reads as follows:

Early Writings, p. 280-281:

As Jesus moved out of the most holy place, I heard the tinkling of the bells upon His garment; and as He left, a cloud of darkness covered the inhabitants of the earth. There was then no mediator between guilty man and an offended God. While Jesus had been standing between God and guilty man, a restraint was upon the people; but when He stepped out from between man and the Father, the restraint was removed and Satan had entire control of the finally impenitent.

It was impossible for the plagues to be poured out while Jesus officiated in the sanctuary; but as His work there is finished, and His intercession closes, there is nothing to stay the wrath of God, and it breaks with fury upon the shelterless head of the guilty sinner, who has slighted salvation and hated reproof.

In that fearful time, after the close of Jesus' mediation, the saints were living in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. Every case was decided, every jewel numbered. Jesus tarried a moment in the outer apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and the sins which had been confessed while He was in the most holy place were placed upon Satan, the originator of sin, who must suffer their punishment.

Some have interpreted the last sentence to mean that only the sins which are confessed while Jesus is ministering in the most holy place are placed upon the scapegoat. But the key to the true understanding of this scripture, is to identify this ministry for what it is—a part of the final atonement by which sin and its guilt will be transferred from the most holy place on to the devil who is the scapegoat, and not of the atonement for the daily transfer of the sin and its guilt from the sinner to the sanctuary. The sins referred to in this statement, are those which have been confessed by Christ, our great High Priest, on behalf of those of His people who have, by true faith and penitence, availed themselves of the final atonement.

The application of God's grace on that critical day is described in *Leviticus* 16. On the day of atonement, the high priest brought two goats to the door of the tabernacle before the assembled hosts of Israel. By casting lots, one of them became the Lord's goat, and the other the scapegoat. The direct purpose of the ministrations of that day was the utter removal in type of the uncleanness from every person in the encampment as well as from the tabernacle and all that appertained to it. They were to bear in mind that this was no more than a symbolic performance, the only virtue of which was to reveal what God would do when the time for the final atonement in the sanctuary above should come.

Accordingly, on the typical day of atonement, the high priest, having slain the Lord's goat, took its blood and sprinkled it upon and before the mercy seat. This action on his part was his confession on behalf of all the people who qualified. The time had come, not for any further lodgment of sin in the sanctuary, but, instead, for the removal of sinfulness from the sanctuary. Either it must be returned upon the sinner's head from where it originated, or it would be placed upon the scapegoat—the symbol of Satan, the originator of sin. It was while the high priest was in the most holy place that he confessed the sins of the people. Anyone whose sins were not then confessed was cut off from Israel forever.

So a correct understanding of this statement is clearly reached by adding two words, which give the sentence its true meaning, so that it then reads:

Early Writings, p. 280-281:

Jesus tarried a moment in the outer apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and the sins which had been confessed [by Christ] while He was in the most holy place were placed upon Satan, the originator of sin, who must suffer their punishment.

Thus it was that the arrival of God's people at the end of the 2300 year prophecy, was a point of great significance. A new phase had begun and the stage was set for the finishing of the work of God throughout the entire earth. There is nothing which

can now prevent its being finished. The tarrying time will end, the wise virgins will be awakened with their lamps full of oil, the sanctuary will be cleansed, and our blessed Saviour will appear in all His Father's glory, His own glory, and the glory of His angels. When Jesus says to us,

Revelation 22

²⁰ Surely I am coming quickly,

—in response we fervently say,

²⁰ ...Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

58. Advancement Through Communion With God

Messenger and News Review, June 1999
Daniel 10:2-3

IN THE last chapter, we studied the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. In doing so we skimmed the merest surface of a vast, shoreless ocean of living truth on this subject. It is so infinitely vast that even eternity will never exhaust the treasures of light to be found in the gospel of Jesus Christ as it is revealed in the messages from the sanctuary.

Accordingly, our objective here is to place on record that which has been revealed to us up to this point, being instructed by God,

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 401:

...who is the teacher of His people.

Deuteronomy 29

²⁹ The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

A great amount of precious light has been shed upon us since the first proclamation of the fourth angel's message in 1888. It began to be unfolded at that time, but was then lost sight of for some decades, until it was rediscovered and its revival grew from 1950 onward.

These incredible revelations of truth are found to be tailor-made to meet the deadly, soul-destroying deceptions of the image to the beast. No human mind could have produced such a perfect solution to the problem of the man of sin in the last days. Especially appropriate is the powerful and beautiful light of the gospel as it shines forth from the prophecies of *Daniel* and the *Revelation*.

Apparent Failure

Daniel 10 provides the introduction to chapters 11 and 12, and begins with Daniel laboring under a tremendous burden for the cause of righteousness. Here, this mighty man of God displays an

uncommon intensity of earnest desire to see the work of God liberated from foreign oppression forever. That which would have concerned him so deeply, was the continuation of God's people being held under bondage despite the fact that the Babylonian kingdom had been destroyed three years before. No doubt it began to appear that Jeremiah's prophecy had failed.⁹⁴

But Daniel was a man of the most extraordinary faith who, like the patriarch Jacob, would not let go of the promises until God had fulfilled them. He was the right man in the right place, the very one through whom God could work out the divine purposes of His will. Similarly it is through the coworking of the divine and the human that the work will at last be finished. This experience of Daniel's will be repeated in the closing up of the great controversy, when once again it will appear that the church is about to fall as Satan brings heavy pressure to bear upon it.

Most, if not all, of God's patriarchs and prophets also came to the place where it seemed that their work had proved a failure and that God's cause was lost. Consider, for instance, Noah who, after preaching for 120 years, was accompanied into the ark by only seven souls.

Study too the experience of Abraham who, with Sarah, bemoaned his childless status long after a child could normally have been born to the aging couple.

See Moses in flight from Pharaoh after he had killed the Egyptian. He then settled down as a married man and a shepherd for forty years while making no attempt to raise an army to destroy the Egyptians during that period. That is clear proof of his having dismissed from his mind any expectation of being the man through whom God would deliver the Israelites from Egypt.

Then there was Elijah who despairingly complained of being the only person still loyal to God. Paul reports the low point to which the despondent Elijah had come when he said:

⁹⁴ See *Jeremiah* 25:11-12; 29:10.

Romans 11

³ Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.

John the Baptist was also deeply troubled by the fear of failure.

The Desire of Ages, p. 216:

To the desert prophet all this seemed a mystery beyond his fathoming. There were hours when the whisperings of demons tortured his spirit, and the shadow of a terrible fear crept over him. Could it be that the long-hoped-for Deliverer had not yet appeared? Then what meant the message that he himself had been impelled to bear?

John had been bitterly disappointed in the result of his mission. He had expected that the message from God would have the same effect as when the law was read in the days of Josiah and of Ezra (2 *Chronicles* 34; *Nehemiah* 8, 9); that there would follow a deep-seated work of repentance and returning unto the Lord. For the success of this mission his whole life had been sacrificed. Had it been in vain?

Even Christ found himself confronted with that most discouraging of all factors—apparent failure in His work.

The Desire of Ages, p. 678:

As the world's Redeemer, Christ was constantly confronted with apparent failure. He, the messenger of mercy to our world, seemed to do little of the work He longed to do in uplifting and saving. Satanic influences were constantly working to oppose His way. But He would not be discouraged. Through the prophecy of *Isaiah* He declares,

Isaiah 49

⁴ I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.

⁵ ...Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.

A Fresh Hold on Omnipotence

Just like his Master almost 500 years later, Daniel found himself in a situation needing an infallible solution. It seemed that the problem confronting him would become a complete and lasting

failure for God's cause. The answer to Daniel's problem was the same as it was for Christ—to gain a fresh hold on Omnipotence. It meant entering into the importunity of prayer necessary to meet the crisis successfully.

Similarly, in the last days the need will arise for the people of the Lord to rise above the grim, forbidding witness of sight and circumstances and fix their gaze firmly on the witness of faith in the utterly trustworthy promises of the Lord. Otherwise the situation will prove to be a hopeless entanglement.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 564:

It is in the mount with God—in the secret place of communion—that we are to contemplate His glorious ideal for humanity. In all ages, through the medium of communion with heaven, God has worked out His purpose for His children, by unfolding gradually to their minds the doctrines of grace. His manner of imparting truth is illustrated in the words,

Hosea 6

³ His going forth is prepared as the morning.

He who places himself where God can enlighten him, advances, as it were, from the partial obscurity of dawn to the full radiance of noonday.

This is a very significant statement. It details the way in which down through all ages, God works out His glorious purpose for mankind. Let us remember that it is God's purpose which is being revealed—it is not primarily the revelation of our purpose for ourselves. Of course, God's purpose can become ours as we spend much time in communion with heaven. By this means God can do His part, while we can learn to occupy our correct position as humble coworkers.

Sadly, God's purposes are unacceptable to mankind in general, and more often than not to His professed people as well. Even the true people of God often experience serious difficulties with His designs, both for them individually, and for His church as a whole. This has been the great hindrance which the Lord has had to battle with. His children are happy to belong to His church and to build His kingdom, but, because they cannot understand His

way of achieving His objectives, they cannot co-work with Him. They cannot enter without reservation into His perfect designs until they learn how to commune with heaven. In the meantime, they very often count the sacrifice of exchanging their own ways for God's ways too great.

As we learn to communicate with heaven, we need to trust that what is being fed to us is the truth of God. Our position as trusting learners is similar to that of the angels who, for the 4000 years leading up to the crucifixion, had to accept God's declaration that His is a kingdom of righteousness and love in which there is no injustice whatsoever. For the angels that must have been a very difficult period, demanding as it did the unqualified acceptance on their part that whatever proceeded from the mouth of the Lord was correct.⁹⁵

The mighty people of God are those who have learned to bow at His feet as humble learners in communion with Him, rather than to spend their prayer time presenting Him with a list of things they want Him to do for them. There is of course a place for presenting our needs to God, and we are encouraged to do so, but we are empowered from on high by the hours spent in communing with heaven.

Let Moses' plea for God to show him His glory be experienced in our personal prayer lives. Such earnest communings with heaven have always brought advanced light into the world. These revelations recorded in His word provide us with the assurance that God's method of working out His purpose for His children is highly successful when they learn to cooperate with Him.

As the children of God learn how to gain a deeper hold on Omnipotence they will be confronted by crises in their personal lives or in the church. The true child of God will not leave everything to God to solve without any human participation whatsoever, but on the other hand he will not appoint himself to be the problem

⁹⁵ See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 761.

solver who calls upon God to help him carry out his solutions to the crisis.

In between these two extremes lies God's purpose for us as His coworkers. What we can do, we are expected to do, and must do in order to fulfill our part successfully in finishing God's work. We are to follow in Daniel's footsteps when he was faced with each of the fearful crises which threatened his life and the future of God's church. He agonized in prayer to an extraordinary degree, as did Jesus. The last day remnant will likewise rise up to do the will of their Father.

Inevitably, there will arise testing situations which will require greater supplies of living faith from God's people. This will require the most intense importunity to bring them to the place where they are fully and trustingly submissive to the divine order.

Initially they will need to exercise unquestioning obedience to God, despite many objections which may seek to assert themselves. Gradually the light will become brighter and brighter as God's children understand the divine plan more and more. Understanding follows obedience, until finally the believers in Jesus will be blessed with perfect sinlessness. Then at last the end of this world of sin will come. In contrast to this, God's ways will increase for eternity.

The Power of Importunate Prayer

Even now we need to learn to importune the throne of grace as did Daniel in the third year of the reign of the Persian king, Cyrus. At the same time he denied himself every comfort in life so as to gain every possible ray of light available. Here is his witness to that experience of extreme self denial:

Daniel 10

² In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks.

³ I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

We can be quite sure that the added hours afforded him were not spent in idleness, the pursuit of pleasure, or the indulgence of appetite. There is but one interest which could engage and hold Daniel's attention, and that was the cause of God and the prosperity of His people. His life had become so identified with these matters, that he maintained a very close communion with God. We know this because such an incredible grasp of prophecy could have been attained only through a level of communion rarely seen throughout human history.

Daniel, along with Moses, John, and many others including Jesus himself, understood the blessings to be gained from deep, consistent communion with God. Each one of these men knew that there was tremendous power in prayer and turned to that resource whenever great or small crises threatened to turn the work of God into a sad failure.

This understanding is especially important and significant as God assembles and equips His army for the final struggle of the ages. God's people must become as completely fitted for battle as was Daniel, whose spiritual powers had reached a very high level of development.

At the end of those three weeks in which Daniel denied himself every hindrance to the deepest communion with heaven, there was opened before him a view of future events that revealed the divine purpose for the church right down to the end of time. The entire prophecy began with Daniel being addressed as one greatly beloved,⁹⁶ and ended with the revelation of detailed truth previously hidden from humanity.

So it will be in the last days when great light shall shine forth, far beyond anything revealed up until that time, signifying a corresponding increase in our communion with God. This great light to be poured upon God's people in the last days is prophesied in *Daniel* 11 and 12, together with the wonderful predictions of the *Revelation*.

⁹⁶ See *Daniel* 10:19.

Revelation 18

¹ After these things I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.

The presence of such powerful shedding of light upon the earth, is indicative of the development in God's children of a depth, breadth, and height of understanding which will mark them as being people of great faith and extraordinary importunity in prayer.

It was because Daniel was such a mighty man of faith and prayer that God could open before him such wonderful revelations of truth as are outlined in *Daniel* chapters 10-12. And when the time comes for these prophecies to be fulfilled, it will require the same level of importunity in prayer to truly understand and apply them, as is written of the coming time of Jacob's trouble.

The Great Controversy, p. 621:

The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger—a faith that will not faint though severely tried. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time. Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. His victory is an evidence of the power of importunate prayer. All who will lay hold of God's promises, as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded.

Those who are unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for His blessing, will not obtain it. Wrestling with God—how few know what it is! How few have ever had their souls drawn out after God with intensity of desire until every power is on the stretch. When waves of despair which no language can express sweep over the suppliant, how few cling with unyielding faith to the promises of God.

Those who learn now how to develop an experience in importunate prayer while the door of opportunity remains open, will gather strength sufficient to cope with the powers of darkness. But anyone who neglects this vital work of preparation will do so at the risk of eternal life. The solemn warning is that:

The Great Controversy, p. 622:

Those who exercise but little faith now, are in the greatest danger of falling under the power of satanic delusions and the decree to compel the conscience. And even if they endure the test they will be plunged into deeper distress and anguish in the time of trouble, because they have never made it a habit to trust in God. The lessons of faith which they have neglected they will be forced to learn under a terrible pressure of discouragement.

59. The Angel Gabriel

Messenger and News Review, August 1999

Daniel 10:10-21

THE prophecies in the final three chapters of the book of *Daniel* were explained to the prophet by the angel Gabriel. There have been quite a number of instances when messengers from heaven have appeared to humans. Usually, those visited in this manner did not know at first who had honored them with their visible presence, but it was not long before the identity of their visitors became evident. Thus it was when Abraham saw three men approaching his tent,

Genesis 18

¹ ...in the hot summer noontide.

Without knowing who they were, he hastened after them when they seemed to take a different direction, urging that they refresh themselves before traveling further. They accepted his hospitality, and it was not long before the patriarch's spiritual discernment revealed to him that one of them was the Son of God.⁹⁷

When Moses was confronted by the burning bush, he did not know at first that he was standing in the presence of the same Being who had visited Abraham. But when the Person in the burning bush addressed him, there was no further doubt in his mind as to who was speaking to him.

Similarly when Joshua sought counsel regarding the conquest of Jericho, there appeared before him an armed warrior with His sword drawn in His hand. Joshua challenged Him to identify himself. In response, the revelation was given,

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 488:

Joshua 5

¹⁴ As Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come.

It was Christ, the Exalted One, who stood before the leader of Israel. Awe-stricken, Joshua fell upon his face and worshiped, and heard the assurance,

⁹⁷ See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 138-139.

Joshua 6

² I have given into your hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor,

—and he received instruction for the capture of the city.

Another example is the experience of the expectant parents of Samson—Manoah and his wife. Their visitor was, as in the cases above, no less a Personage than Christ.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 2, p. 1006:

Manoah and his wife knew not that the One thus addressing them was Jesus Christ. They looked upon Him as the Lord's messenger, but whether a prophet or an angel, they were at a loss to determine. Wishing to manifest hospitality toward their guest, they entreated Him to remain while they should prepare for Him a kid. But in their ignorance of His character, they knew not whether to offer it for a burnt offering or to place it before Him as food.

Enoch, Moses and Elijah

So we too may fail to recognize the true identity of those who are already in heaven, including men such as Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, one of whom is the angel Gabriel. We know that these men of faith were taken up into heaven in order to fulfill certain tasks closely connected with the plan of salvation. All three have come back to this earth at specific points of time to fulfill certain key roles. We can be sure that the events transpiring on this earth are of the utmost interest to them.

Let us briefly examine scriptural evidence that these three men have already been taken up into heaven. We will begin with Enoch, for the simple reason that he was the first man to go. Here is the direct quotation from both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy testifying that he was translated to heaven without ever passing under the power of death:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 88:

Hebrews 11

⁵ By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death;...for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

In the midst of a world by its iniquity doomed to destruction, Enoch lived a life of such close communion with God that he was not permitted to fall under the power of death.

Next we shall consider the testimony concerning Moses' resurrection and his ascension.

The Review and Herald, March 3, 1874:

Christ resurrected Moses and took him to heaven. This enraged Satan, and he accused the Son of God of invading his dominion by robbing the grave of his lawful prey. Jude says of the resurrection of Moses,

Jude

⁹ Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you.

Lastly, there was the translation of Elijah of which it is written:

Early Writings, p. 162:

Elijah had walked with God. His work had been painful and trying, for the Lord through him had reproved the sins of Israel. Elijah was a prophet of God; yet he was compelled to flee from place to place to save his life. His own nation hunted him like a wild beast that they might destroy him. But God translated Elijah. Angels bore him in glory and triumph to heaven.

These references, confirming that the three men are literally and actually in heaven, are but a few of many which could be quoted to confirm this.

Who is Gabriel?

We now need to focus our attention on one of the mighty angels, namely Gabriel, to learn who he is, what his special work is, and what is the great blessing awaiting us in his being commissioned to show Daniel the meaning of the prophecies revealed to him. Soon there will be a reopening of the connection between heaven and earth under the leadership of Gabriel, which will inspire in us the spirit of gratitude and praise.

We will be blessed as never before by the day of glory soon to open before us, when Gabriel and the hosts of angels under his

command will maintain constant communion with us. The pathway by which the angels come and go from heaven to earth will be as alive with angels as when Jacob was granted a view of it during the night that he fled from the fury of his brother. What a wonderful restoration that will be! Here follows the announcement of that forthcoming release of unlimited activity.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 16:

Satan is a diligent Bible student. He knows that his time is short, and he seeks at every point to counterwork the work of the Lord upon this earth. It is impossible to give any idea of the experience of the people of God who shall be alive upon the earth when celestial glory and a repetition of the persecutions of the past are blended. They will walk in the light proceeding from the throne of God. By means of the angels there will be constant communication between heaven and earth.

There are only four references in all the scriptures in which Gabriel is mentioned by name.

Daniel 8

¹⁶ And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.

Daniel 9

²¹ Yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

Luke 1

¹⁹ And the angel answered and said to him, I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.

²⁶ Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth.

While there are only these four references to Gabriel in the Bible, there are quite a number more in the Spirit of Prophecy. These cast considerably more light on the power emanating from the mighty angel Gabriel.

The Desire of Ages, p. 99:

The words of the angel,

Luke 1

¹⁹ I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God,
—show that he holds a position of high honor in the heavenly
courts. When he came with a message to Daniel, he said,

Daniel 10

²¹ There is none that holds with me in these things, but Michael
[Christ] your Prince.

Of Gabriel the Saviour speaks in the Revelation, saying that:

Revelation 1

¹ He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John.
And to John the angel declared,

Revelation 22 [RV]

⁹ I am a fellow servant with you and with your brethren the
prophets.

Wonderful thought—that the angel who stands next in honor
to the Son of God is the one chosen to open the purposes of God
to sinful men.

Gabriel in the Garden of Gethsemane

We will now investigate two events, both of which will yield new
information about the angel Gabriel. First we will study the ac-
count of Jesus' agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, from the
point when the crisis had reached its height.

The Desire of Ages, p. 693-694:

The worlds unfallen and the heavenly angels had watched with
intense interest as the conflict drew to its close. Satan and his
confederacy of evil, the legions of apostasy, watched intently this
great crisis in the work of redemption. The powers of good and
evil waited to see what answer would come to Christ's thrice re-
peated prayer. Angels had longed to bring relief to the divine
sufferer, but this might not be. No way of escape was found for
the Son of God.

In this awful crisis, when everything was at stake, when the
mysterious cup trembled in the hand of the sufferer, the heavens
opened, a light shone forth amid the stormy darkness of the cri-
sis hour, and the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, oc-
cupying the position from which Satan fell, came to the side of
Christ. The angel came not to take the cup from Christ's hand,
but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Fa-

ther's love. He came to give power to the divine-human suppliant.

He pointed Him to the open heavens, telling Him of the souls that would be saved as the result of His sufferings. He assured Him that His Father is greater and more powerful than Satan, that His death would result in the utter discomfiture of Satan, and that the kingdom of this world would be given to the saints of the Most High. He told Him that He would see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, for He would see a multitude of the human race saved, eternally saved.

Although this paragraph does not openly state that it was the angel Gabriel who came to Christ in the Garden, there is another which does. It reads as follows:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1123:

In the supreme crisis, when heart and soul are breaking under the load of sin, Gabriel is sent to strengthen the divine sufferer, and brace Him to tread His bloodstained path. And while the angel supports His fainting form, Christ takes the bitter cup, and consents to drink its contents. Before the suffering One comes up the wail of a lost and perishing world, and the words come from the blood-stained lips, "Nevertheless, if man must perish unless I drink this bitter cup, Your will, not mine, be done."

Gabriel at the Resurrection

With these facts in mind, let us turn to the appearance of Gabriel at the resurrection of Christ. From the description of that event, we can glean further light on this important subject.

The Desire of Ages, p. 779-780:

The night of the first day of the week had worn slowly away. The darkest hour, just before daybreak, had come. Christ was still a prisoner in His narrow tomb. The great stone was in its place; the Roman seal was unbroken; the Roman guards were keeping their watch. And there were unseen watchers. Hosts of evil angels were gathered about the place. Had it been possible, the prince of darkness with his apostate army would have kept forever sealed the tomb that held the Son of God. But a heavenly host surrounded the sepulcher. Angels that excel in strength

were guarding the tomb, and waiting to welcome the Prince of life.

Matthew 28

² And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven.

Clothed with the panoply of God, this angel left the heavenly courts. The bright beams of God's glory went before him, and illuminated his pathway.

³ His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

⁴ And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

Now, priests and rulers, where is the power of your guard? Brave soldiers that have never been afraid of human power are now as captives taken without sword or spear. The face they look upon is not the face of mortal warrior; it is the face of the mightiest of the Lord's host. This messenger is he who fills the position from which Satan fell. It is he who on the hills of Bethlehem proclaimed Christ's birth.

The earth trembles at his approach, the hosts of darkness flee, and as he rolls away the stone, heaven seems to come down to the earth. The soldiers see him removing the stone as he would a pebble, and hear him cry,

"Son of God, come forth; your Father calls you."

They see Jesus come forth from the grave, and hear Him proclaim over the rent sepulcher,

"I am the resurrection, and the life."

As He comes forth in majesty and glory, the angel host bow low in adoration before the Redeemer, and welcome Him with songs of praise.

Lucifer's Position

We now have sufficient evidence to confirm that the angel who appeared in the Garden in order to strengthen Christ, and the one who called the Saviour from the dead was one and the same, the mighty Gabriel. It was also stated that Gabriel was the angel who filled the position vacated by Satan, and that he is the mightiest of the Lord's host.

The being who occupies the position vacated by Satan must have been taken from among men, as was our Saviour.⁹⁸ His is the position coveted by Lucifer who became our adversary, the devil.

After Satan became so charged with envy of the Son of God that he revolted against the divine order and went to war with God to fight for what he thought were his rights, spiritual blindness overcame him. This prevented him from seeing that whoever occupied the position held by Christ had to have, first of all, the divine nature so that he could have unlimited access to the infinite Source of life. At the same time, he had to be a creature so that he could bring life and light to all created beings without destroying them. It is for this reason that Jesus Christ is both God and man, and is named, "Immanuel, God with us."

Matthew 1

²³ Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, God with us.

Originally, Christ was the only One who was God and creature at the same time. But when Adam and Eve transgressed, they forfeited their lives, and needed divine redemption. Forgiveness, as it is generally understood, was insufficient on its own to change their fate. They had died spiritually, and a forgiven dead person is no better off than an unforgiven dead person. For this reason, divine forgiveness includes more. The dead person needs the gift of life. And so, in an act of incredible love, God in Christ enabled us to be partakers of His life by making it possible for us to be born into the actual family of God. Thus is fulfilled the promise that the mystery of God is,

Colossians 1

²⁷ ...Christ in you, the hope of glory.

No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born again. This means we must have the life of God within us. As a result, whereas there was but one divine-human Being serving the universe, now there is a great multitude of them. Even Satan

⁹⁸ See the book, *Melchizedek*.

knows that he has been replaced, as will be evidenced by the scornful words he will utter as he fights for his supposed rights to the very end:

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 473-474:

Satan urges before God his accusations against them, declaring that they have by their sins forfeited the divine protection, and claiming the right to destroy them as transgressors. He pronounces them just as deserving as himself of exclusion from the favor of God.

“Are these,” he says, “the people who are to take my place in heaven and the place of the angels who united with me? While they profess to obey the law of God, have they kept its precepts? Have they not been lovers of self more than of God? Have they not placed their own interests above His service? Have they not loved the things of the world? Look at the sins which have marked their lives. Behold their selfishness, their malice, their hatred toward one another.”

When Satan revolted, he took one third of the angels with him.

Revelation 12

⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

These defections produced vacancies which require replacements, and these are being furnished by the ministry of the plan of salvation. Our great Redeemer is preparing men and women with the necessary qualifications to make up the deficiencies in the numbers of angels.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1082:

God created man for His own glory, that after test and trial the human family might become one with the heavenly family. It was God’s purpose to repopulate heaven with the human family, if they would show themselves obedient to His every word. Adam was to be tested, to see whether he would be obedient, as the loyal angels, or disobedient.

If he stood the test, his instruction to his children would have been only of loyalty. His mind and thoughts would have been as the mind and thoughts of God. He would have been taught by

God as His husbandry and building. His character would have been molded in accordance with the character of God.

The role of being a replacement to those who had fallen into sin and death, is a heavy responsibility. Those who so tragically lost their places in God's kingdom made up one third of the whole, and such a loss must not happen again. The two thirds who remained loyal are referred to in the Bible as numbering...

Revelation 5

¹¹ ...ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.

While that may sound like a very large number of beings, in reality, when compared with the dwellers throughout the universe, it would be relatively small. Yet the loss of the one third who fell has left a serious wound.

Thus far, we have learned that Gabriel is the mightiest angel in the Lord's host; a man taken from the human family; the one who replaces the fallen Lucifer; the angel who stands in God's presence; and the one who sustained Christ at every step He took during His hours of suffering in Gethsemane. He was also the mightiest of the host who called Christ to come forth on the resurrection morning.

The Vision Given to Moses

Now we come to the final piece of evidence which positively identifies which man of the three was Gabriel. To whom did Christ foretell that he would be exalted to such a position? It was to Moses himself, just prior to his death on the lonely mountain of Nebo, the top of Pisgah, from where he was granted a panoramic, prophetic view of the history of the church through all the ages down until the triumphant culmination of the great controversy.

When he saw Christ's sufferings in the Garden of Gethsemane, His so-called trial, His persecution at the hands of the Jews, His crucifixion, His burial, resurrection, and triumphal return to heaven depicted, he was shown that he himself would be the one

who would attend the Saviour through these terrible and wonderful triumphs. In *Patriarchs and Prophets* we read of Moses:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 475-476:

He followed the Saviour to Gethsemane, and beheld the agony in the garden, the betrayal, the mockery and scourging—the crucifixion. Moses saw that as he had lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of God must be lifted up, that whosoever would believe on Him “should not perish, but have eternal life.” *John* 3:15. Grief, indignation, and horror filled the heart of Moses as he viewed the hypocrisy and satanic hatred manifested by the Jewish nation against their Redeemer, the mighty Angel who had gone before their fathers. He heard Christ’s agonizing cry,

Mark 15

³⁴ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

He saw Him lying in Joseph’s new tomb. The darkness of hopeless despair seemed to enshroud the world. But he looked again, and beheld Him coming forth a conqueror, and ascending to heaven escorted by adoring angels and leading a multitude of captives. He saw the shining gates open to receive Him, and the host of heaven with songs of triumph welcoming their Commander.

And it was there revealed to him that he himself would be one who should attend the Saviour, and open to Him the everlasting gates. As he looked upon the scene, his countenance shone with a holy radiance. How small appeared the trials and sacrifices of his life when compared with those of the Son of God! how light in contrast with the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”! *2 Corinthians* 4:17. He rejoiced that he had been permitted, even in a small measure, to be a partaker in the sufferings of Christ.

Success for God’s people in the final battle of the great controversy will depend upon the closest cooperation between the heavenly and earthly agencies. Therefore, we will need to be able to distinguish between our friends and our foes. While Gabriel knows who we are and how much he can depend upon us, the question is, do we know who he is? Each one of us will need to have a clear understanding of Gabriel’s identity and dependability.

The Resurrected Moses

We have now examined sufficient evidence to identify that Gabriel is the resurrected Moses. How comforting, encouraging and inspiring this knowledge will be to every one of us who has come to know Moses through the study of the scriptures. Through forty years of selfless ministry and total dedication to the interests of God and His people, Moses demonstrated flawless obedience, except for the one act by which he marred his service to God and man—the smiting of the rock when he should have only spoken to it. In that way he discredited God by taking the glory, which belonged to the infinite One, to himself.

As we study the wonderful life of Moses, an ever-deepening conviction fastens upon us that we have a mighty champion who, along with Michael the Archangel, is vested with the power and authority of heaven and therefore cannot fail. Christ the Archangel, into whose hands all power in heaven and earth has been given, and Moses, who is Gabriel, the mightiest of the Lord's host, make up an invincible team. That is the same team which worked together in Daniel's case.

One of the great characteristics which marked the ministry of Moses was faithfulness. In this he is compared with Jesus who was also faithful in His ministry as it is written:

Hebrews 3

¹ Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

² Who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all his house.

Here the faithfulness of Jesus is being measured and assessed by that found in Moses. This is an indication to us of the heights to which we may ascend in our yearning quest after righteousness.

In the light of these achievements, let no human or angel say that perfection is impossible or that we shall enter the final conflict poorly equipped, or led by weak, incompetent generals. When tempted to succumb to such thoughts, fix them instead on

the radiant glory of Gabriel, that is, Moses, carrying out his work with such total assurance, power, and perfection.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ For a comprehensive study of the instances when angels appeared on this earth, see the book, *Gabriel: From the Meekest to the Greatest*.

60. Understanding the Vision

Messenger and News Review, November 1999

Daniel 10:1-9

This article includes some additions from the original unpublished draft.

D*ANIEL* 10-12 was recorded for the purpose that the vision would be understood by Daniel and his people right down to the end of the great controversy. Therefore, a message was delivered to him with the warning that the appointed time would be of great length. It was to be so extended that Daniel would need special strengthening in order to bear the revelations of the fearful sufferings yet to come upon his people before the end could come.

But which vision was to be understood? Is it one of those revealed in *Daniel* 7 and 8 to which reference is being made, or is it a continuation of the vision in *Daniel* 10:5-7 of the glorious man before whose glory Daniel fainted? The answer is not difficult to determine. The vision of the glorious man does not require an explanation, for it is a description of Christ's Person, and only requires an understanding of the purpose of His revealing himself to Daniel.

Obviously, Gabriel came again to Daniel in order to continue his explanation of the vision recorded in chapters 7 and 8. This is seen, for example, by the fact, that chapters 7, 8, 11, and 12 all have the same starting point if allowance is made for world empires which, in the meantime, had passed off the scene of action.

Babylon, represented by the winged lion in chapter 7, is not included in *Daniel* 8 simply because that world empire was at the time of the giving of this vision no longer prophecy, but already history and therefore had lost its place in a book of prophecy.

When we come to *Daniel* 11, no further world powers had replaced those in the position of world rulership, so that Medo-Persia was still listed. The explanation is continued here, for this knowledge is essential in the accurate identification of the kings of the north and of the south in the coming, dreadful days. At that

time we will need to know exactly who our enemies are, in order to be protected from them.

Explanation of the Symbols

So then, let us look carefully at *Daniel* 11 in the light of the following question:

“Is that chapter an explanation of a vision already given, or is it a further symbolic presentation of coming events?”

By studying chapter 11 we can see that symbols such as a lion, bear, leopard, ram, or goat are not used to illustrate coming events. Neither are days, months, waters, horsemen, nor bottomless pits used to convey certain truths. Instead, carefully worded explanations are given of some of these symbols as used in previously recorded visions. This means that in our study of chapter 11 of the prophecies of *Daniel*, we are bound by the principle that every symbol must have its corresponding interpretation, and every interpretation must have its corresponding symbol—neither can be lacking. Sometimes the corresponding explanation may be separated from its symbol by chapters and verses, but a little searching will bridge the gulf and link them together.

For instance, the first verses of *Daniel* 11 are given to remind us of symbols employed earlier in the book of this great prophet:

Daniel 11

² And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece.

³ Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.

This is certainly not a symbolic vision, but a plain interpretation of previous visions. For instance, in the prophet was shown the same powers, namely Medo-Persia and Greece entering into conflict with each other as symbolized by a ram and a he-goat. The facts are that what was previously revealed in fairly broad

terms by using symbolic language, is in these verses opened up in much greater detail by using direct language.

Similarly, the first verse of *Daniel* 10 is a concise statement of the contents of the entire book of *Daniel*.

Daniel 10

¹ In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision.

As a result of this message being delivered to Daniel, who was pleading for light in the most importunate of terms, he was able to understand both the message and the vision. Furthermore, he understood the terrible truth that the entire drama would require a long time before the fearful conflict would eventually come to its end. This thought is mentioned twice in *Daniel* 10 alone, it is introduced in verse 1,

¹ ...but the appointed time was long...

—and repeated in verse 14:

¹⁴ ...for yet the vision is for many days.

The “appointed time” was obviously not destined to comprise years of ease and plenty made such by the favor of the world. On the contrary, there were to be centuries of the bitterest persecution against the true church during which literally millions of its members would suffer martyrdom for their faith, or endure the most awful tortures. All of which only served to accentuate the intense longing felt by the true believers to go home and be with their blessed Redeemer.

As a result, from the midst of the darkest of ages, the believers in Jesus symbolically voiced the question as to how long their separation was to continue:

Revelation 6

⁹ When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.

¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?

¹¹ And a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

Of them it will be said:

Revelation 14

¹² Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

This text also applies to the church in the last days.

The Patience of the Saints

The present period of time is certainly one in the history of the church of God when the saints are being compelled to develop great patience. I was but a lad when my widowed mother first heard of and accepted the glad tidings of a soon coming Saviour. So it was that I lived in an atmosphere of continual expectancy of the end of the world, as did the church members living out their faith and hope around me. We could see that the dearest yearning of person after person in the faith was that they would be members of the 144,000 and thus be translated to heaven without dying. That hope has stretched from that day onward.

All my life I proclaimed the truth that Christ is coming very soon, despite the fact that year followed year without His actual appearing. There have been so many raised hopes, so many longings for the termination of the horrors of cruelty, incurable diseases, wars and rumors of wars, and subsequent disappointments that have tried our patience, that in all too many cases we have permitted our zeal to lose its first glow. There are times when we are tempted to feel that we have become false prophets. The unbelievers scornfully inquire,

“Where is their God? where is the promise of His coming?”¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ See 2 Peter 3:4.

In the sad cases of some who once rejoiced in the truth, the pressure has been so great as to cause them to lose faith altogether and abandon their hope completely.

But we have Christ's unbreakable promises that He will come once more, just as He has assured us. Their fulfillment, as revealed to Daniel, would require a long time before His advent will become a reality. Despite predictions like these as to the extended duration of the intervening events culminating in the time of trouble, there is no reason to cast away our faith in Christ's return. At the same time, we must keep in mind the repeated warnings against being caught unawares and fatally unprepared for His coming.

We should also consider the fact that our probationary time can terminate with death at any time, quite unexpectedly. We need to shake off all tendency to Laodiceanism,

Revelation 3

¹⁹ ...be zealous and repent.

The Inspiration of Gabriel

With undimmed clarity under the tutorship of the mighty Gabriel, Daniel saw that time would last for a very long time indeed. Heaven knew that the effect upon the prophet would be devastating, especially as he saw the power of the forces committed against the true church. On the other side, the people of the Lord appeared weak and scattered, few in numbers, and whose arsenal was limited in weaponry to the power of faith and love, it seemed that they would quickly and permanently disappear.

When we gain an accurate and comprehensive evaluation of the forces arrayed against us, we shall also need a revelation of the awesome forces of light which are assembled on the side of truth and righteousness, by the power of which our cause is guaranteed to triumph.

In the last chapter, we saw something of the incredible glory, beauty, and power resident in Gabriel, the man Moses, who is to-

day the mightiest of the Lord's hosts. As I looked upon the marvelous transformation in all his immortal beauty and power from his being a limited, merely mortal, human being, I realized even though dimly, what a mighty force each one of us is to become when all that which has been lost is again restored to us. When I meditate upon what we will become, compared with what we know ourselves to be as mortal, earthbound believers, how feeble, how lacking in the power of heaven we are!

But we do not need to be as feeble as we are, though of course we cannot rise to our full potential until after we have grown up to our full stature after we have been immortalized and taken home at last.¹⁰¹ So that we shall catch inspiration from the revelation of Gabriel, the mightiest of the Lord's host, I will quote again the description of his being in command of the resurrection of Jesus:

The Desire of Ages, p. 779-780:

Matthew 28

² And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven.

Clothed with the panoply of God, this angel left the heavenly courts. The bright beams of God's glory went before him, and illuminated his pathway.

³ His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

⁴ And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

Now, priests and rulers, where is the power of your guard? Brave soldiers that have never been afraid of human power are now as captives taken without sword or spear. The face they look upon is not the face of mortal warrior; it is the face of the mightiest of the Lord's host. This messenger is he who fills the position from which Satan fell. It is he who on the hills of Bethlehem proclaimed Christ's birth.

The earth trembles at his approach, the hosts of darkness flee, and as he rolls away the stone, heaven seems to come down to the earth. The soldiers see him removing the stone as he would a

¹⁰¹ See *The Great Controversy* p. 644-645.

pebble, and hear him cry, "Son of God, come forth; your Father calls You."

That same angel Gabriel, the glorified Moses, who was to be in command of the resurrection of Jesus, was the appointed revealer to Daniel of the triumphant conclusion to the great controversy.

The Effect of Michael

But even more glorious and powerful was the revelation of Michael, the Archangel, who is Christ himself. Of Him, Daniel wrote:

Daniel 10

⁵ I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz!

⁶ His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, His eyes like torches of fire, His arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of His words like the voice of a multitude.

This mighty and glorious Being was none other than Christ himself, resplendent in His glory, and awesome in the power vested in Him. The appearance of Christ, the Messenger was sudden and unannounced, but the reaction of those who saw the vision was swift and total. As it is reported for our blessing, every person other than Daniel, was overcome by a terrible fear, and fled in all directions seeking some place which they supposed might be safe. Daniel alone remained, but he too was overcome to a certain point.

The Review and Herald, February 8, 1881:

No less a personage than the Son of God appeared to Daniel. This description is similar to that given by John when Christ was revealed to him upon the Isle of Patmos. Our Lord now comes with another heavenly messenger to teach Daniel what would take place in the latter days. This knowledge was given to Daniel and recorded by Inspiration for us upon whom the ends of the world are come.

The Word of God is written to bring salvation to all men, but not all men are able to understand or receive it. Daniel could, while those around him could not. This does not negate the truth that Christ is the Light to every man who enters into the world as it is written:

John 1

⁹ That was the true Light which gives light to every man who comes into the world.

At some point in his personal history, clear rays of light shine into the minds of every man, but thereafter, he chooses to respond positively or negatively. If there is the rejection of truth, the souls capacity for receiving it becomes more and more limited until it is looked upon with nothing but hostility. The more powerfully the light shines, the more violent the enmity generated against it and the more heavily the hand of persecution will seek to rain down destruction and death upon the bearer of that Light.

Effects of the Manifestation of Divine Power

There is another situation which develops when invincible power is present and manifest. I will name three such situations:

One was the occasion when Christ alone and unassisted by any earthly powers, cleansed the temple from the plague of the buyers and sellers. These men fled out of control, leaving Christ to minister to the poor and the afflicted.

A second situation is found in the performance of Gabriel at the resurrection of Christ his friend. Physical power was glorified by the manifestation of divine glory and there was not a Roman guard who could stand against the power and glory of the angel Gabriel.

A third situation is the one found in *Daniel* 10 and under study here. This is the occasion when great light and power from heaven shone forth in vision before the messenger of God. When this combination of great light and power accompanied the vision, those in whom there was no spiritual life could not remain in the presence of the messenger of the Lord.

Of course, many visions have been given without an accompaniment of divine power and glory, such as those given to Jeremiah and Isaiah. Those of this type have not caused the nearby unbelievers to take flight. But when power and glory surrounded Daniel, it certainly caused all others to scatter in the most disorderly fashion.

Daniel 10

⁷ And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

⁸ Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength.

⁹ Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

Christ was not attempting to intimidate Daniel, but to provide encouragement, strengthen faith, and give the assurance that the cause of truth and righteousness would triumph. In the hasty flight of those round about him without their even seeing the vision of Christ, was the fulfillment of God's declaration that the church's seeming minority was not a numerical deficiency at all. Rather, it was God's personal confirmation that His people would be invincible, when they were strictly obedient. It was the promise made to ancient Israel:

Deuteronomy 28

⁷ The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.

I have no evidence to suggest that Daniel was surrounded by hostile enemies on this occasion, nor would the force of the object lesson have been dissipated by their not being friendly forces on that day. Their flight was as abandoned as had been promised by God whether they were hostile or friendly.

But what lesson was there in the effect it had on Daniel's becoming prostrated, losing consciousness, being drained of all per-

sonal strength, and that there was no breath remaining in him? These are possible only in the experience of a person endowed with supernatural power.

Testimonies from the ministry of Ellen White give evidence that when she was taken off in vision, all these physical signs of a prophet were also present. Here is a description of one such sign: speaking with prolonged, total absence of breath:

“Now,” Brother White said, “we must see if there is any breath in her body.” There didn’t seem to be any. Everything looked all right, only there was no breath. Brother White said, “Now we will send out and get a mirror, and we will test it.” So someone went to the next door and got a mirror, and it was held close to her face, but no moisture gathered. So there was no breathing.¹⁰²

In view of the very long time needed to bring the great controversy to its close, great courage, and unfailing patience would be needed, for, otherwise the faith of God’s people would fail. Daniel needed to be immersed in a flood-tide of supernatural forces. His acquaintance with these powers would impart to him a new evaluation of what his people faced, and the spiritual power that accompanied them. Thus he would go forth armed by Omnipotence to do battle with the darkness of unrighteousness, in the knowledge of certain victory.

As he went forth so would God’s people in all following ages until the Saviour returns. The prophecies are the means whereby the outcome of the battle between the forces of light and darkness is known before it is even begun.

There is no indication of those who had fled from the appearance of the vision of Christ coming back to face the glory any more until it had faded away. Instead, the voice of Gabriel instructed the prostrated prophet who had risen partway as far as his hands and knees to stand upright. This he did.

¹⁰² *Ellen G. White: The Progressive Years*, Volume 2, 1862-1876, p. 234.

Answer to Prayer

Now commences a series of revelations of living truths which reveal how closely heaven and earth are linked together, and that we are not left alone. There are many occasions when the witness of sight and circumstances declares all too convincingly that God has abandoned us when this is never true. We will feel that it is so, but it will not be so. Consider the power conveyed in some of the promises of God wherein such teachings are to be found.

The Desire of Ages, p. 669-670:

At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer.

Thus in the strongest assertions God has declared that we are never left alone, abandoned, or forsaken. This may be difficult to accept when in the dark hour of affliction, we need to be strengthened and established, but with the eye of faith, we must penetrate the darkness of unbelief. Then we shall know that we have been sent into battle with Christ triumphantly leading the way. He will fulfill His promises.

Acts of the Apostles, p. 242:

There is to be no despondency in connection with God's service. The faith of the consecrated worker is to stand every test brought upon it. God is able and willing to bestow upon His servants all the strength they need, and to give them the wisdom that their varied necessities demand. He will more than fulfill the highest expectations of those who put their trust in Him.

Then there will be no occasion for despondency, doubt of God's willingness to sustain us, or cause for seeking comfort from other sources. Rather, at all times there will be occasion for rejoicing and gladness of heart.

Isaiah 49

¹³ Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord has comforted His people, and will have mercy upon His afflicted.

¹⁴ But Zion said, The Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me.

¹⁵ Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget you.

¹⁶ Behold, I have graven you upon the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.

These are the barest few of the great and wonderful promises by which we are to live.

61. Behind the Visible

Messenger and News Review, December 1999

Original title: Victory Over the Pressure of Sight and Circumstances

Daniel 10:12-14

This article includes some additions from the original unpublished draft, including the draft title.

All Power

THE last chapter closed with the thought that, despite the fact that it appears at times that God has abandoned us with the responsibility for the conquest of evil in our lives and in the world, this is not for a moment true. His parting commission to His disciples and to us, assures us of His constant care. Standing with the faithful on the mount of the ascension, He told them of the work He would accomplish through them. Its proportions were truly immense.

They were far from being unaware of the magnitude of this commission. By personal experience, they were well aware of the deadly hatred they would face, of the bitter hostilities, and unrestrained prejudices they would have to overcome. They had seen all these evil forces combined in their merciless determination to destroy the church of God and, seemingly, almost succeeding. They knew that military and numerical powers were in the hands of their enemies, along with the withering blight of apostasy. They were in possession only of the weapons, faith and love, which appeared so inadequate for carrying the light of heaven to men everywhere.

But they, as we too in turn have done since, have accepted that commission on the basis of the mighty promises which attend it. Let us take very careful note of these as Jesus spoke them to His listening disciples:

Matthew 28

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.

In the old *King James* edition of the Bible, Christ is quoted as saying,

Matthew 28 [KJV]

¹⁸ *All power* is given unto me in heaven and in earth,

—instead of saying that *all authority* has been given to Him. This is not a mistranslation, for no one can exercise all authority unless he is first endowed with all power. The greater the power in his possession, the greater the authority he can wield. Christ does not merely possess a degree of power, but to Him all power in heaven and earth has been given. So great is that difference, that there is no power and therefore, no authority with which to compare it or to successfully challenge that authority.

Those manifestations of power and authority which were experienced by Daniel, must have certainly charged his entire being with heavenly strength and added inspiration. By this means he was braced for whatever might come in conflict against him. How often then, every one of God's children should draw aside and through faith and much study enter into such proximity to our great King that our faith will be truly invincible.

A Needful Delay

It must have seemed to the prophet that God was somewhat indifferent about answering his prayers, after waiting three full weeks for an answer to reach him. But the time came when it was revealed to the suppliant that from the moment in which he had begun praying, he was heard, and immediate steps had been taken in heaven to answer that prayer. But there had been a hindering factor, an obstacle which had to be removed before attention was given to Daniel's importunate pleadings. Gabriel ex-

plained to Daniel just how the answer to his prayer came to be delayed:

Daniel 10

¹² Then he said to me, Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.

¹³ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.

¹⁴ Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come.

This explanation made it plain to Daniel what had delayed Gabriel's coming for 21 days. Gabriel advised Daniel not to fear that the answer was far away either in distance or in time. It was neither, though it might have seemed that way to Daniel. This revelation was the unfolding to Daniel of the significance of the events which had caused that delay, and the reasons for the release of Gabriel to attend to the needs of Daniel.

It was revealed to the suppliant that from the moment he had begun praying, he was heard, and immediate steps had been taken in heaven to answer that prayer. There had been an obstacle which had to be removed before an answer could be given to Daniel's importunate pleadings. The delay had been caused by the resistance of Cyrus, the Medo-Persian king, to the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The mighty angel Gabriel had been assigned the work of gaining the support of Cyrus in the release of the Jews from their earthly bondage. Gabriel was unable to achieve this without the additional help provided by the arrival of Michael, the Archangel. Once that work had been accomplished, Gabriel was free to continue his God-given instruction to Daniel.

The Prayer of Faith

Gabriel's flight from where he was, to a position beside the man of God, was initiated by Daniel supplicating the throne of God in prayer.

Daniel 10

¹² ...I have come because of your words,

—Gabriel had declared. The prayer of Daniel, through living faith, had moved the arm of Omnipotence, and the almighty resources of the universe had come to his aid. It was a demonstration of the incredible reserves of power and light available to all those who will go to war in righteousness in the soon coming battle against the beast and his image.

In this connection, let us consider the following statement and draw its light and power into our souls until we become charged with life, light and glory from above.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 172:

The children of God are not left alone and defenseless. Prayer moves the arm of Omnipotence. Prayer has...

Hebrews 11

³³ ...subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

³⁴ Quenched the violence of fire,

—we shall know what it means when we hear the reports of the martyrs who died for their faith—

³⁴ ...turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Even if the prayer of faith seems to generate no answer, it actually imparts great benefit to even the firmest of believers, such as Daniel and Elijah. These two men understood that such prayer of faith brings not only the divine solution, but in the process, produces fresh heights of achievement in the struggling Christian. Therefore, he clings to his heavenly Saviour, exclaiming, as did Jacob, when the Angel requested,

Genesis 32

²⁶ Let me go, for the day breaks,

—but Jacob replied,

Genesis 32

²⁶ ...I will not let You go, unless You bless me!

That experience wrought a very great change in Jacob. It was so great that God changed his name from Jacob, “the Supplanter,” to Israel, “the Overcomer.”

Likewise, Elijah clung to God’s mighty promises until he had received the blessing so much needed for himself and for his people. The results were that a considerable reformation was wrought in Israel, and, at the same time, Elijah received a great cleansing and a wonderful drawing nearer to God for himself. Here is a brief description of his receiving such a beautiful deepening of his Christian experience:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 2, p. 1035:

Six times he returned from the watch, saying, There is nothing, no cloud, no sign of rain. But the prophet did not give up in discouragement. He kept reviewing his life, to see where he had failed to honor God, he confessed his sins, and thus continued to afflict his soul before God, while watching for a token that his prayer was answered.

As he searched his heart, he seemed to be less and less, both in his own estimation and in the sight of God. It seemed to him that he was nothing, and that God was everything; and when he reached the point of renouncing self, while he clung to the Saviour as his only strength and righteousness, the answer came. The servant appeared, and said,

1 Kings 18

⁴⁴ Behold, there arises a little cloud out of the sea, like a man’s hand.

The Circuit of Beneficence

The parallel experience on the part of Jacob was a microcosm of the whole of the great controversy. The principles involved in the experiences through which Jacob passed, are an accurate portrayal of the conflict in heaven when Lucifer rose up determined to take possession of that which he considered to be his rights. To actually achieve this necessitated his resorting to warfare, for it was in opposition to the will of God for him to establish himself

in the coveted position. This is why when Gabriel announced to Daniel, the all-embracing scope of the explanation contained in *Daniel* 11, he described it as a great conflict.

Daniel 10 [NRSV]

¹ In the third year of King Cyrus of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. The word was true, and it concerned *a great conflict*. He understood the word, having received understanding in the vision.

Those who never attempt to position themselves in any place God has not put them, will truly walk in His light. If they maintain their loyalty to this divine principle of operation, and form their lives accordingly, their names will be enshrined in the book of life.

But, for many, the prospects of living a life in harmony with the principles outlined in the constitution of God's governmental system, seems too restrictive, too depriving, and too much out of harmony with the spirit within them that they fear they could not become a part of it. The higher man's station in life and the greater his wealth, the more he has to lose, and the more difficult it will be for him to make the separation.

Most people down through history have chosen the way of iniquity even though at the cost of eternal life. Those who have not, are in the minority. Daniel was of this latter class. He attained such a level in that class, that heaven classified him as one who was "greatly beloved."¹⁰³

What was it about him that made Daniel to be greatly beloved in heaven? For to be thus recognized in heaven, is to be the recipient of heaven's richest blessings. It means to be highly honored of the Lord. Of course, every true believer in the Lord is greatly beloved, for by virtue of his having been saved, he has become a part of the great stream of love which flows out from the throne of God to encircle the universe and return to the great Source of life and love once more. This beautiful system is the law of life for the universe:

¹⁰³ See *Daniel* 10:11, 19.

The Desire of Ages, p. 21:

But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give.

John 8

²⁸ I do nothing of myself, [said Christ];...

John 6

⁵⁷ The living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father.

John 8

⁵⁰ I seek not my own glory,...

John 7

¹⁸ ...but the glory of Him that sent me.

In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all.

And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.

There is the other, the putrid stream, which, though it may appear to bring life and prosperity, succeeds only in bringing a stream of poison and of death.

Our Appointed Positions

There can be only one way of building God's kingdom, and that is the way in which God has designed it shall be done. That way involves the positioning of every being throughout the universe in the precise position God in His infinite wisdom knows that being belongs in the total order of things. This is confirmed by the following words:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1173:

Heavenly beings are appointed to answer the prayers of those who are working unselfishly for the interests of the cause of God. The very highest angels in the heavenly courts are appointed to work out the prayers which ascend to God for the advancement of the cause of God. Each angel has his particular post of duty, which he is not permitted to leave for any other

place. If he should leave, the powers of darkness would gain an advantage.

Lucifer and his followers had taken that very course of action. They had left their appointed station of duty and, by so doing, had imbalanced heaven. It therefore became necessary to fill those vacancies so that, once more for all eternity, perfect harmony would reign throughout the unlimited universe.

Perfect order marks the kingdom as God has designed it. Likewise perfect order and harmony mark the kingdom as God has introduced elements designed to restore a state of balance. To begin with, a new and distinct order of created beings with Adam and Eve as parents was to populate the earth.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1081:

Infinite love—how great it is! God made the world to enlarge heaven. He desires a larger family of created intelligences.

God does nothing from the point of view of His own personal gratification. So, when He made our world in order to enlarge heaven, He was, as always, acting in love to fill the needs of His created subjects. A great breach had been made in heaven's population. The very immediate need was that this unacceptable state of affairs should be restored to an immediate total harmony.

But this could not be accomplished simply by creating the same number of the same kind of creatures. We know this because those who were created as replacements were a new and distinct order. Note carefully the presentation of this point:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1081:

All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made “in the image of God,” and it was the Creator's design that they should populate the earth.

In what sense were they to be “a new and distinct order”? It was in the sense that they were made in the image of God with the power to reproduce themselves. By this process of reproduction they were to multiply themselves until they should fill the

entire earth. Thus they were to re-populate heaven with the human family.

All these special capabilities were entrusted to them on condition of their maintaining flawless obedience to every principle embodied in the righteousness on which the kingdom is to be built. No imbalance in any shape or form can be tolerated for the presence of such is to admit elements of destruction which remorselessly devour all that is exposed to their ravages.

As a result of our first parents' disobedience, God's perfect plan was thwarted. Instead of being resolved, the great controversy continues day after day. Behind the scenes, invisible to human eyes, good and evil angels are in constant conflict. Although we cannot witness this struggle, it is a life-and-death conflict. Satan and his evil angels work with relentless fury to try to hinder God's intention to fill up the vacant positions, whereas heaven does all in its power to achieve God's goal and to secure the cooperation of humanity for this purpose.

If Satan had been successful in preventing Cyrus from setting God's people free in Daniel's time, he would have delayed the divine purpose once more, but Daniel's unwavering supplication thwarted his scheming. In Daniel, the King of kings had a mighty ally, who through prayer opened the way for the heavenly agencies to influence the Persian king to fulfill the divine plan.

The Invisible Battle

It is essential that we, as members of God's armies, possess a clear understanding of the reality of this deadly conflict. Then we will view with far greater concern God's expectation of our Spirit-inspired support. We can mightily strengthen the cause of God when we realize that the very highest angels are deployed to answer the unselfish prayers of those whose petitions arise to heaven to advance the interests of the cause they love.

It is vital that we understand much more of this battle than we presently do, and act accordingly. The forces exercised by invis-

ble beings are still working for and against us today, even though we cannot see them.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1173:

As a people we do not understand as we should the great conflict going on between invisible agencies, the controversy between loyal and disloyal angels. Evil angels are constantly at work, planning their line of attack, controlling as commanders, kings, and rulers, the disloyal human forces....

I call upon the ministers of Christ to press home upon the understanding of all who come within the reach of their voice, the truth of the ministration of angels. Do not indulge in fanciful speculations. The written Word is our only safety. We must pray as did Daniel, that we may be guarded by heavenly intelligences. As ministering spirits, angels are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. Pray, my brethren, pray as you have never prayed before. We are not prepared for the Lord's coming. We need to make thorough work for eternity.

Such is the very great need of the hour, that unless we learn to pray as we have never prayed before, we shall not be found in our divinely designated positions. The call is for us to give up all "fanciful speculations" and sentimentalism, and to dwell instead upon the Word of God. We need to cooperate with the heavenly angels to prevent the enemy gaining a further advantage, and to avoid any further delay in Christ's coming.

How God Controls Rulers

If we understand the relationship between the prayers of Daniel and their effect upon Gabriel, we will become aware of the efforts put forth by both sides of the controversy to win the collaboration of the king of Persia, and we will better understand the special support of Michael. We need to realize that:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1173:

Day by day the conflict between good and evil is going on. Why is it that those who have had many opportunities and advantages do not realize the intensity of this work? They should be intelligent in regard to this. God is the Ruler. By His supreme power He holds in check and controls earthly potentates.

Through His agencies He does the work which was ordained before the foundation of the world.

It is critical to our understanding of God's character, and therefore to our understanding of, and participation in the building of His kingdom, just how God is able to hold "in check and controls earthly potentates."

These are vital areas of study which must be understood in depth by God's children and ever more so as the great conflict intensifies. This, it assuredly will do as we move into the battle scenes of the last battle—Armageddon. Then it will be revealed whose side we are truly on.

The great problem for our human minds to grasp is to understand how God can hold in check and control earthly potentates without, at the same, depriving them of their freedom to choose. To the mind of man this is a profound mystery. It is a mystery which will occupy his study time throughout eternity, and always there will be fresh glimpses of truth which will put our minds to the stretch.

This problem has been covered in my book, *Behold Your God*, so I will make reference to only one or two arguments here by way of extending that which has already been revealed. In doing this, it is always helpful to so draw out the evidences, so that we are able to observe the implications resulting from their application to our current study.

In the light of this thought, let consideration be given to the words of Daniel to King Nebuchadnezzar during his interpretation of the dream of the great tree:

Daniel 4

²⁵ They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.

There are many who would declare that the meaning of this scripture is perfectly clear. They would say that God is in com-

plete command of the universe and exercises that authority in the appointment of those rulers whom He chooses. They usually overlook the fact that this choosing on God's part is not confined to noble men of great integrity, nor even to base men, but to "the basest of men":

Daniel 4 [KJV]

¹⁷ This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will, and sets up over it *the basest of men*.

Furthermore, no matter how base he might be, God has complete foreknowledge of his character and reign down to the finest detail. Nothing about any ruler ever catches God by surprise. Does this mean that God is directly responsible for the incredible sufferings which those despotic rulers have imposed upon their people? The Roman Emperor, Nero, is probably one of the most evil rulers who ever lived. He is described as...

The Great Controversy, p. 667:

...that monster of cruelty and vice.

No Christian would, so much as for an instant, blame the Most High for Nero's atrocities. The way in which...

Daniel 4

²⁵ ...the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.

—is not arbitrary. He holds in check and controls earthly potentates through the outworking of cause and effect, the play and counter-play of the forces of good and evil. There is the healing effect of opening the mind to the truth on the one hand, and the soul-destroying consequences of permitting pride and prejudice to shut out the light on the other.

Thus, during those periods of history when God has had a messenger of great spiritual strength and purity of heart and life, He has been able to work much more effectively for the respective ruler—provided that he opened his heart to the light. For instance, in the person of Daniel, heaven had a coworker who in praying

most earnestly for the Persian monarch, opened the door for heaven's light to shine upon him. Finally, Cyrus opened his heart to the light, and God was able to rule through him.

But, during those darkened eras of apostasy, where no such spiritual minded petitioner opened the way for heaven's light to shine upon the ruling king, God has been shut out of the decision making process and His control over the rulers has been limited to a greater or lesser degree.

And when the light shone upon the king through the ministry of a child of God, but was rejected by the potentate, as in Nero's case, God could not rule through him. At such times the great controversy has apparently been dominated by Satan and his angels. But evil men such as Nero, Hitler, and others of like character, have been permitted to rise and rule with appalling ease only for a short time in order to display more fully the character of the enemy. The controversy continues to be waged.

The forces exercised by invisible beings are still working for and against us though we cannot see them. Yet it is vital that we understand much more than we presently do of these things.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1173:

As a people we do not understand as we should the great conflict going on between invisible agencies, the controversy between loyal and disloyal angels. Evil angels are constantly at work, planning their line of attack, controlling as commanders, kings, and rulers, the disloyal human forces....I call upon the ministers of Christ to press home upon the understanding of all who come within the reach of their voice, the truth of the ministration of angels. Do not indulge in fanciful speculations. The written Word is our only safety.

We must pray as did Daniel, that we may be guarded by heavenly intelligences. As ministering spirits angels are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. Pray, my brethren, pray as you have never prayed before. We are not prepared for the Lord's coming. We need to make thorough work for eternity.

Such is the very great need of the hour, and unless we learn to pray as we have never prayed before, we shall not be found in our divinely designated position. That will mean that the enemy will gain a further advantage, and Christ's coming will be additionally delayed.

62. The Latter Days

Unpublished Article

Daniel 10:14

Daniel 10

¹⁴ Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in *the latter days*, for the vision refers to many days yet to come.

AT THE time when these words are being typed, without a doubt we are in the midst of the events which are here predicted. We cannot of course, name the day nor the date when the actual events will take place, but we do know the point to which we have come in the unfolding of the prophetic scroll.

On that great occasion when Jesus unfolded the prophetic future as recorded in His words to His intensely interested disciples, He made it clear that it was the privilege of His followers to ever understand the point at which they had arrived in the unfolding of future events. He concluded His assurances with these words:

Matthew 24

³³ So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!

From time to time, we would do well to retrace the prophetic waymarks in order to gain a realistic appreciation of the progress made by the church of God so far, and to be greatly encouraged as we see how short is the way which remains.

For instance, the four great world empires have come and gone, beginning with Babylon, followed by Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. This was followed in turn by the very different little horn power, which displaced three kingdoms in its rise to rulership of the world, before it crumbled to ruins just as its predecessors had done.

That little horn power came to its end at the ending of the 1260 years in the year 1798, but while the wound delivered to her was deadly and seemingly fatal, we are warned that it would heal. The healing process is now far advanced and soon will be complete.

When it is, the image of the beast will be formed, and then the closing events listed in the last verses of *Daniel* 11, and the whole of chapter 12 will be fulfilled. The kings of the North and of the South will play out their distinctive roles and the end will come.

Six Thousand Years of Unrest

Almost six thousand years have been required so far to fulfill all these anticipated events, and for many it has been a long tarrying time. Think of those poor souls who spent years and years languishing in underground prisons, and of those who toiled day and night at galley oars for instance. With what longing they must have looked for their Saviour's return. To them, so immense was the staggering injustice of sin, that they hated it with an intensity beyond description. The truth that he who suffers the most for Christ, will love the most, will be radiant with glory in the earth made new.

In the meantime let all of God's waiting children be thankful that there will be no extension of time beyond the six thousand years since the fall of man into sin. The evidence for this is found in the fact that the whole of the earth must have its full quota of Sabbath time. So where we find that there will be one thousand years of rest for this earth, we may know that there will have been six thousand years of unrest. The antitype is determined by the type. This truth is verified by several statements some of which read as follows:

The Great Controversy, p. 659-660:

For six thousand years, Satan's work of rebellion has "made the earth to tremble."¹⁰⁴ He had "made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof."¹⁰⁵ And he "opened not the house of his prisoners."¹⁰⁶ For six thousand years his prison house has received God's people, and he would have held them captive forever; but Christ had broken his bonds and set the prisoners free.

¹⁰⁴ *Isaiah* 14:16.

¹⁰⁵ *Isaiah* 14:17.

¹⁰⁶ *Isaiah* 14:17.

To really appreciate the message of this statement, it must be viewed from the point of time when Satan shall have been made captive at the commencement of the millennium. This statement specifically states that there will be a total of six thousand years between the fall of man and the coming of our Redeemer.

We will now contemplate the same truth as presented in a second statement.

The Great Controversy, p. 518:

The great controversy between Christ and Satan, that has been carried forward for nearly six thousand years, is soon to close; and the wicked one redoubles his efforts to defeat the work of Christ in man's behalf and to fasten souls in his snares. To hold the people in darkness and impenitence till the Saviour's mediation is ended, and there is no longer a sacrifice for sin, is the object which he seeks to accomplish.

So it was in Sister White's day that the six thousand years were almost ended, and that therefore, the one thousand years rest for this battered earth had almost begun. These facts confirm the evidences advanced in this chapter respecting the truth that six thousand years of this earth's unrest must be followed by one thousand year's total rest. Total it surely will be, for there will be no sinners upon it to disturb its rest in any way except for the devil and his angels. With no one to tempt and annoy, they will be forced to rest for the one thousand years.

Here now is another statement which is offered as a third witness in support of this point:

The Great Controversy, p. 656:

Jeremiah 25

³¹ A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord has a controversy with the nations, He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword.

For six thousand years the great controversy has been in progress; the Son of God and His heavenly messengers have been in conflict with the power of the evil one, to warn, enlighten, and save the children of men. Now all have made their decisions; the wicked have fully united with Satan in his warfare

against God. The time has come for God to vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. Now the controversy is not alone with Satan, but with men.

³¹ ...the Lord has a controversy with the nations;...He will give them that are wicked to the sword.

Our gravest concern in this hour leading up to the termination of the six thousand years, is whether or not we have gained the fitness to withstand the terrible pressures of temptation which will be brought to bear upon us. The kings of the South and of the North are the forces against which we must go forth. If we are found to be unfit as so many will, it will be too late to try again, for this is the last, decisive battle of the ages. Either we win or we lose. No one will be able to escape taking an irreversible stand for or against God's truth.

The Church as an Army

Naturally, none of us desire to miss out on being members of the body of Christ which is His church in the world and the depository of the riches of His grace. Only when fully equipped with these attributes can we be effective in providing God with the weaponry without which His work in the world can never be finished.

But it will be finished through the manifestation of God's infinite faith and love. Prior to the great second advent of Jesus, God will provide the world with just the revelation needed to show forth the glory of His all powerful character of perfect love. The role to be filled in the completion of this assignment is given to the saints of the Most High—those redeemed who as faithful souls make up the church of God.

Surprising as it may be to many, God does have a mighty church on earth whose members are upholding God's downtrodden law. In order to accomplish this, the church has to be

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 50:

...the depository of the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ.

This is an extraordinary statement for it would seem to be enough to say that there will be a full and final display of the “riches” or of the “wealth” of the love of God. To have used either word would be enough, but in His search for superlatives, He combines them both.

So therefore, it will be the wealth of the riches of the love of God which having been deposited in each believer, will be manifest from each one of them. What an incredible experience it will be for everyone of God’s children to have such an intimate acquaintanceship with the almighty forces of light and truth.

That is the power which not even the most powerful armies on earth are able to resist when its members are filled with the Holy Spirit. This was proved repeatedly by the convincing defeats inflicted by the faithful few from time to time when their only weapons were truth, faith, and love. Of that mighty force it is written.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 50:

God has a church on earth who are lifting up the downtrodden law, and presenting to the world the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. The church is the depository of the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ, and through the church eventually will be made manifest the final and full display of the love of God to the world that is to be lightened with its glory.

The prayer of Christ that His church may be one as He was one with His Father will finally be answered. The rich dowry of the Holy Spirit will be given, and through its constant supply to the people of God they will become witnesses in the world of the power of God unto salvation.

Yet as we trace the prophetic witnesses through their final manifestations, we shall see the king of the North flinging himself with great fury against these forces of righteousness. He will utterly pay no respect to the King of kings, but will manifest the spirit which is found in himself and the forces of darkness which follow him. They hate to see the full and final display of the love of God especially as it is revealed in God’s true and faithful chil-

dren. He sallies forth to war against it whenever the opportunity presents itself.

To understand just who is at war with whom in the desperate struggle depicted in *Daniel* 11:40 to *Daniel* 12:13, we have but to remember that the same Scriptures detail what shall happen to God's people in the final warfare. The total demise of the king of the North is at the same time the triumph of God's people.

Clearing God's Character

There is much more at stake than simply the salvation of large numbers of individuals from eternal death. Salvation from sin and death is included, but they are not the full scope of what must be achieved before the end can come. The future of the universal kingdom is at stake. That wonderful organization of which God is both the wonderful architect and the source of its every need, has been attacked. The charge has been made that it is governed by a self-centered despot who cares not for His subjects, but who uses them for His own devious ends.

Strange as it may seem, the remarkable being was able to present his case so convincingly that one third of the angels elected to follow him in his warfare against the Omnipotent one. A terrible struggle in an attempt to take over the Kingdom from the Godhead has taken place. The outcome of this determined effort could not be determined by the use of force for the following reasons:

1. Neither man nor angel can destroy God for He is totally indestructible. The entire universe might collapse, but our God,—never!
2. Should God arise and sweep the world clean of all His enemies, He would have been endorsing the charges being made against Him. Satan would have triumphantly declared that in destroying His creatures, God was but exhibiting His true character.

Even the angels who had never fallen, expected that God would arise in His anger and wipe out the guilty inhabitants both on earth and among the angels.

The Desire of Ages, p. 37:

With intense interest the unfallen worlds had watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth. And if God should do this, Satan was ready to carry out his plan for securing to himself the allegiance of heavenly beings. He had declared that the principles of God's government make forgiveness impossible. Had the world been destroyed, he would have claimed that his accusations were proved true. He was ready to cast blame upon God, and to spread his rebellion to the worlds above.

But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son to save it. Though corruption and defiance might be seen in every part of the alien province, a way for its recovery was provided. At the very crisis, when Satan seemed about to triumph, the Son of God came with the embassy of divine grace.

Through every age, through every hour, the love of God had been exercised toward the fallen race. Notwithstanding the perversity of men, the signals of mercy had been continually exhibited. And when the fullness of the time had come, the Deity was glorified by pouring upon the world a flood of healing grace that was never to be obstructed or withdrawn till the plan of salvation should be fulfilled.

So, God did not resort to the extreme measures which He might have done and which He certainly had the power to do, and which Satan hoped and planned that He would do. It is worthy of praise to the Most High that He refrained from taking such a course of action, for it would have given Satan just the arguments he needed in his warfare against the government of God throughout the entire universe.

In actuality, the service of love is the only one which can be accepted, for it is the only one with the capacity to successfully govern the kingdom. All others are defective in themselves.

The Great Controversy, p. 498:

In His dealing with sin, God could employ only righteousness and truth. Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit. He had sought to falsify the word of God and had misrepresented His plan of government before the angels, claiming that God was not just in laying laws and rules upon the inhabitants of heaven; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was seeking merely the exaltation of himself.

Therefore it must be demonstrated before the inhabitants of heaven, as well as of all the worlds, that God's government was just, His law perfect. Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper, and his real object, must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works.

63. Learning from the Past

Messenger and News Review, January 2000

Daniel 11:1-22

The Great Controversy, p. 343:

The work of God in the earth presents, from age to age, a striking similarity in every great reformation or religious movement. The principles of God's dealing with men are ever the same. The important movements of the present have their parallel in those of the past, and the experience of the church in former ages has lessons of great value for our own time.

THE better we understand the result of the collision between the forces of light and darkness in the past, the more clearly shall we understand the prophecies relating to the future, and the better we will be fitted to withstand the fearful pressure yet to be brought on the inhabitants of the earth. That which God's people have already experienced in the past, the church must again face as a test in the future.

While we may regard historical events as belonging to the past, the fact is that, while the great nations of history have passed away never to return, the principles involved in their rise to power and their subsequent fall are being repeated. This is the area of study defined in the last three chapters of the book of *Daniel*.

For our part, there is a strong disposition to repeat the failures and mistakes that have caused a new movement to lose its forward momentum and sink back into hopeless apostasy. Examples of such patterns of development abound.

The Great Second Advent Movement

One of these is the glorious rise of the great second advent movement. Consider the enthusiasm, faith, courage, dedication, putting away of sin, and spirit of sacrifice which brought these believers to their knees. Here is a description of the lofty spiritual experience to which they ascended:

Early Writings, p. 239:

A spirit of solemn and earnest prayer was everywhere felt by the saints. A holy solemnity was resting upon them. Angels were watching with the deepest interest the effect of the message, and were elevating those who received it, and drawing them from earthly things to obtain large supplies from salvation's fountain.

God's people were then accepted of Him. Jesus looked upon them with pleasure, for His image was reflected in them. They had made a full sacrifice, an entire consecration, and expected to be changed to immortality.

But they were destined again to be sadly disappointed. The time to which they looked, expecting deliverance, passed; they were still upon the earth, and the effects of the curse never seemed more visible. They had placed their affections on heaven, and in sweet anticipation had tasted immortal deliverance; but their hopes were not realized.

With hindsight, we can see how the great disappointment robbed the early Adventists of positive faith. The devil was quick to take advantage of this situation, leading the believers into apostasy until they were deeply ensnared. The movement which had begun so well was finally locked into the rejection of living truth. Laodicean lukewarmness held the members in its grip, and the hope of Christ's soon coming receded into the distance.

The Apostolic Church

Another case of an inspiring beginning dissolving into incurable apostasy is the Apostolic Church. The record of its history might fill us with great expectation that it would speedily finish the work, if it were not that we know of its sad development. If not for this, we would be confident that God had finally found a people who would live steadfastly to the absolute end without providing Satan with the least advantage whatsoever. A wonderful picture of their high and holy state is painted by the pen of inspiration:

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 578-580:

At the first the experience of the church at Ephesus was marked with childlike simplicity and fervor. The believers sought

earnestly to obey every word of God, and their lives revealed an earnest, sincere love for Christ. They rejoiced to do the will of God because the Saviour was in their hearts as an abiding presence. Filled with love for their Redeemer, their highest aim was to win souls to Him. They did not think of hoarding the precious treasure of the grace of Christ. They felt the importance of their calling; and, weighted with the message, "On earth peace, good will toward men," they burned with desire to carry the glad tidings of salvation to earth's remotest bounds. And the world took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. Sinful men, repentant, pardoned, cleansed, and sanctified, were brought into partnership with God through His Son.

The members of the church were united in sentiment and action. Love for Christ was the golden chain that bound them together. They followed on to know the Lord more and still more perfectly, and in their lives were revealed the joy and peace of Christ. They visited the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and kept themselves unspotted from the world, realizing that a failure to do this would be a contradiction of their profession and a denial of their Redeemer.

In every city the work was carried forward. Souls were converted, who in their turn felt that they must tell of the inestimable treasure they had received. They could not rest till the light which had illumined their minds was shining upon others. Multitudes of unbelievers were made acquainted with the reasons of the Christian's hope. Warm, inspired personal appeals were made to the erring, to the outcast, and to those who, while professing to know the truth, were lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

As we read how the believers' ardor was charged by the Holy Spirit, we would naturally conclude that this was an unquenchable fire against which the powers of darkness could have no effect. But the same deadly forces, which later brought about the apostasy of the Adventists, managed to penetrate the defenses that had been buttressed so firmly against them. The tragic situation which began to develop is described in the following words:

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 580:

But after a time the zeal of the believers began to wane, and their love for God and for one another grew less. Coldness crept into the church. Some forgot the wonderful manner in which they had received the truth. One by one the old standard-bearers fell at their post. Some of the younger workers, who might have shared the burdens of these pioneers, and thus have been prepared for wise leadership, had become weary of oft-repeated truths. In their desire for something novel and startling they attempted to introduce new phases of doctrine, more pleasing to many minds, but not in harmony with the fundamental principles of the gospel. In their self-confidence and spiritual blindness they failed to discern that these sophistries would cause many to question the experiences of the past, and would thus lead to confusion and unbelief.

The Church of Today Faces the Same Peril

In these last days, as we again face the tests of our forefathers, the pattern of the past is in danger of being repeated. The history of God's church is of great benefit to us, for it enables us to become familiar with the forces of the enemy and his tactics. We need to understand enough of our weaknesses, and the terrible power of our foe, to cause us to flee to the Mighty One for the power to overcome. We need now to develop the faithfulness which will prevent the church apostatizing again. It is time for us to learn the lessons from the history of our forefathers and apply them. We are being given the opportunity to succeed where past generations have failed.

Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 116:

We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Many of the prophecies are about to be fulfilled in quick succession. Every element of power is about to be set to work. Past history will be repeated; old controversies will arouse to new life, and peril will beset God's people on every side. Intensity is taking hold of the human family. It is permeating everything upon the earth.

Who are “Daniel’s People” in the Last Days?

Gabriel told the aged prophet Daniel:

Daniel 10

¹⁴ Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come.

The area of particular interest both in Daniel’s day and our own is the question of what will happen to God’s people in the last days. It is vitally important that we do not overlook the fact that the subject of the prophecy that Gabriel brought to Daniel (and through him to us) was not the rise and fall of political powers, but the events that would happen to Daniel’s people in the latter days. Therefore, the question naturally arises:

“Who are Daniel’s people in the last days?”

A popular interpretation is to focus on political powers in order to solve this identification problem. Although such an explanation may appear to be a convincing solution, a point is always reached where the prophecy cannot be fitted. However, there is an alternative explanation available which harmonizes with all the elements of the prophecy.

When rightly understood, the Bible does not present political powers as God’s coworkers whom He uses to finish the work, for in spirit and practice they are out of harmony with His character. God never wields the carnal weapons of force and destruction, nor does He kill those who do not obey Him. His weapons are the constructive forces of faith and love.¹⁰⁷

However, Satan has so effectively enticed God’s people with the temptation to resort to the same weapons which he himself uses, that they have often fallen for the deception. As a result, they have failed to give a clear witness of God’s character, and our heavenly Father is made to appear as the great destroyer, instead of the loving Creator He really is. For six thousand years, this

¹⁰⁷ See the book, *Behold Your God*.

misconception has prevailed, causing all the darkness and death that envelops our sad planet.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 415-416:

It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth....The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love.

It is the momentous task of every believer in Jesus to serve under Christ's command in the work of absolutely eradicating every trace of unrighteousness in the revelation of God's character. In the final battle, righteousness is to prevail over evil. This cannot be done by force, for the use of force is the use of unrighteousness. We can quite simply categorize the use of force as being the exercise of unrighteousness. Whenever pressure is applied in order to compel a person's compliance, then the enforcer is taking the position of head in the place of Jesus Christ, who is the only true Head of every person in the kingdom of God. Christ never gains the position of headship over any member in the church by the use of compelling force. That is completely foreign to His way of operating.

The Desire of Ages, p. 759:

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.

When it is said,

“Compelling power is found only under Satan's government,”

—it follows that compelling power is never found under God’s government. Because God’s principles of operation are an outworking of His character of goodness, mercy, justice and love, they exclude all use of force. If God’s people were to use force to solve their problems, they would disqualify themselves from a place in His kingdom.

Any problem between two kingdoms, which is solved by the use of force, requires the victorious kingdom to use a greater force than its opponent. Then, once the rule of the stronger kingdom is established, the deployment of a still greater force is needed to maintain the control gained. In this way the rule of force becomes an integral part of the solution, and its use can never be given up without the fear of reprisal. Such a status quo creates a continual state of unrest, which disqualifies a kingdom from any hope of being classified as the kingdom of peace.

History has demonstrated the outworking of these principles again and again. For instance, when the Jews were conquered by the Babylonians, and later by the Romans, there was continual strife and rebellion. The Jews hated their oppressors, who hated and despised them in return. This prevailing spirit disqualified the Jews to be a kingdom of righteousness and peace.

No such kingdom could ever claim to be God’s kingdom, nor could its subjects ever claim to be God’s people, which means that they could never be classified as Daniel’s people either. Therefore they could not be the subjects of the revelations given to Daniel when he was told:

Daniel 10

¹⁴ Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days.

We need to avoid the common, disastrous mistake of interpreting Gabriel’s expression “your people in the latter days,” as being the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. Instead, Paul teaches us:

Galatians 3

²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

If we are not Christ's, that is, if we are not born again so that His actual life is within us, then we are not the seed of Abraham, and are not heirs according to the promise.

Daniel's people in the latter days will all possess the character of God who achieves His goal without the use of force. They will be blessed with the same indwelling spirit of life and godliness as is eternally present in the life and character of our wonderful heavenly Father.

Thus Daniel's people can be accurately identified as those with the life of Christ within them, as it was in Daniel. These are the people who are the subject matter of this prophecy of Daniel's concerning the last days.

As we move along in our study of this climactic period in history, let us realize our great privilege in being given this opportunity to witness and live up to our namesake as the true people of Daniel.

64. The Ministry of the Angels

Messenger and News Review, March 2000

Daniel 10:13, 21

AS PROPHESIED in the book of *Daniel*, there will be startling developments taking place as we draw near to the closing events of human history. Among them will be a much greater access by the children of God to the ministry of angels. This will be the result of their putting away sin to an extent not previously experienced by God's people. And this, in turn, will be the result of them searching their hearts as never before. This period will be the antitype of Israel's affliction of soul immediately preceding the great day of atonement.

Secondly, there will be a great increase in the demand for the ministry of the angels as they fly back and forth between heaven and earth. There is no question that the angels are busier at some times than they are at others. An example of this can be seen when Gabriel needed, and was appointed, additional help after the Persian king resisted the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit, yielding only when Michael added His powerful influence.

This joining of forces on the part of these mighty beings, namely Gabriel and Michael, gives us some conception of the awesome power needed to resolve such events. Similar power will be needed for future events, which will take place as prophesied. The importance placed by heaven on these events is such that they receive nothing short of top priority.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1173:

Heavenly beings are appointed to answer the prayers of those who are working unselfishly for the interests of the cause of God. The very highest angels in the heavenly courts are appointed to work out the prayers which ascend to God for the advancement of the cause of God. Each angel has his particular post of duty, which he is not permitted to leave for any other place. If he should leave, the powers of darkness would gain an advantage.

Who Are the Very Highest Angels?

To appreciate the power of the truth contained in the above quotation, it is necessary to determine who are the highest angels in the heavenly courts. Upon investigation, we find that the highest angel is the Archangel or chief Angel. In all the Scriptures, He is referred to by that name only twice:

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Jude 1

⁹ Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you!"

In the Spirit of Prophecy, there are numerous references to the Archangel, each one of which refers to Jesus Christ. The following quotation provides a direct identification:

The Sanctified Life, p. 51:

What great honor is shown to Daniel by the Majesty of heaven! He comforts His trembling servant and assures him that his prayer has been heard in heaven. In answer to that fervent petition the angel Gabriel was sent to affect the heart of the Persian king. The monarch had resisted the impressions of the Spirit of God during the three weeks while Daniel was fasting and praying, but heaven's Prince, the Archangel, Michael, was sent to turn the heart of the stubborn king to take some decided action to answer the prayer of Daniel.

These words leave no doubt about Michael being heaven's Prince, who in turn is the Archangel, Jesus Christ. The next reference to the Archangel, is a very interesting one, and is found in *Daniel* 10:13. There He is classified as being one of the chief Princes.

Daniel 10

¹³ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.

Therefore, Michael is one of several chief princes, each of whom is a dweller in the heavenly courts. This places Him in the company of Gabriel, who is the mightiest of the Lord's host. But those who will occupy the highest positions in the structure of the kingdom restored will all have been redeemed from among men. There is ample confirmation of this in the inspired writings.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 162-163:

The work of redemption involves consequences of which it is difficult for man to have any conception.

1 Corinthians 2

⁹ Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.

As the sinner, drawn by the power of Christ, approaches the uplifted cross, and prostrates himself before it, there is a new creation. A new heart is given him. He becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. Holiness finds that it has nothing more to require. God himself is...

Romans 3

¹⁶ ...the justifier of him which believes in Jesus.

And,

Romans 8

³⁰ Whom He justified, them He also glorified.

Great as is the shame and degradation through sin, even greater will be the honor and exaltation through redeeming love. To human beings striving for conformity to the divine image there is imparted an outlay of heaven's treasure, an excellency of power, that will place them higher than even the angels who have never fallen.

Noted in the Scriptures of Truth

Daniel 10 [KJV]

²¹ But I will shew you that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holds with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

We need to bear in mind that Gabriel, who was here speaking to Daniel the prophet, was Moses. What Moses was shown by Michael when he was awaiting death on Mount Nebo, he now

showed to Daniel. Just before Moses was laid to rest, prior to his imminent resurrection, he was shown a vision of everything yet to happen from that time through until the earth will be made new. But, it was not merely a series of historical events which were spread before him, and which he viewed with the keenest of interest. He saw much, much more than that.

Moses understood the great controversy—the two mighty antagonistic principles pitted against one another—the totally righteous against the totally evil. He saw both powers striving for the supremacy, but activated by contrary spirits, so that there is absolutely no common ground between them. One leads inescapably to eternal death, plunging its adherents into certain total destruction from which there can never be any recovery. The other so totally satisfies all who choose to walk in its ways, that they will continually pour forth praise to the Everlasting Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁸

There is no doubt, after all these millennia of struggle, that the appointed time of our Saviour's advent has not come as quickly as we, the followers of Jesus, would have liked. This is because the patience of the saints, based upon the faith of Jesus, has not yet been revealed. And this is made necessary because Satan has contested every step taken by God for the restoration of His lost creation. Every principle of righteousness is being challenged to ensure that it is absolutely flawless.

The believers who will finally be sealed are also being tested to see if they will remain faithful no matter how severe the pressure brought to bear upon them. The end result of all this will be a kingdom made eternally secure from any destructive contamination by sinfulness in any shape or form whatsoever.

This positive assurance, which keeps us informed of the certain ultimate triumph of the cause of righteousness despite the initial successes of the man of sin, is a strong feature of the prophecies of *Daniel*. Each prophecy always concludes with the assuredness

¹⁰⁸ See *Revelation* 5:13-14.

of God's glorious kingdom being established with such certainty that it will never pass away. Just as that which has happened to date has been strictly in accordance with prophecy, so will the remaining prophecies likewise be fulfilled as declared.

The Scriptures of truth are a revelation to our finite minds of that which has already transpired, as well as that which is yet to happen. We can pinpoint the precise place in the sequence of fulfilling prophecy where our lives are stationed. Obviously, those living today have the opportunity of seeing far more prophecy fulfilled than did those living in the days the scriptures were being written. Ahead of us, the remaining prophecies will rapidly become history as last day events crowd one upon another. As never before, it will become easier and easier to trust God in the unknown, because He will have revealed so much more of himself in the known. True faith has always grown as God's people have learned to know as much of His character as has been possible under their circumstances, while totally trusting Him in the unknown.

All these principles were noted in the Scriptures of Truth in the day when Gabriel came to Daniel to enlarge his understanding, and to confirm the certainty that this way of God could not fail.

65. The Prophetic Unfolding of Greater Detail

Messenger and News Review, April 2000

Daniel 11:1-22

EACH of the prophecies contained in the book of *Daniel* covers the same period of history—from the time in which they were given until the world made new. The differences between the prophecies lies in the greater and still greater details supplied with each successive vision.

Thus the first of them, the great image of *Daniel* 2, presents a relatively simple outline of the outworking of the principles of darkness and of light, from the time of the Babylonian kingdom. Additional information about this prophetic period is found in *Daniel* 7. Further light is provided in chapters 8 and 9, which still deal with the same predictions. We would therefore expect chapters 11 and 12 to follow the same pattern. And this they do, adding still more light to that already provided in the previous chapters of *Daniel*.

Because Babylon had become history shortly before the light contained in *Daniel* 11 and 12 had been revealed to God's people, the information begins with Medo-Persia.

Daniel 11

¹ Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, even I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.

² And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece.

In those two verses the final prophetic outline begins. The timing of the starting point was the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede. Then there follows the rather detailed history of the Medo-Persian kingdom, which predicts that there would follow three more kings, the fourth of which would be the richest and most powerful of them all, using his mighty powers to stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece.

As presented in *Daniel* 8, Greece was the next kingdom to appear on the scene. Alexander the Great established his dominion with incredible speed throughout the entire then-known world. The speed of his conquests is symbolized by the leopard beast of *Daniel* 7, and the rapidity of the male goat of *Daniel* 8. But when he was at the pinnacle of his power, this mighty deliverer was cut off without a legitimate heir. Consequently, his kingdom was divided into four parts—the north, south, east, and west. Thus ended the dynasty of Alexander the Great.

The Literal Kings of the North and South

The next section of history to be covered in the prophecies of *Daniel*, spans the time between the demise of the Grecian Empire, and the appearance of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

While the Alexandrian Empire was divided among the conqueror's four leading generals after his death, it did not remain so for very long. After a few years had passed there was but the king of the Seleucid kingdom in the north, who occupied the territory now known as Asia Minor, and the king of the south, who occupied the land of Egypt. These two kings were almost continually at war against each other as both strove to gain the ascendancy.

That which commands the attention of God's people is that the route, or highway, between these warring nations invariably passed through the land of Israel. This meant that Israel suffered terrible desolation whenever the king of the north or the south went to war. We can imagine in what a state the land of Israel would have been after, for instance, two hundred thousand soldiers, together with a huge squadron of cavalry, had marched through the land to meet and fight the armies of their enemies. Trees would have been stripped of their fruit, fields of their ripening grain, farms of their animals, streams of their crystal clarity and fish, and roads would have become impassable.

Whenever news spread through Israel that either the king of the north or the south had decided to go to war, it must have spread consternation throughout the land of the Jews. They

would have known that even though they were not involved in the impending conflict themselves, they would still have to pay a fearful price. With what interest then, would the Israelites have followed the moves and countermoves of the kings of the north and the south.

The Same Controversy in our Time

All that happened long, long ago. But the crises which are even now developing between the counterpart kings of the north and the south today, will be far more terrible, and far more devastating, than those resulting from the battles fought on ancient battle-grounds.

Already, the king of the north is coming against the king of the south. By the sure word of prophecy, we know what is coming, and as it approaches, our interest in these developments will intensify. The critical verses describing what will befall God's people in the latter days, but which will bring these mighty kings to their end with none to help them, read as follows:

Daniel 11

⁴⁰ At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.

⁴¹ He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon.

⁴² He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

⁴³ He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels.

⁴⁴ But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many.

⁴⁵ And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

Let us watch with unceasing vigilance every move made by these two kings as they marshal their forces for their final and finishing confrontation.

Force and Counter-force in History

All this will best be understood when we first consider the position occupied by the ancient kings of the south and the north, so we will now study progressively through *Daniel* 11.

Daniel 11

⁵ Also the king of the South shall become strong, as well as one of his princes; and he shall gain power over him and have dominion. His dominion shall be a great dominion.

⁶ And at the end of some years they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the South shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement; but she shall not retain the power of her authority, and neither he nor his authority shall stand; but she shall be given up, with those who brought her, and with him who begot her, and with him who strengthened her in those times.

⁷ But from a branch of her roots one shall arise in his place, who shall come with an army, enter the fortress of the king of the North, and deal with them and prevail.

⁸ And he shall also carry their gods captive to Egypt, with their princes and their precious articles of silver and gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the North.

⁹ Also the king of the North shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land.

¹⁰ However his sons shall stir up strife, and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one shall certainly come and overwhelm and pass through; then he shall return to his fortress and stir up strife.

¹¹ And the king of the South shall be moved with rage, and go out and fight with him, with the king of the North, who shall muster a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into the hand of his enemy.

¹² When he has taken away the multitude, his heart will be lifted up; and he will cast down tens of thousands, but he will not prevail.

¹³ For the king of the North will return and muster a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come at the end of some years with a great army and much equipment.

¹⁴ Now in those times many shall rise up against the king of the South. Also, violent men of your people shall exalt themselves in fulfillment of the vision, but they shall fall.

¹⁵ So the king of the North shall come and build a siege mound, and take a fortified city; and the forces of the South shall not withstand him. Even his choice troops shall have no strength to resist.

¹⁶ But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and no one shall stand against him. He shall stand in the Glorious Land with destruction in his power.

¹⁷ He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do. And he shall give him the daughter of women to destroy it; but she shall not stand with him, or be for him.

¹⁸ After this he shall turn his face to the coastlands, and shall take many. But a ruler shall bring the reproach against them to an end; and with the reproach removed, he shall turn back on him.

¹⁹ Then he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

²⁰ There shall arise in his place one who imposes taxes on the glorious kingdom; but within a few days he shall be destroyed, but not in anger or in battle.

²¹ And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue.

²² With the force of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant.

The Lessons of History not Learned

The brief survey of history provided in these predictions covers approximately half a millennium, from the early years of the Medo-Persian kingdom up until the first advent of Christ. One of the most notable aspects of this period was the obvious failure of both the Israelites and the peoples of the world to profit from the messages God sent them through the lessons of history. These

were simply the lessons of cause and effect. Before both classes of people the results were so plain that even the spiritually blind should have been able to read them successfully.

But the leaders of the great empires proceeded with their grandiose ambitions to conquer the world using weapons of warfare. The common methods they employed were compulsion and deception, which were also used just as freely by the professed people of God whenever the opportunity arose. Thus it was demonstrated that the way of force led to certain defeat and destruction. This is because neither the world nor Babylon has anything to offer by way of deliverance from the bondage of sin, sickness, and death.

In delivering His people from Babylonian captivity, God demonstrated an alternative to the use of force. He desired them to be so totally convinced that “those who live by the sword, will die by the sword,”¹⁰⁹ that they would refuse to resort to the use of either force or deception forever.

He laid out before them the future history of Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, to show them that the law of cause and effect would continue as surely as night follows day. They could rest assured that their future would be but a repetition of their miserable past if they were to permit even one seed of apostasy to lodge within them. They needed to see that just one seed, if permitted to germinate, would in time become a vast impenetrable forest.

Thus God repeated the truth, to both Jew and Gentile, that if the lessons from the past were thoroughly learned and faithfully applied, then they would certainly establish a kingdom in righteousness, permanence, and peace. Otherwise, if great care was not taken from the very outset, they could expect only strife, divisions, wars, bloodshed, final destruction, and permanent obliteration.

¹⁰⁹ Matthew 26:52; Revelation 13:10.

The prophetic verses of *Daniel* 11 foretold very definite and accurate details of what they would pass through, or what they would escape, depending on their choice. Had they learned from the past and repented of their using force as a kingdom-building method, they would have reaped the promised results.

Not only God's Objective, but also His Way

The Lord made it very clear that if the people repented, the prophesied descriptions of death and destruction would be canceled in favor of peace and plenty. Through Jeremiah He had declared this principle of conditional, prophetic declarations.

Jeremiah 18

⁷ The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it,

⁸ If that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.

⁹ And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it,

¹⁰ If it does evil in my sight so that it does not obey my voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.

Following the collapse of Babylon, the Medo-Persian kingdom set about the re-establishment of world supremacy, no doubt with the aim that all people could live in an order free from want and fear. This is indeed a laudable goal, for God has promised to establish exactly such a kingdom. We are to pray:

Matthew 6

¹⁰ Your kingdom come,

—and then we are to work most diligently towards that end. This is our responsibility. But although it is commendable to have the right goal, this is not enough by itself. We must also use right methods to achieve that goal.

So even if a nation sets out to establish a universal kingdom of peace with the intention of building up the kingdom of God, the problem still remains that they use means to accomplish this end which are exactly the opposite from those which God uses in

righteousness. Those earthly rulers envisage the entire world as one unified governmental structure—a mighty project which, in reality, requires that the builders thereof not only have the correct objective ever in view, but also that they will go about its accomplishment in strict obedience to God’s way of kingdom building.

This would mean that before any plans were made to execute such a grand scheme, the most prayerful and thorough consideration would be given to whether the king and his people understood God’s way of kingdom building, and were totally and unreservedly committed to it. Contemplate this point carefully, for it is a common mistake to imagine that once we have dedicated ourselves to building God’s kingdom, that is sufficient.

The Example of Cain

But it is not sufficient, anymore than was the offering of Cain acceptable to God (see *Genesis* 4:1-5). Cain was very ready and willing to make a generous offering, but not according to God’s way. Cain thought that it was sufficient to put everything into building God’s kingdom, but he overlooked the fact that he had to do it in God’s way if it was to be successful.

The Omnipotent One has chosen this way because it is the only way in which an eternal kingdom can be structured. There is no alternative. For a kingdom to last for eternity, it cannot be built on the principle of force or compelling power. Anyone who attempts to do so is certain to fail.

The history of Cain clearly demonstrates the outworking of the course he selected. The lesson we can learn from this is that wherever similar results become apparent in the unfolding history of any person or people, the same spirit is to be found. Likewise the future of a people can be predicted by whether they understand and commit themselves to God’s way of kingdom building or not. If they choose God’s way, they will surely overcome as Christ overcame.

The fluctuating rise and fall of the kings of the north and the south as outlined in *Daniel* 11 are clear revelations of what was lacking in their kingdom-building plans. Although at times they have been able to maintain their authority over large portions of the world, they will finally be weakened to a state of total exhaustion. Their authority and power will count for nothing, for, despite the king of the north's conquering fury,¹¹⁰

Daniel 11

⁴⁵ ...he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

¹¹⁰ See *Daniel* 11:40-44.

66. Daniel's People in the Last Days

Messenger and News Review, May 2000

Daniel 11:29-39

This article includes some additions from the original unpublished draft.

GOD'S people can gain great inspiration from the study of *Daniel* 11 as it spells out last day events. The reading of *Daniel* 11, with its chronicles of unending wars and rumors of wars, projects our attention forward to that time when the king of the South, and then the king of the North shall come to the bitter end of their careers. There will be no one to whom they can turn for assistance.

The king of the South will be the first to be eliminated as a possible threat. Then the king of the North will follow suit. He will come to an end from which he will never recover, and the people of the Lord shall be eternally delivered from his oppression, as it is written,

Daniel 11

⁴⁵ ...he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

As we behold the amazing precision of Bible prophecy describing various kings and queens coming and going, and how the true people of the Lord will finally be delivered from their cruel oppressors, our hearts will be filled with wonder at how God is the perfect Problem Solver. We will also see the supreme interest and love that the heavenly Father has for His church, as we read:

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 12:

During ages of spiritual darkness the church of God has been as a city set on a hill. From age to age, through successive generations, the pure doctrines of heaven have been unfolding within its borders. Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard. It is the theater of His grace, in which He delights to reveal His power to transform hearts.

The Encouragement of Prophecy

The conflict between good and evil is so extended, and so seemingly endless, that it tries the faith and patience of the saints to the uttermost. For this reason, it is necessary for God to provide evidence that will strengthen a living, personal faith in Him.

One way to achieve this purpose is to supply detailed accurate accounts of what will happen in the future. Then, when the prediction comes to pass exactly as foretold, God's people will rest in the sure knowledge that He has not been caught by surprise, but knows what He is doing, where He is going, and just when He will arrive there. This will inspire them to trust in God's wondrous plan for the deliverance of His people, in the knowledge that it is being perfectly executed and that nothing can possibly go wrong.

In this way, true Bible students can be delivered from all fear of the future. The words spoken by the master Teacher and Prophet will keep them from discouragement:

John 14

²⁹ And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.

A little later Jesus repeated the same thought when He said:

John 16

⁴ But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.

When, under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit, we read through the verses of *Daniel* 11 in sequence, we cannot but be inspired and blessed with a greater and greater peace pervading our entire being as we compare prophecy with history. Such a reading will refresh us, strengthen our faith, and empower us to accomplish great victories in our own lives, while being a positive influence in the lives of others.

In *Daniel* 11 there is recorded quite a list of battles fought, won and lost. As these political struggles and their outcome are explained quite adequately in other publications, we will not repeat

what is already recorded elsewhere. We will concentrate on the task of gaining whatever more light is available.

Events Encompassing our Entire World

The most important point for us to remember is that *Daniel* 11 is specifically designed by the Lord to inform us of events that will befall Daniel's people in the latter days.¹¹¹ These events will not be localized, but will encompass the entire world. Nothing less than such a global solution will meet the need of the hour, and nothing less than that will satisfy our hearts' longings.

God thinks only in terms of global salvation—salvation for all people—if that is at all possible. The promise of the worldwide outpouring of the Holy Spirit confirms this desire.

Acts 2

¹⁷ In the last days, says God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh...

²¹ And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The events pictured in *Daniel* 11 that will happen to God's people in the last days, are the same as those described in *Revelation* chapters 12, 14, and 16-20. What will happen to God's people at that time, will take place throughout the entire world.

Prophets and Kings, p. 188:

The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The observance of the false sabbath will be urged upon us. The contest will be between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. Those who have yielded step by step to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will then yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death.

At that time the gold will be separated from the dross. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliance will then go out in darkness. Those who have assumed the orna-

¹¹¹ See *Daniel* 10:14.

ments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will then appear in the shame of their own nakedness.

Among earth's inhabitants, scattered in every land, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. In heathen Africa, in the Catholic lands of Europe and of South America, in China, in India, in the islands of the sea, and in all the dark corners of the earth, God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones that will yet shine forth amidst the darkness, revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to His law.

Even now they are appearing in every nation, among every tongue and people; and in the hour of deepest apostasy, when Satan's supreme effort is made to cause...

Revelation 13

¹⁶ ...all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond,
—to receive, under penalty of death, the sign of allegiance to a false rest day, these faithful ones,

Philippians 2

¹⁵ ...blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke,
[will] shine as lights in the world.

The darker the night, the more brilliantly will they shine.

The Rise and Fall of Rome

Let us begin our study of the events which lead up to the climax of the last days, with *Daniel* 11:29. As would be expected, the report of the rise and fall of the Roman Empire took place in its turn, and in its correct chronological position in the unrolling of the prophetic scroll. This place is found in verses 29 and 30, where it is stated that the king of the North would go out and then return again, but not with his former riches and power.

Daniel 11 [NIV]

²⁹ At the appointed time he will invade the South again, but this time the outcome will be different from what it was before.

It is not difficult to determine that "he" refers to the king of the North. Rome was a decaying kingdom at this period of our investigation. This decline was not without its counterbalance, for

when an earthly king begins to rise, there is always another which, having passed his zenith, is on the way down again.

Mighty as pagan Rome had become through her conquests over human beings in every walk in life, and in all the perfecting of the arts and sciences as far as they were then known, she still held the seeds of death in every fiber of her existence. Therefore, die she must, and die she did. It was the signs of her death which were seen by the prophet when he was shown this once so mighty, and seemingly invincible, king coming back in a very different way from how he went out.

The Ships from Cyprus

Daniel 11

³⁰ For ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant.

Those “ships from Cyprus” represent the next powers which were to arise from the ruins of the Roman Empire. They correspond with the ten powerful divisions symbolized by the ten great horns of the fourth beast of *Daniel 7*. The ten divisions of what had been the unified Empire, had fragmented into ten hostile kingdoms, three of which soon passed away, thus leaving a remnant of seven.

They in turn were to change borders and dominions as time passed, though these ever-changing faces of Europe are not of any significant consequence to the student of prophecy. The reason for this is that once three of those original kingdoms had been destroyed, the prophet’s attention was focused on the domination of Europe by the little horn power, which we have seen to be the papacy, that ruled the world for 1260 years. But, like all earthly kingdoms, the time came when even she would no longer go out or come in as she once had done.

The coming of the ships of Cyprus against the king of the North grieved him to the point where he returned in rage against the

holy covenant. There can be no mistaking what the holy covenant is. It is the agreement entered into by the Everlasting Father and Jesus Christ, which would offer salvation to repentant, and consequently obedient, souls.

The Desire of Ages, p. 790:

Jesus refused to receive the homage of His people until He had the assurance that His sacrifice was accepted by the Father. He ascended to the heavenly courts, and from God himself heard the assurance that His atonement for the sins of men had been ample, that through His blood all might gain eternal life. The Father ratified the covenant made with Christ, that He would receive repentant and obedient men, and would love them even as He loves His Son. Christ was to complete His work, and fulfill His pledge to...

Isaiah 13

¹² ...make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

All power in heaven and on earth was given to the Prince of Life, and He returned to His followers in a world of sin, that He might impart to them of His power and glory.

Just as the unrighteous always hate and persecute the true children of God, the king of the North directed his anger against the gospel. These changes, namely the crumbling of Roman power, and the turning against the holy covenant, constituted the transition across Europe from military might to ecclesiastical authority, or from pagan to papal authority.

The Man of Sin

We shall now concentrate our attention on *Daniel* 11:31-39 which reads as follows:

Daniel 11

³¹ And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.

³² Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.

³³ And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering.

³⁴ Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue.

³⁵ And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.

³⁶ Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.

³⁷ He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all.

³⁸ But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things.

³⁹ Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.

These verses portray a terrible scene of great spiritual warfare, during which the man of sin exerts all the powers at his command to try to blot out God's truth, destroy the strength of the sanctuary, terminate the daily ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, replace it with the abomination of desolation, and wipe out the followers of God's truth. The evil character of his work is described as...

Daniel 11

³² ...corrupting with flatteries.

It was a long period of fearful apostasy, but the people of God arose to the occasion and were strong. They carried out great exploits and thus foiled the plottings of the evil one, who was bent on the destruction of God's plans for the building of His kingdom on earth as it is built in heaven.

Light Shines in Darkness

Daniel 11

³³ And those of the people who understand shall instruct many...

It was by the living power of the Scriptures that the church was to endure the fiercest trials. Those with understanding would instruct many, as was the case in the formation and development of the mighty work of God in the Protestant Reformation. It was by the preaching of the Word of God that the Reformation began, for if the gospel had not been rediscovered, there would never have been a reformation.

There was only one way by which the oppressive condition of the pre-reformation period could be changed for the better, and that was by the introduction of the everlasting gospel. This was the only way to transform the minds and hearts of the people, for it is within the people themselves that the change had to begin. This change could not be effected by using coercion, for such would serve only to harden the sinner in transgression, and never to work true repentance.

While there have been many apostasies following the great revivals over the centuries, there has always been a faithful remnant of true believers in each case who have reliably risen to the occasion. During the long oppression of the 1260 years when the true church was repeatedly beaten down, sometimes seemingly never to rise again, that she arose stronger than ever to make definite advances in the erection of God's kingdom.

And so it will be in the future—the darkest hour of human history will be the most glorious one for the church. When the earth is shrouded in midnight darkness, the light of the everlasting gospel will penetrate that darkness with undimmed brilliance.

It is imperative that God's people never lose their knowledge of the true gospel as found in the holy Scriptures, for that is the living power of God. The gospel is the only means that has infinite capacity to change the sinner's heart. It is creative power. Only He who created us in the first place has the capacity to recreate

us anew. Once that awesome power has been introduced into a situation, a new life begins, a new movement is formed, and a new day dawns. But only by the gospel. No other power will serve to effect such deep and lasting changes.

The World's Moral Midnight

Before the Reformation, nations were steeped in the darkness of midnight despite the efforts of those in both high and low places to bring relief from the fearful burden of corruption which threatened to obliterate humanity. Even those who hated the reformers desired that reforms be made. But they were not prepared to sell all in order to possess the Pearl of great price. Of the appalling conditions existing during that period of darkness and dreadful persecution, it is written:

The Great Controversy, p. 60:

But "the noon of the papacy was the midnight of the world." (J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, b. 1, ch. 4) The Holy Scriptures were almost unknown, not only to the people, but to the priests. Like the Pharisees of old, the papal leaders hated the light which would reveal their sins. God's law, the standard of righteousness, having been removed, they exercised power without limit, and practiced vice without restraint. Fraud, avarice, and profligacy prevailed. Men shrank from no crime by which they could gain wealth or position. The palaces of popes and prelates were scenes of the vilest debauchery. Some of the reigning pontiffs were guilty of crimes so revolting that secular rulers endeavored to depose these dignitaries of the church as monsters too vile to be tolerated. For centuries Europe had made no progress in learning, arts, or civilization. A moral and intellectual paralysis had fallen upon Christendom.

During the Reformation, the preaching of the gospel was met head on by the forces of darkness, as is testified to by these words:

Daniel 11

³³ ...yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder.

The Reason for Persecution

We may wonder why God's people have been subjected to such dreadful persecutions in which they have lost every earthly possession, have been forced into exile, have had their health broken, have sacrificed their lives, and have been forever separated from those nearest and dearest to them. Why do the innocent have to suffer so fearfully when all they ask for is the freedom to live harmless and undefiled lives?

The answer is found in the Scripture before us in which it is declared:

Daniel 11

³⁵ And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.

Jesus confirmed this reasoning during His sermon on the mount when He said that those who are persecuted are blessed, and they emerge from their bitter trials spiritually enriched and better prepared to inherit the kingdom.

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 31:

Through trials and persecution, the glory—character—of God is revealed in His chosen ones. The church of God, hated and persecuted by the world, are educated and disciplined in the school of Christ. They walk in narrow paths on earth; they are purified in the furnace of affliction. They follow Christ through sore conflicts; they endure self-denial and experience bitter disappointments; but their painful experience teaches them the guilt and woe of sin, and they look upon it with abhorrence. Being partakers of Christ's sufferings, they are destined to be partakers of His glory. In holy vision the prophet saw the triumph of the people of God. He says,

Revelation 15

² I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory,...stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

³ And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are your works,

Lord God Almighty; just and true are your ways, you King of saints.

Revelation 7

¹⁴ These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

¹⁵ Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them.

We can never look forward to suffering bitter persecution unless we have become fully convinced that a great blessing awaits us by this means. Those who actually glory in tribulation come to a very high level of spiritual experience, as Paul wrote:

Romans 5

³ And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;

⁴ And perseverance, character; and character, hope.

The true child of God does not doubt the spiritual value of these characteristics. Such a person will hunger and thirst after these attributes until he or she is imbued with them.

During the Reformation, Christians who were subjected to incredible sufferings inflicted by their hateful persecutors, emerged with greater steadfastness of purpose than before their trials commenced. By their godly lives of integrity and faithfulness, they demonstrated that a great work had been done within them. Of this happy result, persecution was in part the cause, as it established in them a resolve to be faithful to God under all circumstances, which resolve could not be broken.

He Shall Be Diverse

The same terrible persecuting power is pictured as follows:

Daniel 7

¹⁹ Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet.

There was something about this beast, his ten horns, his extra little horn, and the uprooting and replacement of the three horns, which was different from the other beasts—the lion, the bear, and the leopard. This difference was of sufficient significance as to immediately catch and hold Daniel’s attention.

Nor is this the only reference to this fourth beast in this chapter. Four times in that Old Testament chapter, the fourth beast was declared to be different from the others:

Daniel 7:7	...and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it.
Daniel 7:19	...the fourth beast,...was diverse from all the others.
Daniel 7:23	The fourth beast...shall be diverse from all kingdoms.
Daniel 7:24	...and he shall be diverse from the first.

Each of the listed verses state that the powers symbolized by the little horn are different from that of the others. The question now is:

“In what way was there this difference?”

When the time came for the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and pagan Rome to relinquish their hold on the throne of world supremacy, they followed the same general pattern. The dying kingdom came to the place where it had become too weak to protect itself from the ambitious power of the rising kingdom. The old kingdom was completely broken up as a political and military force, and a new power with little if any relationship to the outgoing forces, took its place.

The surviving remnants of the conquered nation were assigned to the labor-force where they served as slaves. Their new lifestyle was not one to be envied. The line between the conquer and the conquered was very clearly marked off. As an example, consider the circumstances under which Joseph survived as a slave in Egypt.

We see a measure of these conditions persisting after the fall of pagan Rome, but the new Roman kingdom differed essentially from the previous kingdoms. It was a combination of church and

state, in which the civil powers became increasingly the servant of the church.¹¹² This was a new order of things in which the religious power was transferred to a strong position, while the civil powers were reduced to the means by which she could accomplish her aims.

Previously, the king or the emperor ruled over the church and the people. This order was reversed. In this new order, the priests, or the church, ruled over the kings and emperors. This reversal of positions and the transfer of power, caused Daniel to focus his attention on this diverse beast, and the dreadful abuse of power which took place under the church's control.

Times of Great Trial and Distress

This history has to be of the greatest interest and concern to every true Protestant, for in the final showdown the entire world will be united to crush those who refuse to support a revived combination of government by church and state united.

- Then it will be that the test will again be brought to bear upon God's people with a severity beyond the worst that could ever be anticipated or imagined.
- Then the lessons from the past will be of the greatest value in the final face-off of the ages.
- Then it will be that we shall know through the terrible suffering we shall be called upon to endure, why Satan will combine the forces of Church and state in his desperate determination to destroy God's eternal kingdom, and how close he will come to being successful.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 472-473:

The remnant church will be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts. Satan numbers the world as his subjects, he has gained control of the apostate churches; but here is a little company that are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete. As he influenced the heathen nations to de-

¹¹² See *Opposing Principles* by A. T. Jones.

stroy Israel, so in the near future he will stir up the wicked powers of earth to destroy the people of God. All will be required to render obedience to human edicts in violation of the divine law. Those who will be true to God and to duty will be menaced, denounced, and proscribed. They will...

Luke 21

¹⁶ ...be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends.

The great enemy knows that if he could only blot God's remnant from the earth, his triumph would be complete. He is fully aware that this will also be his last opportunity to go to war against the Son of God. Therefore, he will muster all the forces he possibly can, by deceiving the people into giving him their total support. The resulting confederacy of church and state will provide him with the most formidable combination of forces to be found on this earth.

After dealing with the plight of God's people during the Reformation in *Daniel* 11:31-35, the next three verses describe the character and activities of the man of sin. We learn that he would follow his own will, exalt himself to the highest level possible, and utter blasphemies against the Most High. Daniel predicted that he would be successful in his objectives of acquiring immense accumulations of wealth and power.

This has provided us with a demonstration of what befalls the nations of the world when church and state combine, to rule the earth for their own gain and personal advantage. We can see the result of wealthy classes become exceedingly enriched at the expense of the poor, whom they oppress beyond belief in order to satisfy their insatiable greed for wealth and power.¹¹³ When we realize the pinnacle of power that the man of sin will achieve, it is hard to imagine that only six verses later,

Daniel 11

⁴⁵ ...he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

¹¹³ See *Daniel* 11:36-39.

67. What You Are Determines Who You Are

Messenger and News Review, June 2000

Daniel 11:40-45

WE COME now to our study of the last verses of *Daniel* 11. The messages contained in those verses are not portrayals of truths which happened in the far off past, nor do they present prophecies of events yet to transpire in the distant future. They do however deal with events due to happen in the present and immediate future. In chapter eleven we read:

Daniel 11

⁴⁰ At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.

⁴¹ He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon.

⁴² He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

⁴³ He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels.

⁴⁴ But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many.

⁴⁵ And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

Our first task is to obtain a correct understanding of all the terms used in these few verses. The list in the order in which they are mentioned is as follows:

- the king of the South,
- the king of the North,
- the Glorious Land,
- Edom, Moab, the prominent people of Ammon,
- the Land of Egypt, the Libyans and the Ethiopians,

- news from the east and the north,
- the tents of his palace,
- the seas, and
- the glorious holy mountain.

The Geographical Method of Interpretation

There are two options of interpretation available, from which we must choose. The first of these we will call:

“The Geographical Interpretation Method.”

The second is:

“The Symbolic Interpretation Method.”

We will start by examining the geographical method, to see if it is truly scriptural according to God’s principles of prophetic interpretation. Should it fail to measure up, we shall then turn to the other method for a clearer understanding of this prophecy.

The geographical system proposes that where you are determines who you are. Uriah Smith, who used the geographical method, stated this principle in his book *Daniel and the Revelation*. We have no desire to criticize or condemn either him or anyone else. We quote the following two statements only for their value as witnesses either for or against the truth.

After a long interval, the king of the south and the king of the north again appear on the stage of action. We have met with nothing to indicate that we are to look to any locations for these powers other than those which shortly after the death of Alexander constituted respectively the southern and northern divisions of his empire. The king of the south was at that time Egypt, and the king of the north was Syria, including Thrace and Asia Minor. Egypt continued to rule in the territory designated as belonging to the king of the south, and Turkey for more than four hundred years ruled over the territory which first constituted the domain of the king of the north.

But if Turkey, now occupying the territory which constituted the northern division of Alexander’s empire, is not the king of

the north of this prophecy, then we are left without any principle to guide us in the interpretation.¹¹⁴

In these statements, the writer declares his belief that “where you are” determines “who you are.” We are not claiming that he clearly understood that, but his words can be interpreted in no other way. By the same line of reasoning, he determines who will be the king of the North during the last days, when that time arrives.

Thus, in these few words, it is declared that the only procedure by which a nation can be identified correctly in prophecy, is to ask what nation occupies the territory once held by the king in question. It is therefore considered that the nation of Turkey is the modern king of the North because she is the power occupying the same territory as the ancient king of the North.

This principle becomes immediately suspect when we see that it cannot be consistently applied—and not even Uriah Smith himself was able to apply it consistently. For instance, the power which will feature largely in these last days will be Babylon the Great, but no one identifies her by asking what power now occupies the territory of ancient Babylon. It would indeed be a futile quest, for such a search would demonstrate that the place once occupied by Babylon is now completely emptied of people. Of it the prophet Isaiah has dolefully written:

Isaiah 13

¹⁹ And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

²⁰ It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation; nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there.

²¹ But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, and their houses will be full of owls; ostriches will dwell there, and wild goats will caper there.

¹¹⁴ *Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 289, 295, by Uriah Smith (1944 Edition).

²² The hyenas will howl in their citadels, and jackals in their pleasant palaces. Her time is near to come, and her days will not be prolonged.

We would waste our time looking along the Euphrates River today in order to identify that great and mighty city at the present time. Geography has nothing to do with determining that question. We therefore conclude that the geographical principle of interpretation is invalid.

The Symbolic Interpretation Method

The true principle which must replace the geographical interpretation is that:

“What you are determines who you are.”

This is the principle presented in the gospel, and it is a vital key to the understanding of it. An illustration is provided by our Saviour when He instructed His disciples that He sent them forth as lambs among wolves.

The Desire of Ages, p. 353:

Those who are brought in controversy with the enemies of truth have to meet, not only men, but Satan and his agents. Let them remember the Saviour's words,

Luke 10

³ Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

Let them rest in the love of God, and the spirit will be kept calm, even under personal abuse. The Lord will clothe them with a divine panoply. His Holy Spirit will influence the mind and heart, so that their voices shall not catch the notes of the baying of the wolves.

A wolf knows no restraint especially when driven by hunger. If you were to relocate a wolf anywhere in the world, you would never find that it has become a lamb or the least bit lamb-like in its behavior. The gentle sheep have much to fear from wolves wherever they may still be found on the earth.

It is easy to see from this illustration that it is not a matter of where you are, that determines who you are, but what you are.

Therefore we can no longer expect to find that Egypt is the king of the South, or that Turkey is the king of the North, or that the Glorious Land is Palestine. What is commonly called the “Holy Land” today, is a serious misnomer; for a land so filled with violence and iniquity would better be called the “unholy land.”

So we will discover that in the last days the kings of the North and South and the Glorious Land are three mighty powers. These three will have to be re-identified. We need to recognize these powers correctly, for we cannot afford to be deceived during the final events of this world’s history.

Atheistic France

We will now turn to one of these powers for a further demonstration of the validity of *The Symbolic Interpretation Method*, which is what you are determines who you are. The evidence will be taken from *Revelation* 11 where Egypt is mentioned.

Revelation 11

⁸ And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

This verse will help us understand the same terms as used in the book of *Daniel*.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 585:

In the *Revelation* all the books of the Bible meet and end. Here is the complement of the book of *Daniel*. One is a prophecy; the other a revelation. The book that was sealed is not the *Revelation*, but that portion of the prophecy of *Daniel* relating to the last days. The angel commanded,

Daniel 12

⁴ But you, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end.

In order to identify the king of the South as described in *Daniel*, we need only seek the interpretation of this same power as given in the *Revelation*. There we will find plainly presented information to the effect that the king of Egypt, who is the king of the

South, is worldwide Atheism. Here is the statement of the Spirit of Prophecy relating to this scripture:

The Great Controversy, p. 269:

“The great city” in whose streets the witnesses are slain, and where their dead bodies lie, is “spiritually” Egypt. Of all nations presented in Bible history, Egypt most boldly denied the existence of the living God and resisted His commands. No monarch ever ventured upon more open and highhanded rebellion against the authority of Heaven than did the king of Egypt. When the message was brought him by Moses, in the name of the Lord, Pharaoh proudly answered:

Exodus 5 [ARV]

² Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto His voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go.

This is Atheism, and the nation represented by Egypt would give voice to a similar denial of the claims of the living God and would manifest a like spirit of unbelief and defiance.

This illuminating statement describes exactly how to identify the king of the South. In defining Egypt as a symbol for Atheism, no reference is made to geography whatsoever. The only reasoning presented bears no relationship to the land of the present king of the South at all, but only to his character.

If “where you are” was the deciding factor, then “Egypt” in the time of the French Revolution would refer to geographical Egypt as the king of the South. But it was another nation altogether, namely atheistic France, which fulfilled the prophecy of the king of the South in *Revelation* 11, and consequently also of *Daniel* 11. This conclusion is reached by identifying the Atheism of the Pharaoh and the licentiousness of Sodom as the prevailing characteristics of the king of the South.

The Great Controversy, p. 269-271:

According to the words of the prophet, then, a little before the year 1798 some power of satanic origin and character would rise to make war upon the Bible. And in the land where the testimony of God’s two witnesses should thus be silenced, there would be manifest the Atheism of the Pharaoh and the licentiousness of Sodom.

This prophecy has received a most exact and striking fulfillment in the history of France. During the Revolution, in 1793, “the world for the first time heard an assembly of men, born and educated in civilization, and assuming the right to govern one of the finest of the European nations, uplift their united voice to deny the most solemn truth which man’s soul receives, and renounce unanimously the belief and worship of a Deity.” (Sir Walter Scott, *Life of Napoleon*, vol. 1, ch. 17)

“France is the only nation in the world concerning which the authentic record survives, that as a nation she lifted her hand in open rebellion against the Author of the universe. Plenty of blasphemers, plenty of infidels, there have been, and still continue to be, in England, Germany, Spain, and elsewhere; but France stands apart in the world’s history as the single state which, by the decree of her Legislative Assembly, pronounced that there was no God, and of which the entire population of the capital, and a vast majority elsewhere, women as well as men, danced and sang with joy in accepting the announcement.” (*Blackwood’s Magazine*, November, 1870)

France presented also the characteristics which especially distinguished Sodom. During the Revolution there was manifest a state of moral debasement and corruption similar to that which brought destruction upon the cities of the plain. And the historian presents together the Atheism and the licentiousness of France, as given in the prophecy:

“Intimately connected with these laws affecting religion, was that which reduced the union of marriage—the most sacred engagement which human beings can form, and the permanence of which leads most strongly to the consolidation of society—to the state of a mere civil contract of a transitory character, which any two persons might engage in and cast loose at pleasure....If fiends had set themselves to work to discover a mode of most effectually destroying whatever is venerable, graceful, or permanent in domestic life, and of obtaining at the same time an assurance that the mischief which it was their object to create should be perpetuated from one generation to another, they could not have invented a more effectual plan than the degradation of marriage....Sophie Arnould, an actress famous for the witty things she said, described the republican marriage as ‘the sacrament of adultery.’ (Scott, vol. 1, ch. 17)

The tragedy of the French Revolution establishes and confirms the principle that “what you are” determines “who you are.” It is not necessary to supply any further arguments to confirm this truth.

We now have sufficient evidence to know that the kings of the North and of the South, as well as all the other symbols used in prophecy, are to be identified by “what they are,” instead of by “where they are.” We can now proceed to identify the kings of the North and the South, the great River Euphrates, the seven churches, Armageddon, the seven angels, the seven last plagues, the various beasts and their horns and crowns, and their different roles in last day events.

We will find that whenever we apply this method of symbolic interpretation, the results are completely reliable, and perfectly consistent with each other. And as we study further, the beauty, reliability, and power in God’s word will shed further light on us.

68. The King of the North

Messenger and News Review, July 2000

Daniel 11:40-45

WE HAVE learned that the king of the South mentioned in *Daniel* 11 is Atheism, not geographical Egypt as is commonly supposed. The same rules of detection which have been used to identify the king of the South correctly, must be employed with equal consistency when discovering who is the king of the North. It will not be a case of where he is, but of what he is, that determines who he is.

The better we understand this principle, the earlier in history we shall find the king of the North at war against God and His people. He was definitely in action before Daniel's day. We find both the kings of the North and South active in Joshua's day.¹¹⁵ In fact the king of the North was there at the actual opening of the great controversy, and has been ever since.

All the way from the fall of Adam and Eve until the end of the great controversy, the king of the North plays a predominant role in the battle of the ages, but never so much as in the closing scenes of the great battle of Armageddon. In that critical, final, soon-coming struggle, the king of the North will be the principal antagonist of God's people among the confederacy of nations assembled to war against the God of heaven and earth. Therefore, we need to understand the character of the king of the North, the part he will play, and how to recognize him when we come in contact with him.

Babylon in Jeremiah's day

We will begin our search for the king of the North as far back as the days of Jeremiah. A great deal was revealed about the king of the North during this prophet's lifetime. This revelation begins in the first chapter where the warning is sounded forth that the kingdom of the North is about to launch a ferocious attack upon Israel:

¹¹⁵ See *Joshua* 10 and 11.

Jeremiah 1

¹³ And the word of the Lord came to me the second time, saying, What do you see? And I said, I see a boiling pot, and it is facing away from the north.

¹⁴ Then the Lord said to me: Out of the north calamity shall break forth on all the inhabitants of the land.

¹⁵ For behold, I am calling all the families of the kingdoms of the north, says the Lord; They shall come and each one set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all its walls all around, and against all the cities of Judah.

¹⁶ I will utter my judgments against them concerning all their wickedness, because they have forsaken me, burned incense to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands.

There is no doubt about to whom the kingdom of the North refers. It points to Babylon—that notorious kingdom, which was ever the implacable enemy of God’s true people. So long as God’s people obeyed and trusted Him, their security and prosperity was assured, and Babylon had no opportunity to persecute and destroy them. But as soon as the children of God became infected with apostasy and a persistent refusal to repent, they cast off the wonderful protection of the Almighty and the awesome persecuting kingdom of Babylon could then have power over them.

We are already aware of the fearful state of apostasy into which the children of Israel had sunk at the time the warning of Jeremiah was delivered to them. Destruction by the northern kingdom had become a serious threat to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. This was an indicator of how deep the apostasy had become. Even so, it was not yet total at that time, for there was still an opportunity for Israel to repent. But once total apostasy had been reached, there would be no further protection from national ruin.

Throughout the wonderful, dedicated ministry of Jeremiah, it was Babylon who came against Judah and Jerusalem, which enables us to correctly identify the king of the North as Babylon.¹¹⁶ If we study each one of these verses, we will understand the char-

¹¹⁶ See *Jeremiah* 1:13-14; 4:5-8; 6:1, 22; 10:22; 13:20; 46:20, 24; 47:2

acter, spirit, and role of the king of the North with greater force and clarity.

We will discover that the two major characteristics of Babylon are that she is charged with self-exalting pride and that she is the wanton, merciless destroyer of God's people. Her destructive traits are the fruit of her self-exaltation. The only people of God she retains alive are those for whom she has a further use. Otherwise, she tries to destroy all those whom she fears are threatening her personal ambitions.

Spiritual Babylon

At this point, some may argue that, because Babylon was a literal city with clearly defined geographical borders, the symbolic method of interpretation cannot be consistently applied. But a little thought will show that this is not the case. There were two Babylons:

1. Mystical or spiritual Babylon in whom resided the evil spirit of that great and awesome power;
2. Literal or physical Babylon where that spirit lodged.

In Jeremiah's day, mystical Babylon was found in the place of physical Babylon, but this was not always the case.

Mystical Babylon, that indwelling spirit of continuing rebellion, found its first defined location in heaven in the evil spirit of un-sanctified, selfish ambition which sprang up within Lucifer. He was able to abide in heaven only a short time after that, for he was unable to remain in its pure and holy atmosphere. Therefore, he was cast out and his angels were cast out with him.¹¹⁷

After this physical separation, Satan and his followers seized whatever power they could lay their hands on to help them carry forward their evil enterprises. Since then, they have continued to accumulate as much wealth and as many followers as possible in their efforts to destroy God's kingdom of light and glory.

¹¹⁷ See *Revelation* 12:9.

After the flood, idolatry became established throughout the earth and people everywhere determined to defy the authority of God. Accordingly, they set about building a tower which they thought would be a safe escape route to the realm above the clouds. But, instead, they unwittingly erected a giant lightning rod which diverted the full charge of electricity from the thunder head above to the waiting earth below. What a flash of lightning that must have been, followed by an incomparable clap of thunder! Such an event has surely never been witnessed since, until the advent of nuclear explosion.

In defiance of God's command to multiply and fill the earth, first given in the Garden of Eden and repeated to Noah's family,¹¹⁸ his descendants determined to build a great city which would be the pride of the nations. God saw all this and permitted the out-working of that spirit to bring a state of unbelievable confusion on all humanity. Before this, one language had been spoken throughout the entire world, now there were many languages, and this created hopeless confusion because people could no longer understand one another. As a result, they grouped themselves together according to the language they spoke, and scattered across the earth.

Genesis 11

⁶ And the Lord said, Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.

⁷ Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

⁸ So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.

⁹ Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

All this confusion has its source in the heart of the great rebel. Indeed, he is responsible for the breakdown of the unity of the people of the whole earth. This confusion came to be aptly de-

¹¹⁸ See *Genesis* 1:28 and 9:1.

scribed as “Babel.”¹¹⁹ In time this developed into the better known “Babylon.” Thus, the spirit of Babylon came to dwell in the land of Babel, that is, of Babylon.

Changes in Location, But Not in Spirit

Up until she fell, Babylon was without question the bastion of sun worship for the then known world. She even gave the name Babylon to that religion—that name which is so synonymous with the great apostasy that it is even recognized by the Eternal One, and recorded as such in the Scriptures. Since then she has been found adopting many different names, but regardless of her name, she displays only one spirit, one constitution, and one code of behavior.

In the days of the fullness of political Babylon’s power and glory, she was the center of sun worship. With the fall of political Babylon, and consequently the cessation of support for spiritual or mystical Babylon, it seemed that her day was done, that she had been delivered a fatal blow. But she reappeared in a different guise. The former Babylonian priests simply relocated to Greece and later to Rome, where those great host nations provided her with ample support and protection. The same evil powers simply transferred from one host nation to another.

This progression extended the evil, with which that proud, contagious system of religion was most thoroughly saturated, until Babylon’s spirit had become established in the farthest limits of the habitable globe. And even today she continues to court the rich and powerful nations with the objective of overpowering the Prince of Peace.

Although there have been numerous changes in the geographical location in which Babylon has based her operations, there have been no changes in its spirit. The king of the North resides in the hearts and controls the lives of all those who have not come out of Babylon, spiritually, mentally, and physically, and live in harmony with the great messages of present truth.

¹¹⁹ i.e. “confusion,” see *The Great Controversy*, p. 383.

Furthermore, we must be actuated by the same pure and holy Spirit which filled the life of Michael. We will be continually attacked by the enemy, who fights against this spirit in the most deadly warfare. This enemy is known as the Devil, Satan, the Dragon, and that Old Serpent,¹²⁰ and also as Babel, Babylon, and the king of the North.

Battle Between Two Kings of the North

But there comes the time when, strange as it may seem, the king of the North will be destroyed by another king of the North. In the Scriptures of truth are the predictions of this marvelous event. Through many years of inspired testimonies, Babylon is consistently identified by the Holy Spirit as being the king of the North. Then, quite suddenly, throughout *Jeremiah* 50 and *Jeremiah* 51, the role is reversed. Babylon, the king of the North, is attacked and destroyed by another king of the North.

There are a number of texts prophesying that kings from the north would come with great power and destroy Babylon completely.

Jeremiah 50

¹ The word that the Lord spoke against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet.

² Declare among the nations, proclaim, and set up a standard; proclaim—do not conceal it—say, Babylon is taken, Bel is shamed. Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are humiliated, her images are broken in pieces.

³ For out of the north a nation comes up against her, which shall make her land desolate, and no one shall dwell therein. They shall move, they shall depart, both man and beast.

⁹ For behold, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country, and they shall array themselves against her; from there she shall be captured. Their arrows shall be like those of an expert warrior; none shall return in vain.

¹²⁰ See *Revelation* 12:7-9.

Jeremiah 51

⁴⁸ Then the heavens and the earth and all that is in them shall sing joyously over Babylon; for the plunderers shall come to her from the north, says the Lord.

Jeremiah 50

⁴¹ Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation and many kings shall be raised up from the ends of the earth.

⁴² They shall hold the bow and the lance; they are cruel and shall not show mercy. Their voice shall roar like the sea; they shall ride on horses, set in array, like a man for the battle, against you, O daughter of Babylon.

⁴³ The king of Babylon has heard the report about them, and his hands grow feeble; anguish has taken hold of him, pangs as of a woman in childbirth.

When it is declared that “a people shall come from the north, and a great nation and many kings,” we can be certain that they come without friendly intentions. The above verses confirm such a conclusion and show it is impossible for them to be the same power which sustained Babylon. They could only be a people who were her perpetual enemy.

From this we conclude that there are two kings of the North between whom there is no harmony, but unbridgeable separation. This being so, it should not be difficult to locate the origins of each of those kings.

As will be demonstrated later, the king of the North is stronger than the king of the south, but nevertheless, in the final count-down, total ruin awaits him. In order to understand these facts, we must know who this other king of the North is. It will be found that He is the real One, in whose shadow all others are seen to be mere counterfeits, impostors, deceivers and substitutes. The question now to be considered is:

“Who is this king of the North who brings total destruction on the other king of the North?”

69. Two Contrasting Kingdoms

Messenger and News Review, August 2000

Daniel 11:40-45

This article includes some additions from the original unpublished draft.

Two Mountains

WE NOW want to search for the King of the North who brings total destruction on the other king of the North, otherwise known as Babylon. Of one King located in the north it is written:

Psalm 48

¹ Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness.

² Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

³ God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

In this quotation it is declared that God is the King in this northern place. As we learned from our study of the prophecies of *Daniel* and the *Revelation*, a mountain symbolizes a kingdom. This is confirmed in the messages of Jeremiah,¹²¹ and by John in the *Revelation*.¹²² Therefore, the holy mountain referred to in *Psalm* 48:2, is the original, or righteous kingdom of the King of the North. There can be no doubt about this because it is blessed with the beautiful attributes of righteousness.

In contrast to this, Babylon is portrayed as a destroying mountain, as the following verse from Jeremiah plainly declares:

Jeremiah 51

²⁵ Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, who destroys all the earth, says the Lord. And I will stretch out my hand against you, roll you down from the rocks, and make you a burnt mountain.

It is interesting to recall that whereas Babylon is symbolized by a wild beast of prey, namely the great and terrible lion, the real King of the North is seen to be as gentle and as peaceful as a lamb

¹²¹ *Jeremiah* 51:24-25.

¹²² *Revelation* 17:9-11.

and is fitted to dwell in Paradise restored. Similarly, the kingdoms of the two kings of the North are also widely different in character, one a destroying mountain, the other a mountain of holiness. The great King in the kingdom of holiness is Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.

The Connector

The divine order for the management of the government in heaven—otherwise known as gospel order—recognizes God as the absolute and exclusive source of supply to sustain a working universe with everything it needs. There is no question about this because the task is so immense as to be infinitely beyond the capacity of any created being. No one could even seriously imagine that he could fill such a position.

But the fact that the Creator has sufficient power within himself to speak the universe into existence is also the cause of an apparent problem: the outgoing stream of energy from God the Source is so great that no created being could possibly survive it.

This truth was conveyed to Sister White when she was shown what took place in heaven at the end of the 2300 years. Reporting on that vision, she wrote:

Early Writings, p. 54:

I saw a throne and on it sat the Father and the Son. I gazed on Jesus' countenance and admired His lovely person. The Father's person I could not behold, for a cloud of glorious light covered Him. I asked Jesus if His Father had a form like himself. He said He had, but I could not behold it, for said He, "If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist."

How could this tremendous stream of life-sustaining power, which is necessary to support every form of life, be so regulated that it would not be a source of destruction?

The way in which the God of absolute perfection solved this problem was to introduce another person into the system who had the special capacity of being both Creator and creature at the same time. In His divine nature, this mighty Being, who was just

like God, sends forth from himself all the power necessary to create and sustain the vast galaxies.

But in His nature as a creature, the intensity of power is reduced to the point where He can serve without destroying. There was no one else in the entire universe who could accomplish such a task, except the equally all-powerful Son of the living God. Both of these natures and their attendant services are combined in the one Person, Jesus Christ.

The Position of Christ Questioned

But there arose an angel of great brightness and strength who began to question the authority, character, and wisdom of the Almighty. Lucifer desired to penetrate into areas of speculation where created beings are beyond their depth. The profoundest of all the questions to which he desired to find an answer, was the unique position of Christ. Because the Son of God was just like the angels in appearance, Lucifer saw no apparent difference between the dependent angels and the connector Christ.

As this angel compared himself with the other angel, namely the Son of God, he questioned why he was excluded from the counsels of God's will. Speaking of the order maintained in heaven, it is declared that Lucifer was the brightest and the highest of the covering cherubs. As such, he stood as high as a created being could rise. Great and wonderful were the high honors opened to him, and lovingly did the loyal angels serve him.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 37:

He was beloved and revered by the heavenly host, angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with wisdom and glory above them all. Yet the Son of God was exalted above him, as one in power and authority with the Father. He shared the Father's counsels while Lucifer did not thus enter into the purposes of God. "Why," questioned this mighty angel, "should Christ have the ascendancy? Why is he honored above Lucifer?"

Thus we can see that the very principles which were at the heart of the great controversy began to develop at its inception. It

is an inflexible rule that everyone who seeks to exalt himself actually dethrones himself. This is what happened with Lucifer, and he will continue on his downward pathway until his destruction is complete. Just as there was no limit to his unholy ambitions, there will be no limit to his utter destruction:

Isaiah 14

¹² How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!

¹³ For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north;

¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.

¹⁵ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.

It is a well-established truth that these verses are a description of the character and work of the great apostate. “The mountain of the congregation” is a reference to God’s kingdom. In that kingdom Lucifer had aspired to...

¹³ ...the farthest sides of the north,

—or,

Isaiah 14 [NIV]

¹³ ...the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.

Lucifer strove for the position where all the mysteries as yet unknown to him would be opened to him. Furthermore, he declared he would...

Isaiah 14

¹⁴ ...ascend above the heights of the clouds,

—which further indicated his determination to attain to the highest position in existence. Here we have a clear picture of Lucifer’s envy of Christ. The latter occupied the highest position next to God the Father in the kingdom of the north, while Lucifer tried to take His place in the farthest sides of the north. These four verses are a clear and convincing revelation of the true iden-

tity of both the kings of the North. Christ is the real King of the North, while Lucifer is the usurper.

It is a relief to read the closing announcement which assures us that Lucifer's quest will meet with nothing more than complete and permanent failure. The glad tidings are:

Isaiah 14

¹⁵ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.

Let us note that he would not merely be brought down to the pit, nor to the depths of the pit, but to the lowest depths of the pit, which is the abode of eternal oblivion.

This is not the only text detailing the terrible fate of Satan. We would do well to search the Scriptures diligently to uncover the real identities of our spiritual enemies, referred to as "the king of the North" and "the king of the South." Such a search, particularly in *Daniel*, *Revelation*, *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah*, will strip these destructive powers of their disguises.

God's Way or Our Way?

As we have now seen, the king of the South is the spirit of Atheism, and the king of the North is the spirit of Babylon. The result of Babylon's activity is overbearing oppression, strife, hatred, and all the other evils which beset the human family.

But we find that the spirit of the king of the South has nothing better to offer us, for the same terrible iniquities and oppressions reign under atheistic regimes.

What then is the difference? The essential difference is that:

*Babylon is the system
which attempts to build God's kingdom
by the application of human procedures,
while Atheism is the attempt
to build man's kingdom, man's way.*

We might think that it does not matter how the kingdom of God is built, just so long as it does get built. But that is a grim

mistake to make, for it is absolutely impossible to build God's kingdom according to human methods and procedures whether they be those of the king of the North or of the South.

Cain and Abel

But men are so unwilling to accept this, even though one of the very first encounters between God and the devil was over this issue. That was when righteousness in Abel met unrighteousness in Cain and led to the murder of Abel. The lesson taught in this tragic encounter is valid and critically true from eternity in the past, until eternity into the future. It stresses and clarifies the solemn truth that there is only one way of building God's kingdom so that it is not enough to pray,

Matthew 6

¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth...

There must be added the meaningful words,

Matthew 6

¹⁰ ...as it is done in heaven.

Any attempt at gaining admission by any other way will surely and utterly fail.

The King of the South does not even pretend to serve God. How could he when he does not even believe that God exists? Yet, at the same time, he has to recognize that there is tremendous power present throughout the earth which to some extent man is able to harness for what he hopes will prove a blessing to him. However, though he declines to accept the fact of it, and tries to disguise his convictions by hiding them behind another identity.

Man cannot really deny the existence of a living personal God. It appears that in the earliest days of human history when both of Adam's first two sons were young men, that Cain did recognize the existence of God. But it could not have been a true concept of the Sovereign of the universe for that had been surely lost even before they had been driven from the Garden of Eden.

If only we had a true concept of how extensive was the damage done by sin to our first parents, we would understand much better how far mankind had fallen when its earliest membership of two, fell for the tempter's lies. When they pleaded permission to remain in their beautiful garden-home, it was kindly explained to them that they were asking an impossibility:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 61:

After their sin Adam and Eve were no longer to dwell in Eden. They earnestly entreated that they might remain in the home of their innocence and joy. They confessed that they had forfeited all right to that happy abode, but pledged themselves for the future to yield strict obedience to God.

But they were told that their nature had become depraved by sin; they had lessened their strength to resist evil and had opened the way for Satan to gain more ready access to them. In their innocence they had yielded to temptation; and now, in a state of conscious guilt, they would have less power to maintain their integrity.

The cases of Cain and Abel clearly exemplify the difference between the king of the North's attempts to build God's kingdom man's way, and the building of God's kingdom, God's way. Both Cain and Abel built an altar, each similar to the other. But on those altars each brought an offering quite different from the other.

Only the offering brought by Abel, in perfect obedience to the divine instructions, received God's unqualified blessing and approval. Fire descended from heaven and consumed Abel's offering.

Both brothers professed to serve the true and living God, both offered a sacrifice, but one of them, refusing to acknowledge that salvation from sin be could only be obtained by death, brought fruit from his own harvesting instead.

The messages demonstrated by these two young men are very clear, for they portray the opposing principles found in the lost or the saved down until the end of time. Abel sacrificed a lamb for his offering, thereby testifying that the solution to the sin-prob-

lem is to be found in the death of the existing sinful, evil nature, and the reception of a new life in its place.

By contrast, Cain, by claiming that the message of mature fruit was the object lesson of salvation, was teaching that an individual person is good in himself and only needs to have that goodness cultivated to the highest degree possible.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 73:

The class of worshipers who follow the example of Cain includes by far the greater portion of the world; for nearly every false religion has been based on the same principle—that man can depend upon his own efforts for salvation. It is claimed by some that the human race is in need, not of redemption, but of development—that it can refine, elevate, and regenerate itself. As Cain thought to secure the divine favor by an offering that lacked the blood of a sacrifice, so do these expect to exalt humanity to the divine standard, independent of the atonement.

The history of Cain shows what must be the results. It shows what man will become apart from Christ. Humanity has no power to regenerate itself. It does not tend upward, toward the divine, but downward, toward the satanic. Christ is our only hope.

Acts 4

¹² There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved...Neither is there salvation in any other.

The Results of Kingdom Building

Such is the eternal truth as it is revealed in the conflict between Cain and Abel, who represent the vast majority supporting human philosophy on the one hand, against the few standing for God's truth on the other.

After the incredible demonstration provided on the cross of the ultimate sacrifice by Christ, and the ultimate destruction of those who depend on self for salvation, we might expect the devil and his followers to surrender, throw down their arms, and acknowledge that they have been totally wrong. But instead, they try to destroy all the evidence against themselves. The human race can-

not hope to deliver itself from its present decay and soon-coming eternal destruction without the infusion of the gospel.

It matters not whether the armies confronting the true people of God are those of the king of the North or of the South, or whether they are seeking to build God's kingdom man's way, or man's kingdom man's way. In either case the outworking is still the same—things will only get worse in the progress towards ultimate oblivion.

Superficially viewed, it must be admitted, that in various areas people do make the world appear to be a better place. And never has the world been more wealthy than at the present time, as the wonders of modern science and technology open access to knowledge not even dreamt of a few short centuries ago.

But this acquisition of material wealth and prosperity has largely assisted in the development of inventions which provide humans with ever more efficient means of torturing and killing one another. The earth today has literally become a slaughter house of misery and sickness as people in their millions refuse to acknowledge that God's kingdom can be built only in God's own way.

There will, however, be a settlement of the case. There is coming such a demonstration of the outworking of the principles and policies of those two mighty kingdoms, and the contrasting power and glory of the true King of the North, that all will be revealed. This will be so comprehensive and convincing, as to cause the kings of the South and then the North to come to their end with none to help them.

70. The Appointed Time is Long

Messenger and News Review, September 2000

Daniel 11:36-39

This article includes some additions from the original unpublished draft.

AS WE have studied, the appointed time is nigh when the kings of the South and North will come to their end, fulfilling the prophecies outlined in *Daniel* 11:42 and 11:45. In these verses is to be found the story of the wonderful climax of all that which has gone before as a buildup to the final, enduring championing of the blessed forces of righteousness, as Michael our Prince leads the armies of heaven to their climactic victory.

A Long Time

We might imagine that only a short period of time would be necessary to settle controversies between God and any of His created beings. But when the long-awaited triumph of truth comes, it will have been a long conflict indeed. So long, that there is the tendency on the part of the saints to question the veracity of the prophecy.

But the long protraction of the fulfillment of the promises of God does not weaken His word in any way, as it is written:

Daniel 10

¹ The message was true, but the appointed time was long.

Jesus likewise sounded a warning against being diverted from the pathways of truth as a result of the drawn-out tarrying time. He solemnly voiced that warning when He said,

Matthew 24

⁴⁸ But if that evil servant says in his heart, My master is delaying his coming,

⁴⁹ And begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards,

⁵⁰ The master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of,

⁵¹ And will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.

The length of the tarrying time demonstrates how deeply the issues in the great controversy lie. It will take a full six thousand years for lost humanity to see the real nature of the fallen being whom they are following. Then, when the kings of the South and the North have made their last defiant stand against Him who is King of kings and Lord of all Lords, they will come to their final end with no one else to help them.

A Period of Time

When does all this happen? How do we know when it is “the time of the end,” as mentioned in *Daniel* 11:40, 12:4, 9, and 13? We might imagine that such a time is still future, but the time of the end actually started back in 1798. Proof that the time of the end began in that year, is contained in the answer to a question posed in:

Daniel 12

⁶ How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?

⁷ Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.

The answer given was that it would be for time, times, and half a time.¹²³ This period of time (which, as we saw in an earlier chapter, adds up to 1260 years) began in 538 and ended in 1798. So the time of the end, which is not a single point in time but a period of time, began in this year.

The same is true of the cleansing of the sanctuary at the end of the 2300 years. This is an event which does not occur at a point in time, but continues over a period of time—a time that has already lasted from 1844 until today. How much longer it will be before the final end point of this period arrives, we do not know. It requires the patience of the saints to endure this protracted seeming delay, which is even more difficult to bear due to the abiding ex-

¹²³ See *Daniel* 7:25; *Daniel* 12:7 and *Revelation* 12:14.

pectation of an immediate second coming of our long-promised Deliverer.

The Great Tribulation

Once the apostolic church had lost its purity and power, the true and loyal among its members became preoccupied with survival. While there were noble efforts put forth at soul-winning, they were not to be compared with those put forward once the Protestant Reformation began to roll back the flood tide of evil which had for so long worked to destroy the church of God.

Christ's prophetic declaration of how great the toll of human life would be, was made when Christ answered His disciples' question about the signs of His coming and of the end of the world. He said:

Matthew 24

²² For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be shortened, but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

The Great Controversy, p. 266-267:

The persecution of the church did not continue throughout the entire period of the 1260 years. God in mercy to His people cut short the time of their fiery trial. In foretelling the "great tribulation" to befall the church, the Saviour said:

Matthew 24

²² Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Through the influence of the Reformation the persecution was brought to an end prior to 1798.

Without such a shortening, initially those who were true to God would have been hunted until they had been exterminated. The only inhabitants remaining would have been the godless. But this creates a state of things wherein the earth cannot survive, for the life-sustaining Spirit of God can only remain where there are loyal hearts in which He can abide. If His withdrawal is enforced

for any reason, the earth would speedily pass into a state of disruption in which no man can exist.

The Flood

The flood of Noah's day is a clear example of this. For one hundred and twenty years, the warning of impending total destruction was sounded with increasing power by God through His servant Noah, but was rejected with greater and greater positiveness by the wicked of that dreadful era.

Finally, the time came when eight people were all that remained loyal to God on the whole earth. All the rest could only sneer at the mere suggestion of a flood to cover the entire face of the earth. But when all nature collapsed in total ruins, the earth became completely unlivable as every life-support system was swept away or was buried deep in the earth.

It was the wickedness of the people themselves which caused the flood. It was never the deliberate punitive act of God as may be confirmed by reference to the book, *Behold Your God*. It is sin, and sinners, and not God who destroy. All the killing which went on during the period of the papal supremacy was never the handiwork of God, nor was it done by His command, nor is it a reflection of His character. No such solutions were employed in heaven when rebellion manifested itself there, nor will they ever be found in the kingdom of light and glory.

Attack of the King of the South

At the beginning of the time of the end in 1798, the next event in the drama was due to take place. This was the attack made by the king of the South against the king of the North.

Daniel 11

⁴⁰ At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him.

We have already confirmed that the king of the South is Atheism especially as that appellation was attached to her during the French Revolution. We saw that this definition became fitting because men and women became more hardened against God, and

the priests, in the face of the terrible hardships under which they lived and because of the atrocities to which they were daily subjected. So terrible were these inflictions that they were really unable to endure the sufferings imposed upon them. Only the power of the human spirit can enable men to rise to the occasion and endure the otherwise unendurable in a situation of that intensity.

We also recognize the king of the North as those forces which in Scripture are called “Babylon the Great,” and which seek to build God’s kingdom by using human principles and procedures. In order to understand the message of this verse correctly, let’s apply these definitions to the prophecy:

“At the time of the end, (which is from 1798 onward,) Atheism will make an attack on the papacy.”

The question then is,

“Did any events take place about 1798 and onward which would be a clear-cut fulfillment of these predictions?”

There is no difficulty in discovering the event in history which fulfilled this prophecy to the very letter, for it was in 1798, that the French General Berthier took the reigning pontiff prisoner and carried him into exile where he finally died. In *Revelation* 13:3, this event is called the administration of the “deadly wound,” but this wound was to be healed.¹²⁴ This blow left the papacy with less power than she possessed before, as it is written:

The Great Controversy, p. 266:

Though a new pope was soon afterward elected, the papal hierarchy has never since been able to wield the power which it before possessed.

This reduction in the power now wielded by the papacy is a wonderful witness to the mighty blessing made available to those who served God during the days of the Protestant Reformation. While they appeared to be vanquished on every front, it was their enemies who were reduced in power. These faithful souls emerged from every encounter increased in strength, freedom,

¹²⁴ See also *Revelation* 13:12.

the knowledge of the truth, and the expanding emancipation from erroneous ideas, customs, habits, and practices.

Following their struggle, tremendous advancements were made in every field of knowledge. Were the world to continue without coming to a total end, there would yet be seen the full effect of the victory gained by the reformers.

But in studying what took place at the time of the “deadly wound,” it is necessary to understand the lead up to those events: one set of conditions being the cause of the other. So, let us briefly step back in time and its attendant conditions so as to be able to successfully match cause with its effects.

Historical Background

A critical point of time was reached when apostasy developed to the place where paganism formed a marriage with a lifeless, cold, formalistic, church. Reference to this development reads as follows:

Daniel 11

³⁰ For ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant.

³¹ And forces shall be mustered by him. And they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily, and place there the abomination of desolation.

The “holy covenant” is known by several names in the Scriptures. It is the covenant made with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and which was made with all the great patriarchs such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. What it would do for humanity is spelled out for us in *Genesis* 3:15, where the Lord spoke to Satan, to whom He announced the degree to which He would resist the devil’s plotting against helpless humanity. God solemnly declared:

Genesis 3

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.

Furthermore, it was offered to the children of Israel when they came to Mount Sinai. There were those who accepted the blessings of everlasting righteousness, and those who rejected it.

The holy covenant is simply the everlasting gospel which is the power of God to save from all sin and sinning. It is a contract made between God and man that, if a perishing soul will fulfill certain conditions of faith and acceptance, God will accept that man by virtue of Christ's grace, and will give him a place in heaven. No one can be saved outside of the holy covenant: man must do his part, and God must do His.¹²⁵

So then, when we are pointed in *Daniel* 11, to a power which would return in rage against the holy covenant, and would show great regard for those who forsake it, then attention is being directed to a power which is at war against God, no matter how pretentious, earnest, self-sacrificing, or seemingly loving that power might appear to be.

The Inner Cause of Apostasy

Over the centuries, the people of the Lord have begun so well time after time, but, because they have failed each time to continue searching their hearts and expelling every evil seed until no trace of any of them can be found, they are still imprisoned on this earthly place of confinement. They seem to forget that seeds do not remain seeds, but always grow up to become plants after their own kind.

Therefore, it is unsafe for us, for so long as a moment, to permit the continued presence of an evil thought, word, or deed in our lives. Especially is this the case in respect of an evil spirit such as our reaction to any slight or injury which has supposedly damaged our characters or our career.

It must never be forgotten that in the day of judgment, no one will be called upon to answer for what the other person has done to him, but only for what he has done to the other person. It will

¹²⁵ See the Chapter in *Patriarchs and Prophets* entitled "The Law and the Covenants," for greater details.

not be the other person's actions against me for which I shall have to answer, but my reactions to his actions. Therefore, it is of little consequence as to how I am treated in this sin-cursed earth, but of supercritical concern are my reactions to the evil done to me.

This is a most fortunate arrangement, for it leaves every believer in Jesus free to choose, by the grace of God, just what disposition and character he will permit to manifest itself. In short, each individual becomes, through the redemptive powers God has invested in him, and the commissions to which God will ordain him, the master of his own destiny.

Such a life can only be developed through the unrestricted tutelage of the Holy Spirit. Such a life must know where it is going, and must be unconditionally committed to growing up into the image of Christ. There is no limit to the possibilities for a life of wonderful usefulness for all who dedicate body, mind, and, spirit, to such high ideals.

The Reformation

God was neither unmindful of, nor indifferent to the seeds of apostasy which were becoming established in the church subsequent to the days of the apostles. In answer, the Omnipotent One gave to His faithful few the spiritual perception needed to detect the rise of the mystery of iniquity.

Such men arose in the power of the Almighty God to resist the papacy and roll back the tide of evil which was the evil fruit of that monstrous system. Of these mighty men of the greatest courage and unyielding determination, it is written:

Daniel 11

³² Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong and carry out great exploits,

³³ And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder.

³⁴ Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join them by intrigue.

³⁵ And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end, because it is still for the appointed time.

The French Revolution

The final verses leading up to *Daniel* 11:40-45, introduce what appears to be a new version of a previous work, in the form of a king who shaped his kingdom according to his own ideas and will. Things which have been omitted from his kingdom are those which we would least expect to see being deleted. Consider the following details revealing this singularity:

Daniel 11

³⁶ Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.

³⁷ He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all.

³⁸ But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things.

³⁹ Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.

Bear in mind that this is not the papacy which is being portrayed here. Instead, these descriptions are of the ruling power of the French Revolution which indeed was so different from the gods which had preceded him.¹²⁶ When the gods of the past went

¹²⁶ Editor's note: In applying *Daniel* 11:36-39 to the power of Atheism, manifested in the French Revolution, Fred is departing from his previous interpretation of these verses. See, for example, the audio study #25, from the Arkansas Camp of 1980, called "Lessons from Daniel". Starting around the 6 minute mark, Fred identifies these verses as applying to the Papacy, but admits that he doesn't fully understand how they apply to this power. There is,

forth to battle, the forces which fought for them were well disciplined and thoroughly organized, but in the French Revolution, the ruling power was the outburst of uncontrolled revengeful fury. There was no single leader or even an assembly of rulers, or a council of men, such as is found in a democracy for instance, who or which stamped his will upon a conquered people. The people themselves were dominated by the pent-up passions within them.

These are misguided forces which explode in one direction today, but onto an altogether different target, tomorrow. A person living under such a regime feels totally insecure because that is precisely what he is—unsafe, in deathly danger of his life, and in constant peril of being betrayed unto death. This appalling condition of things could scarcely be worse than is described in the following paragraphs:

The Great Controversy, p. 283:

King, clergy, and nobles were compelled to submit to the atrocities of an excited and maddened people. Their thirst for vengeance was only stimulated by the execution of the king; and those who decreed his death soon followed him to the scaffold. A general slaughter of all suspected of hostility to the Revolution was determined. The prisons were crowded, at one time containing more than two hundred thousand captives. The cities of the kingdom were filled with scenes of horror. One party of revolutionists was against another party, and France became a vast field for contending masses, swayed by the fury of their passions. "In Paris one tumult succeeded another, and the citizens were divided into a medley of factions, that seemed bent on nothing but mutual extermination."

however, a fairly sound interpretation of these verses, applying them to the Papacy, in Robert Brinsmead's book, *The Vision by the Hiddekel*, a book which Fred was familiar with, from his early days in the Awakening movement, although he might not have remembered, in his later years, the interpretation given in that book. It is to be noted that Uriah Smith, in his book on the *Revelation*, applies these verses to the French Revolution, which is perhaps the source for Fred's application as given in this article.

This is the sense in which this king deployed his mighty power in a different way from any other which had ever preceded him. This feature of his nature is revealed in the fact that...

Daniel 11

³⁶ ...he would prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.

In short, his name could be called the “wrath of man,” for that is precisely what and who he was. He would follow through a certain and sure outworking of the operation of law, because a certain wrath, anger, or fury has banked up against a fearful day of the most terrible retribution.

Until all the forces of humanity violently out of control have utterly expended themselves, this terrible god was to continue his triumph over men and nations, and the tragic sufferings of those who but a short while earlier had been fearfully and degradingly oppressed, were now ground down into the most abject terror. None knew what the next day would bring to these wretched victims of this unstoppable monster.

With the storming of the Bastille on July 7, 1789, the French Revolution entered upon its bloodiest and most violent phase. The Bastille was a fortress which had ostensibly been built in Paris to strengthen that city’s defenses, but in reality was a huge prison designed to contain any dissenters from the power of king and priests. Ironically, on the day it was overthrown, it is said to have contained only seven inmates.¹²⁷

It was only nine years later that the time of the end began in 1798. The king who reigned in the interval between was the “Wrath of Man,” the great devastator, the wanton slaughterer of human life, and the waster of houses, lands, and gardens. He is the force which once enthroned cannot be curbed or controlled, for whilever there was fuel to be consumed, the conflagration was certain to be continued at blast furnace intensity.

¹²⁷ See *Grolier's Encyclopedia*, Article on the Bastille.

Daniel 11

³⁷ He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all.

³⁸ But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things.

Their turning to a “god of fortresses” on the part of this or that hopeful ruling faction, as took place during the French Revolution, is the typical response of humanity when faced with disasters of its own creation. They adopt defensive measures in the hope of containing the destroyer.

This was but a rerun of the solution so ineffectively adopted by the men who built the tower of Babel in their efforts to save themselves. Instead they would have shown true wisdom if, and only if, they had made God alone to be their Problem-solver. Every scheme of human devising by which men seek to obtain deliverance, sooner or later become the agent of their own personal destruction. Thus it was that the tower of Babel proved to be their destroyer, not their saviour.

And in the days of the French Revolution, the pattern of cause and effect continued until all the pent up fury had been consumed. They fought for various reasons such as revenge, freedom from oppression, the desire for a better life, self-defense, hatred of the king, and so forth. So many knew not why they had been caught up in the flood tide of evil which they had no hope of resisting or of escaping, until they had perished miserably and permanently.

Self-Exaltation: the Cause of Devastation

We have long since understood what God’s wrath is, namely the fearful forces of men and nature completely out of God’s and man’s control. When these are unleashed upon the hapless victims of such a condition of things, the very worst calamities, catastrophes, and disasters are certain to devastate the earth. This

truth has been convincingly demonstrated many times over the in course of history.

The first and most overwhelming so far in human history was the flood of Noah's day. Later came the plagues of Egypt, which so ravaged the land, that after the Exodus which followed, the whole country had become a waste land. Just imagine, for instance, the effect which the hailstorm had on the forests, crops, live stock, buildings, and any people caught out in it.

The occupation by the house of Israel of the land of Canaan, provided the chosen people with a marvelous opportunity to live under the peaceful reign of the true God where the strange God of *Daniel* 11:36-39 was never to rule at all. God never intended that a place would be found for him.

But as surely and as rapidly as they turned aside into the pathway of apostasy, just so surely and as rapidly did the Israelites firstly give conception to, and therefore existence to this strange God, and immediately a steady growth pattern set in as day after day the victim suffered from various forms of apostasy and oppression as did the rejectors of the gospel in unhappy France.

At this stage, the strange king is but a helpless, harmless, embryo. But permit no one to be deceived by this, for growth is rapid and sturdy. When the same beginning of sin appeared in Adam and Eve, they were not gradually lowered into sin, but they were stricken by it. They suffered instant depravity the moment they committed the sin.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 61:

After their sin Adam and Eve were no longer to dwell in Eden. They earnestly entreated that they might remain in the home of their innocence and joy. They confessed that they had forfeited all right to that happy abode, but pledged themselves for the future to yield strict obedience to God. But they were told that their nature had become depraved by sin; they had lessened their strength to resist evil and had opened the way for Satan to gain more ready access to them. In their innocence they had yielded to temptation; and now, in a state of conscious guilt, they would have less power to maintain their integrity.

So it was that the fearful outbreaking of this god is categorized as being...

The Great Controversy, p. 266-267:

...the most striking illustration which the world has ever witnessed of the working out of the papal policy—an illustration of the results to which for more than a thousand years the teaching of the Roman Church had been tending.

This means that when the great tyrannical explosion came, this mighty king was very fully developed and quite totally out of control. It was the wrath of man operating at fever-pitch.

But there have been other such exhibitions which have illustrated the outworking of the same truths. I would list the fall of Jerusalem when the temple built by Solomon was burned, and again when the same city was wasted by the Romans, nor would I ignore the disasters and wars which have occurred on smaller scales, but are still the depredations worked out according to the same laws of cause and effect.

Terrible yet to come, are those unbelievably awful seven last plagues. Each of these are the direct outworking of the reign of this king of terror. Of him it is written:

Daniel 11

³⁸ He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any God; for he shall exalt himself above them all.

He is as merciless, unfeeling, uncaring, uncontrollable, and as devastating as a fiery holocaust. When the time of the fiery harvest was reaped throughout France, and all that could be consumed had been burned, then and only then did some sanity return to the nation.

But in the coming devastation during the seven last plagues, no mercy will be available. Either each soul will be ready or unready. God, in absolute and complete foreknowledge of the incredible sufferings through His children must pass, has made available every possible provision for their safety.

In the meantime an intensive study of the relationship of cause and effect as illustrated by the history of the Bible and the French Revolution, will certainly open our eyes to see how fearful is the result of permitting this dreadful king to have life.

Counter-Attack of the King of the North

Although the king of the North was wounded during the French Revolution, he still had sufficient power to rally his forces. That the king of the North would counter-attack is certain, because of the nature of the spirit which is in him—a spirit of revenge, retaliation, enmity and pride. With the manifestations of each of these reactions we are quite familiar.

There is no place in the response of the counterfeit king of the North for the victory gained through the prevailing power of truth and love. Whereas God's principles call for us to love our enemies even as He loves His, the ways of Satan and sin are to eliminate those who oppose them.

Sinfulness is our greatest enemy when defined as the spirit of evil, and in that form, we are to hate it even as God hates it. But the essence of Christianity is found in the principle that while we are to genuinely hate the sin that is in the sinner, we are to love the sinner himself, even as we love our own selves. If we do this, we shall be the true children of our heavenly Father.

In that wonderful sermon on the Mount of Blessing, Jesus laid out this powerful principle which is at the heart of His glorious kingdom of peace and righteousness. Said He:

Matthew 5

⁴³ You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.

⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

⁴⁵ That you may be the sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

⁴⁷ And if you greet your brethren only, what do you more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

God has no enemies in heaven. Instead, all of His enemies are shut out of His presence. So we do not think in terms of God's hating Satan, but it must be remembered that there are no degrees of hatred with God; God does not have in himself the slightest trace of hatred whatsoever. It is true that Satan is His enemy, and in him is nothing but enmity. But God is as incapable of manifesting enmity as Satan is of manifesting love. So it is that God loves Satan who is His ultimate enemy.

This raises a problem. In practical terms does this mean that we are to become his friend? This question is answered by referring to the distinction being made between love with fellowship, and love without it. It is natural to think that where we have love, we will naturally have fellowship, but the experience of God himself proves that this is not necessarily so. He loves every one of His rebellious children, but He is certainly unable to fellowship with them. There are many Christian parents with unbelieving children. These know what it means to suffer from lack of fellowship while their rebellious offspring are loved by them regardless of how wide is the separating gulf between them.

I remember very well being called upon to answer this question by a small group of three or four Christian sisters. I had laid before them the principle of loving our enemies, the greatest of whom is Satan. I had shown them from the Scriptures that this was to be as perfect in themselves as God himself is perfect. They could understand and appreciate this, especially as they could testify to their having been delivered from hard feelings toward their fellow-workers.

But positive as were the changes they found were being established within them, they found no joy from being in the presence of these fellow-workers, no basis of common interests, no shared hope in the return of our Saviour. They realized as never before

that the worldlings lived only for the present, and had no belief in, or hope of eternal life.

The question troubling these sisters in the faith, was:

“Why we do not enjoy fellowship with them? We can honestly testify to the truth that we no longer hate them, but neither do we love them either.”

The simple answer is that it is quite impossible to share life with a committed unbeliever, and especially if you, yourself are a truly dedicated believer in the principles of living righteously. When they saw the distinction between love with fellowship, and love without fellowship, they had no more problem with that question.

Once these principles are understood, then what took place in the unrestrained hatred and mighty spirit of bitter revenge which went on display when the king of the South attacked the king of the North, is likewise quite readily understood.

The people of France claimed that their very legitimate objectives were to replace bondage with liberty, but it became very apparent that they replaced bondage with even worse slavery. Nor did they miss the opportunity of punishing all those who had previously exploited them. These were the so-called upper classes—the king, the wealthy land owners, and the religious orders. There was unbelievable chaos and confusion throughout the entire land. The fire only burned down as the fuel for it became exhausted.

Solomon, the wisest of men had observed the truth of this. He wrote:

Proverbs 30

¹⁵ There are three things that are never satisfied, four never say, Enough!

¹⁶ The grave, the barren womb, the earth that is not satisfied with water—and the fire never says, Enough!

It is inevitable that the king of the North will come against the king of the South, in what is to be his very last charge. According to the laws of attack and counter-attack, these two kings must in-

evitably war against each other just as long as they can find the strength to mount such warfare. Therefore, it was prophesied that the king of the North would come against the king of the South in an all-encompassing, sweeping victory.

Daniel 11

⁴⁰ ...and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them and pass through.

The first point to be made is that *Daniel* 11 should actually include verses 1-4 of chapter 12. Those four verses are but a continuation of chapter 11. So, Daniel 12:1-4 should actually be verses 46-49 of *Daniel* 11. This corrected relationship will make the message of these last verses of Chapter 11 much more understandable.

Having identified the event which marked the attack made upon the king of the North at the time of the end, we would also expect to find the event which corresponds to the prophecy of the swift and certain victory over the king of the South. Naturally, we expect this to be located in time shortly after the attack on the king of the North.

But do we find any great, overwhelming counter-attack on the king of the South in this period of history? No! Instead we see the papacy making a quiet, but sure and certain reconstruction of her lost powers. Not until her careful planning is finished, and she has recovered her lost strength will she go forth with great fury against the king of the South.

The Great Controversy, p. 581:

God's word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare. She is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men. She is piling up her lofty and massive structures in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions will be repeated.

Stealthily and unsuspectedly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike. All that she desires is vantage ground, and this is already being given her. We shall soon see and shall feel what the purpose of the Roman element is. Whoever shall believe and obey the word of God will thereby incur reproach and persecution.

The papacy, the king of the North, has been making a steady recovery, but this can hardly be classed as a “whirlwind” return to superior power and authority. That is yet to come. And most certainly it will come.

“But,” an objector may claim, “the time interval between the king of the North’s being attacked, and his deadly counter-attack is too great.”

However, it is not unusual that a time interval of several hundred years is covered in a single Bible verse. In *Daniel* 11:40, the king of the South attacks the king of the North, and the king of the North counter-attacks. In *Revelation* 13:3, the deadly wound was struck, and it is healed. These are both descriptions of the same event, which began in 1798, but the counter-attack, or “healing of the wound,” is yet future. Both scriptures have the same starting point and the same ending date, and the time interval between these two events is already more than 200 years. How much longer we shall have to wait we do not know, but it cannot be long now.

It is in this tarrying time that the patience of the saints will be tried, though not yet to the uttermost. That will come during the time of Jacob’s trouble and what a time of trouble that will be, both for the world and for the persecuted people of God.

King of the South Vanquished

As we continue our study into the very last period of human history, we see that there will be an increasing unification of all Satan’s forces of evil. This will be accomplished in two ways. One will be by the elimination of all those who will not submit to the authority of the man of sin, and the other by coming into har-

mony of thought and action on the part of all the powers of this earth, whether they be civil, religious, or otherwise.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 983:

Revelation 17

¹³ These have one mind.

There will be a universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan's forces.

¹³ ...and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

Thus is manifested the same arbitrary, oppressive power against religious liberty, freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, as was manifested by the papacy, when in the past it persecuted those who dared to refuse to conform with the religious rites and ceremonies of Romanism.

As we have seen from the battles between the king of the South and the king of the North, the results have favored either the one or the other. In the last verses of *Daniel* 11, however, the end of both is foretold.

At first, it is the king of the South who is vanquished, never to rise again. From *Daniel* 11:40 we see that this will be accomplished by the powers symbolized by the whirlwind, chariots, horsemen, and many ships. Through the strategic deployment of such fearful weaponry, those who refuse to submit to the king of the North will be slaughtered.

While the elimination of these people has not yet become a universal, full-time preoccupation of the king of the North, the work is already going forward in some areas. The eventual outcome will be the total demise of the king of the South.

During this phase, the king of the North will not be concerned with the establishment of religion, as such, but rather with racial and economic conflicts. It will be subsequent to the fall of the king of the South that the king of the North will give his entire attention to religious issues. Then will be the time when Sunday will be enforced as the sacred day of worship, to be respected and exalted by all people.

This brings us up-to-date where we find ourselves right in the midst of last day events. This is the time for:

- the appearance of the Image of the beast, his mark, the number of his name,
- the battle of Armageddon,
- the final struggles of the king of the North and the South against each other,
- the summary of the final time prophecies,
- the standing up of Michael,
- the ending of the reigns of those terrible Kings,
- the sealing of Daniel, and
- the eternal glorification of the saints in light.

Great and marvelous are the truths which are being revealed during this climactic period of history.

71. Gathering Momentum

Messenger and News Review, October 2000

Daniel 11:40-43

This article includes some additions from the original unpublished draft.

AS WE continue the study of the final battle between the king of the South and the king of the North, it is time to be reminded that as we move into the very last periods of human history, that there will be an increasing unification of all of Satan's forces of evil.

This will be accomplished in two ways:

1. The elimination of all those who will not submit to the authority of the man of sin, and
2. The coming into harmony of thought and action on the part of all the powers of this earth, be they civil, religious, or otherwise.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 983:

Revelation 17

¹³ These have one mind...

There will be a universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan's forces.

¹³ ...and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

Thus is manifested the same arbitrary, oppressive power against religious liberty, freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, as was manifested by the papacy, when in the past it persecuted those who dared to refuse to conform with the religious rites and ceremonies of Romanism.

The Fall of the King of the South

As we have seen from the previous studies of the king of the South against the king of the North, the results have either favored the one or the other. Here however the end of both is foretold. At first, it is the king of the South who is vanquished, never to rise again.

On reading *Daniel* 11:40-45, we see that it will be accomplished by the powers symbolized by the whirlwind, chariots, horsemen, and many ships. By the strategic deployment of this fearful

weaponry, those who will not submit will be slaughtered. While the elimination of these has not yet become a universal, full-time preoccupation of the king of the North, the work is going forward in limited areas. The eventual outcome will be the total demise of the king of the South.

During this phase the establishment of religion will not be the issue of concern, but it will rather be racial and economic conflicts. It will be subsequent to the fall of the king of the South that the king of the North will give his entire attention to the enforcement of Sunday as the day to be universally respected and exalted as the sacred day of worship for all men.

While as yet we see virtually no sign of the king of the North's prophesied determination to enforce Sunday sacredness, we do see quite some success in his pitting nation against nation and people against people. The time predicted by Jesus has come that...

Mark 13

⁸ ...nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

One of the king of the North's most outstanding achievements thus far toward the realization of his goals, was his execution of the so-called "Persian Gulf War," when Saddam Hussein of Iraq attacked the tiny, oil-rich nation of Kuwait. In the face of the coalition of nations under the leadership of the United States of America, the duration of the struggle was very short-lived. It began on January 16, and ended on February 25, 1991. By contrast, the Vietnam war was dragged on through approximately twenty weary years until it finally terminated in 1975.

Both of those wars can be seen as struggles between the king of the South and the king of the North. And both of them were fought out during the time of the end.

It would be well for students of prophecy to check the characteristics of each side of all the wars fought since 1798, in order to maintain an awareness of where the kings of the North and the

South are, what they are doing, how they are relating to each other, and what they are plotting for their futures.

It is not always possible to find a clear-cut answer awaiting the seeker for truth at the end of every line of study. This will be because the king of the North and of the South have not yet fully reached the state respectively described of each of them at this time. What we will find however, is that we are able to identify the king of the North by his principles of general operations.

But let us consider for a few moments each of the protagonists of those two wars in turn. Was one or both of those parties who were engaged in those bloody conflicts the king of the North, and could his antagonist be the king of the South? We will consider the United States of America and the remainder of the coalition of nations first. The total coalition was made up of the following nations:

The military coalition arrayed against Iraq consisted of: Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kuwait, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Korea, Spain, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In its largest overseas commitment since the Vietnam War, the United States deployed more than 500,000 troops, 1,800 aircraft, and approximately 100 ships.¹²⁸

There is no doubt about the United States of America being symbolized in Bible prophecy for therein is to be found a great deal of information to this effect.¹²⁹ This we shall study in greater detail when we reach this point in our contemplations of the glorious light shining from the book of *Revelation*.

In the meantime, however, we are seeking the identity of the United States of America in the last days. Is she shaping up to be the king of the South, or the king of the North, or could she be the third kingdom the one which appears as the “holy mountain”?

¹²⁸ *Grolier's Encyclopedia*, Article, “The Persian Gulf War.”

¹²⁹ See *The Great Controversy*, p. 579 and onward.

This holy mountain as we have already learned from the information provided earlier in the book of *Daniel*, is the holy kingdom of the eternal God, which cannot be the king of the South, but can only be the true king of the North. Therefore, the United States of America cannot be the king of the South or the true king of the North. She is however, the particular king of the North which is alluded to in these closing verses of *Daniel* 11.

Another piece of evidence which serves to confirm that the United States of America is the king of the North, is found in her ascendancy during this period, while the king of the South continues to decline in power and prestige. So it was that the United States of America, continually advanced in power, honor, victory, on the battlefields of earth whether directly or indirectly. The deadly wound is being healed in the restoration of papal prestige, and influence, not by a single stroke, made at a point in time, but slowly and surely even as a wound heals.

Another very specific event which fulfilled the prophecy that the king of the North would overwhelm the king of the South was fulfilled in part when Communism was replaced in East Germany, the Soviet Union, and other former communist states, by a democratic system of government. Since then, these countries have either affiliated themselves to the Western powers, or at least opened up to them.

At the present time we are waiting for the other nations of the world which belong to the king of the South, such as China, India, Iran and Iraq, etc., to crumble under the general pressure. The prophecy continues to be fulfilled, and will be complete before long.

It is most encouraging to find that we can look back over the past and see how far we have come along this series of prophetic waymarks that are being accurately fulfilled.

Some Will Escape

Before quoting *Daniel* 11:41, let us remember that the words printed in italics do not appear in the original Scriptures. Instead,

the translators inserted them because they thought them necessary in order to give the verse a proper sense as they understood it. Although the word “countries” appears in verses 40 and 42, it should be entirely omitted from *Daniel* 11:41. The text would then read:

Daniel 11

⁴¹ He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many shall be overthrown. But these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon.

The various elements in this prophecy are symbolic and not literal. These are:

- the Glorious Land,
- Edom,
- Moab, and
- the prominent people of Ammon.

The literal “Glorious Land” according to the report of the spies who spent forty days searching out the land, was a very fertile inheritance, well-watered, and productive of the best of fruit. That land of Canaan however, was but a transitory, earthly paradise which could only be “the Glorious Land” when the real Presence of God filled it. What did it symbolize? The true Glorious Land was, and forever will be, the true church of the living God.

This prophecy predicts the infiltration of the king of the North’s false teachings into the minds of church members. This will be another source on which apostasy will hungrily feed and grow. So in what way does the king of the North enter the true church? The Advent church was called to spread the gospel and Christ’s coming soon after the time of the end began. However, she lost her hold on the fundamental doctrines once held, such as the nature of Christ in the time of His incarnation.

Eventually all the forces of darkness will join in one vast confederacy of evil in their opposition to the Most High. But from the midst of this great apostasy, just as from every other apostasy before it, there will be those who successfully resist the great enemy

of truth, and escape out of bondage to the evil one. These escapees are listed for us as:

Daniel 11

⁴¹ ...Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon.

The literal Edomites were descendants from Abraham. They were the children of Esau, who was the son of Isaac, and they hated and warred against the children of Israel all their days until they finally disappeared from the earth. Similarly, Lot was the nephew of Abraham, and his two daughters were the mothers of Moab and Ammon who grew up to hate the children of Israel.¹³⁰ So all these races shared the same family background—the household of Abraham.

None of these nations exist at the present time, nor will they exist again right down to the close of human history. Since they have faded away from the face of the earth, the question arises,

“Whom do they represent in these last days? Who will escape out of the hand of the king of the North?”

They all shared the family background originally—the household of Abraham. His son was Isaac, whose son was Esau, whose sons were the Edomites who hated and warred against the children of Abraham all their days until they disappeared from the earth. In like manner Lot was the nephew of Abraham and his two daughters were the mothers of Moab and Ammon who grew up to hate the children of Israel with equal hatred.

The spiritual counterpart of these people are those who have a common spiritual heritage with those who walk in the way of truth and righteousness, but, having apostatized from the living truth, have become the bitter enemies of those who remain loyal to God. Although these apostates are enemies of the very worst kind, more so than the heathen, there will be some among this group who will come out when the loud cry is raised and will take their stand with the true church.

¹³⁰ See *Genesis* 19:31-38 for the story of the origin of both of these nations.

The great truth to be revealed in the closing up of the great controversy is the righteousness of Christ—the revelation of God’s holy character. This will be the antithesis of every principle by which Babylon the Great operates. This message will carry a convincing power of such effectiveness as to cause multitudes to decide for the truth, and a harvest of souls will be gathered into the kingdom of grace and glory. It will be reminiscent of the days of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the former rain. Here is a description of this startling development:

The Great Controversy, p. 390:

Notwithstanding the spiritual darkness and alienation from God that exist in the churches which constitute Babylon, the great body of Christ’s true followers are still to be found in their communion. There are many of these who have never seen the special truths for this time. Not a few are dissatisfied with their present condition and are longing for clearer light. They look in vain for the image of Christ in the churches with which they are connected.

As these bodies depart further and further from the truth, and ally themselves more closely with the world, the difference between the two classes will widen, and it will finally result in separation. The time will come when those who love God supremely can no longer remain in connection with such as are...

2 Timothy 3

⁴ ...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

⁵ Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.

So great will be the changes in the conversion of Edom, Moab, and Ammon, that it will be a most noteworthy event. So it receives special mention in this prophecy.

The Means to Victory

The next verses list a series of overwhelming victories on the part of the king of the North:

Daniel 11

⁴² He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

⁴³ He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels.

The things he will gain power over are:

- the land of Egypt,
- gold and silver,
- the Libyans and Ethiopians.

Determining the identity of each of these classes is not difficult or mysterious.

- Egypt, as we have already learned, is the wide-spreading power of Atheism;
- The treasures of gold and silver is an expression which includes every form of wealth known to man;
- The Libyans and Ethiopians represent those in heathen lands where, in ancient times, the gospel was completely unknown and idol worship filled the land.

We will now consider a list of the measures which the king of the North will employ in order to gather the whole world into a single confederacy, as prophesied in:

Revelation 13

³ And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

The Use of Military Might

The first power to be mentioned is the use of military might. This is the primary means of bringing the king of the South into total submission, as spelled out in:

Daniel 11

⁴⁰ At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.

But not all people on the earth will come into line by this means of force. And it would not suit the king of the North to be at the head of a depopulated world. Therefore, he does not intend to use military might to annihilate everyone.

The Power of Persecution

Instead, by holding up before them his incredible, battleground performances, he will seek to intimidate the remnant who survive his sweeping victories. In this he will again be triumphant as prophesied:

Revelation 13

³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

⁴ So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast saying, Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?

This paints a picture of extreme fear; of people great and small being thoroughly intimidated; of mighty men who have been reduced to the position where there is no fight left in them. Such is the intention and the power of persecution.

The time is fast approaching when the structure of a persecuting power will again be fully exposed to view. This will happen when unregenerate men are invested with power sufficient to enforce their will upon others. Then,

Daniel 12

¹ There shall be a time of trouble such as there never was since there was a nation.

The Power of Deception

The third on our list of devices employed by the king of the North is the power of deception. Whereas God is the Author of truth and open revelation, the king of the North is the custodian of dark mysteries. At the time of the end he will deceive many who are living on the earth:

Revelation 13

¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast.

The Power of Great Riches and Position

The fourth and last means used is the power of great riches, along with which must be listed the offer of position—the third temptation which Satan pressed upon Christ. That the king of the North will have this power is revealed in these words:

Daniel 11

⁴³ He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt.

Money has tremendous power. Down through the ages, millions have sold their allegiance for various prices—the most infamous being Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Christ for a mere thirty pieces of silver—and this will happen once again, especially during the going forth of the loud cry. Here is a confirmation of this coming event:

The Great Controversy, p. 607:

As the movement for Sunday enforcement becomes more bold and decided, the law will be invoked against commandment-keepers. They will be threatened with fines and imprisonment, and some will be offered positions of influence, and other rewards and advantages, as inducements to renounce their faith. But their steadfast answer is, "Show us from the Word of God our error..."

This is an extract from a paragraph describing the surging forward of the fourth angel's message. These words reveal how money and the offer of position will be used to tempt God's true people, and it gives their response to these inducements.

Through these very successful means, the king of the North will bring the entire world under his dominion. There will apparently be no one to stand in his way anymore. All opposition will have ceased. There will no longer be anyone to resist him, nor any other than himself to refer to. Even the so-called Christian churches will support him in the great, final coalition of church and state.

When this union has been consummated, the king of the North will gaze upon the kingdom, which will be the fruit of his ruthless

kingdom-building efforts, with the same terrible satisfaction as filled the heart of the ancient king of the North, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

But just as in those days of long ago there were a few who did not bow to his wishes, so again a remnant of faithful Christians will refuse to bow down to the current king of the North, thus threatening to destroy his total supremacy.

72. Only One Step Away from World Dominion

Messenger and News Review, November 2000

Daniel 11:44-45

This article includes some additions from the original unpublished draft.

Power Leads to Persecution

DANIEL 11:40-43 pictures sweeping victory after victory over every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, on the part of the king of the North, until the entire unbelieving world becomes subject to his awesome power. It is a daunting list of confederate forces that will be gathered together to ensure the ongoing authority and permanence of this mighty potentate. Other scriptures in the book of *Revelation* also reveal the same outcome for the whole earth in the last days of its history.

When this worldwide union is complete, the king of the North will reign supreme, just as did the king of the North of old, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. And just as all the kingdoms of this world bowed at the feet of King Nebuchadnezzar and pledged their allegiance, so this event will be repeated in the final stages of earth's history.

In both cases, the king of the North occupies a position of seemingly permanent impregnability. But this unholy ambition to be lord of all lords, and king of all kings, will fail to provide the world ruler with even fleeting satisfaction, for at the very moment when his hand is outstretched to grasp the glittering prize, it will be snatched from him forever.

Daniel 11

⁴⁴ News from the east and the north shall trouble him...

He will be unexpectedly intimidated by tidings arriving from the east and the north which will cause him such terrible anxiety that he will decide that it cannot be ignored under any circumstances;

⁴⁴ ...therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many.

In ancient Babylon, when King Nebuchadnezzar set up the golden image to test the allegiance of his subjects, only to find that there were three Hebrews who resisted his command, he abandoned himself to an exhibition of rage such as is commonly resorted to in a desperate effort to preserve authority.

Daniel 3

¹³ Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego...

¹⁹ Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: therefore he spoke, and commanded that they should heat the furnace seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

²⁰ And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

He used the power of force to punish those into submission who dared to openly resist his ambition. Similarly, at the end of time, when the king of the north finds his universal authority challenged, the persecutions of the past will be repeated.

Wherever unregenerate people are in command of any part of the world, persecution is certain to manifest itself in one of its varied forms. And the more power there is in the hand of the oppressor, the greater the persecution to which those under that power will be subjected. So, when a king has absolute power, he will persecute mercilessly. This principle of cause and effect can be seen throughout history.

During his reign, King Nebuchadnezzar demonstrated his absolute control of the lives of his subjects by threatening them with certain destruction in the fiery furnace if they refused to render him unquestioning obedience. He was able to carry out such threats because he had the power and the determination to do so.

But when the Holy Spirit through the faithful ministry of the three Hebrews took away that determination and replaced it with God's will and purpose, the persecution ceased—at least for the time being.

In like manner, the long-protracted persecutions of the Dark Ages were forced upon anyone who refused to conform to the will of those who had the power and the determination to compel everyone either to obey or die. It is fortunate for us that among the countless millions of the earth's population, there have been enough faithful ones who have preferred to die rather than disobey the divine laws. Their faithful obedience has served to maintain an open lifeline between earth and heaven so that all who might enter in could do so.

If the earth should ever have become totally emptied of righteous people at any time, it would have destroyed itself, as in the days of Noah.

Enmity Between Light and Darkness

The unrighteous are unaware of this danger, for they see themselves, through the various theories of evolution, as being self-generated and thereafter self-sustaining. There is no place in their philosophies for the working of an Almighty Creator by whom the entire universe was called into existence. Instead of being humble and teachable, the unregenerate are proud and stubbornly set in their ignorance. They are very confident that they are successfully enlarging the borders of knowledge and coming closer to the secret of how to live without dying.

The real truth is that as iniquity abounds more and more, the grasp on God's eternal realities becomes weaker and weaker, the light becomes dimmer and dimmer, and the world's proximity to eternal death comes nearer and nearer.

It is a fact, however little appreciated, that all light and life are borrowed against probationary time. And it is only because Christ died on Calvary that it is possible for us to live at all. This is the witness which the proud and unregenerate do not wish to hear, and this is also the reason why they become violent when the gospel is presented to them.

Unfortunately, the reaction of many becomes even more violent when the message of living righteousness comes to them person-

ally, and offers to flood the soul with life, light, and faith. The work of the gospel can only be successful when it first removes the presence of death, and implants in its place the radiance of life and light. The dethronement and eradication of the forces of death and darkness must precede the installation of the life which, flowing out of the Everlasting Creator into him, establishes eternal life in those who seek it according to the correct principles from its true Source—He who is Alpha and Omega, He who has no beginning and no ending.

Jesus Christ came into this world so that whosoever would might inherit that life and thus live eternally. Thus He said:

John 10

¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

After sacrificing so much so that men might be the recipients of this incredible deliverance, Christ's sad lament is that men were not willing to come to Him that they might receive the light which is in Him. He said:

John 5

⁴⁰ But you are not willing to come to me that you may have life.

Thus our Saviour expressed the longing which drove Him with relentless determination to save as many of us as would accept His unspeakable gift.

It requires living faith to grasp and receive the gift of everlasting life. Men are able to perceive that they are face to face with death, but when it comes to them, they have no capacity for laying hold of the life of which they must take possession if they are to live forever.

Let it never be forgotten that our salvation involves much more than being repentant for sinful deeds of which we have been guilty. The acquirement of perpetual life, requires nothing less than a total elimination of evil, death-dealing forces until only a vacuum remains. Then into the space thus provided must be in-

stalled the actual life of the Saviour. Repentance and pardon most certainly are involved, but if we fail to progress beyond this point we remain lost.

Satan understands this. Therefore, he permits no opportunity to slip through his hands which can be employed to keep men and women cut off from the Life-Giver.

In addition, as predicted in these verses from *Daniel* 11, he will bring four or five great pressures on mankind in his utter determination to place himself as the supreme king of the whole world.

Satan's Tools For Unity

I will now present a list of the measures which the king of the North will employ in order to gather the whole world into a single confederacy.

1. MILITARY MIGHT

The first power to be listed will be the use of military might. It is the primary means of bringing the king of the South to total submission as laid out in:

Daniel 11

⁴⁰ At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.

2. INTIMIDATION

But not all people on the earth will come into line by this means. Furthermore, it does not suit the king of the North to be at the head of an empty world. Therefore, he does not intend that those who are not crushed by military might should be utterly annihilated.

Therefore, by holding up before them his incredible, battle-ground performances, he will seek to intimidate the remnant left behind by his sweeping victories. In this he will again be triumphant as prophesied:

Revelation 13

³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

⁴ So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast saying, Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?

That is a picture of extreme fear, of people great and small being thoroughly intimidated, of mighty men who have been reduced to the place where there is no fight left in them. Such is the intention and the power of persecution. The time is fast approaching when the structure of a persecuting power shall be fully exposed to view. As stated above, it will be when unregenerate men become invested with power sufficient to enforce their wills upon their fellowmen.

Daniel 12

¹ ...there shall be a time of trouble such as there never was since there was a nation.

3. THE POWER OF DECEPTION

The third on our list of devices is the power of deception. While God is the Author of truth and open revelation, he, the king of the North, is the custodian of dark mysteries by which in the time of the end, he will deceive those who live on the earth:

Revelation 13

¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast.

4. RICHES AND PROMOTIONS

The fourth on my list is the power of great riches along with which must be listed the offer of position—the third temptation which Satan sought unsuccessfully to press upon Christ. That he will have this power is revealed in these words:

Daniel 11

⁴³ He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt.

Money has tremendous power. Down through the ages, millions have sold their allegiance for various prices—the most famous being Judas Iscariot’s betrayal of Christ for a mere thirty pieces of silver—and they will yet do it especially during the going forth of the loud cry.

Here is one confirming prediction of this coming event. This statement is an extract from a paragraph describing the surging forward of the fourth angel’s message. These words reveal the part which money and the offer of position will play, and the response God’s true people will give to these inducements.

The Great Controversy, p. 607:

As the movement for Sunday enforcement becomes more bold and decided, the law will be invoked against commandment keepers. They will be threatened with fines and imprisonment, and some will be offered positions of influence, and other rewards and advantages, as inducements to renounce their faith. But their steadfast answer is: “Show us from the word of God our error”—the same plea that was made by Luther under similar circumstances.

Through these very successful means, the king of the North will bring the entire world under his dominion. There will be no one to stand in his way anymore. All opposition will have ceased. There will no longer be anyone to resist him, nor any other than himself to refer to. Even the so-called christian churches will support him in the last great coalition of church and state.

When this union has been consummated, the king of the North will gaze upon the kingdom which will be the fruit of his ruthless kingdom building efforts, with the same terrible satisfaction as filled the heart of the ancient king of the North, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

Tidings from the East and North

But just when it seems that world dominion is in his grasp, tidings from the east and the north will cause him terrible anxiety:

Daniel 11

⁴⁴ But news from the east and the north shall trouble him.

There is no difficulty in determining what the tidings were from the east and the north which so greatly troubled the ancient king of the North. Another kingdom was threatening the Babylonian empire. It was the Medo-Persian empire whose general, Cyrus, and his troops were marching against Babylon.

Close to one hundred years before his birth Cyrus was named by God, through Isaiah, as the man through whom His righteous judgments would fall upon that wicked city. Let us now consider those remarkable prophecies as found in the book of *Isaiah*. As we review these predictions, let it be understood that they were not a picture of God's manipulation of human events but were, on the contrary, the natural outworking of cause and effect.

Isaiah 44

²⁴ Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and He who formed you from the womb: I am the Lord, who makes all things, who stretches out the heavens all alone, who spreads abroad the earth by myself;

²⁵ Who frustrates the signs of the babblers, and drives diviners mad; who turns wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolishness.

²⁶ Who confirms the word of His servant, and performs the counsel of His messengers; who says to Jerusalem, You shall be inhabited, to the cities of Judah, You shall be built; and I will raise up her waste places;

²⁷ Who says to the deep, Be dry! And I will dry up your rivers;

²⁸ Who says of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and he shall perform all my pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, You shall be built, and to the temple, Your foundations shall be laid.

The Lord, through His prophet Isaiah, did not stop with the announcement of the conqueror through whom the mighty kingdom of the River Euphrates would be utterly destroyed, but pro-

ceeded to detail what he, and the troops under his command, would achieve in order for that victory to be in Israel's favor:

Isaiah 45

¹ Thus says the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held—to subdue nations before him and loose the armor of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut.

² I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron.

³ I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the Lord, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel.

⁴ For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel my elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known me;

⁵ I am the Lord, and there is no other; there is no God beside me. I will gird you though you have not known me.

The accuracy with which these predictions detail the fall of Babylon is quite impressive. On the fateful night when Babylon fell, that point in the defenses on which the king no doubt felt that he could most safely rely, was the closure and the safe locking of each of the pairs of the massive, bronze, river doors. As long as the doors were securely locked, as he assumed they were, he knew that his mighty city was secure and he could devote his time to abandoned feasting and revelry.

But the guards whose work it was to keep those doors shut and safely guarded, had rendered themselves quite incapable of carrying out their orders by joining in the stupefying revelry of that fateful night. Had they been as alert as normally, the soldiers of King Cyrus would have marched in under the walls along the river banks, only to find themselves with no choice but to march out again.

But that could never be, for the Lord who sees all that the future holds, had unveiled the events of that coming disaster for the king of the North. The events foretold in *Isaiah* 44:24-45:5 happened just as they were prophesied.

Although it appeared, according to human assessment, that Babylon would last forever, God's word that she would be overthrown was fulfilled to the very letter. That city, which was titled,

"Babylon, the Impregnable,"

—had the confidence that she would live and reign forever. This expectation was based on the one hand upon the might of her armies, and on the other, on the adequate area of land within the city on which could be grown sufficient food to sustain both Babylonian and beast indefinitely.

Add to that the unfailing water supply which the River Euphrates provided, and it appeared that there would never be a famine in Babylon, or so the current king of the North, King Bels-hazzar, concluded.

But it is a fact of history that the great city of Babylon did fall, notwithstanding all the proud human wishes to the contrary. The same spirit governs every king of the North who comes on to the stage of history.

The So-Called "Eternal City"

It is significant that long after the king of the North had lived and died in Babylon, the city of Rome assumed a similar title:

"The Eternal City."

But she too is a temporary king of the North and will as surely and totally pass away as those who have gone before, as well as those who are yet to come, be they individuals, churches, or nations. There is no true eternal life in any of them, only the deceptive appearance of it.

The ultimate version of the city which claims immortality for itself, is labeled:

Revelation 17

⁵ MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

The same evil spirit governs each and every version of the king of the North—the way of death. There is no real life in any of

them, only the deceptive appearance of it. But, let no one dare to challenge her boastful, arrogant claims of being the actual source of life. Nevertheless, in their turn, each new incarnation of the king of the North must come to the place where he will come to his end without anyone to help him.

Consider the life history of every pontiff who has claimed for himself the title,

“God on Earth,”

—and it will be found that without any exception, that all have passed to their graves, or soon will do so. The true God is himself immortal, and therefore can never, nor will ever, die. Therefore, just as soon as we see a man fall dead into the dust of the earth, who has claimed to be God on earth, we are to know with infallible certainty that he is by no means God. In perfect safety, we can reject him as a miserable imposter. Neither light nor truth can come from such a person.

A Gradual Development

The condition of things existing in the kingdom of the North at the time of its fall did not develop in a single day. It had grown over quite a period of time in the face of the sternest warnings of what the fate of the city and its inhabitants would be unless they repented. The divinely ordained influences began to be felt in the very heart of kingdom of the king of the North at least as early as Daniel and his three brothers in the faith were positioned in the court of King Nebuchadnezzar.

At first, the presentation of the everlasting gospel in the almighty power of the Holy Spirit, softened and then converted King Nebuchadnezzar. Following his death however, his successors turned away from the principles of truth he had accepted. This did not exclude the continuation of the presence of the divine influence, because Daniel was still there. Furthermore, he held a position of very high authority in the realm after the death of the converted king.

It is a principle that the more powerfully the gospel exerts its influence, the more hardened the confirmed sinner becomes. This is because the application of the gospel either softens or it hardens, just as the same sun melts ice, but hardens clay. The continual resistance against the influence of Daniel's life of righteousness on the part of the king of the North brought its sure results.

In the spiritual world, the hardening process is so gradual as to be undetected until very advanced. Then, when it is usually too late to recover, the guilty sinner becomes aware of his terrible losses and would give anything to regain his squandered wealth. All too little does he realize that backtracking is, more often than not, an impossibility.

Think of the countless men and women of Bible history who truly apostatized. Very few were successful in coming back to the fold, except in such rare cases as King Solomon and Ishmael.

Breaking the Pattern of the Past

While there have been critical points in history when the crisis caused by the rejection of the gospel has seemingly reached a breaking point, and the church has been doomed to destruction, the purpose of God proceeds serenely on its way, knowing no haste and no delay.

While it shall have cost millennia in time and millions of martyred lives to have come to this place, having arrived at this point, there will be forever ended the sad pattern of advancement, followed by retreat into apostasy, followed by another forward progression of the enemy, and the king's of the North or of the South gaining the ascendancy.

The marring of God's work is highly visible during those centuries when Israel was a monarchy, from King Saul down to King Zedekiah. There were so many evil, idol-worshipping kings and people during this period that it is difficult to view it in a positive light.

Even after the marvelous, life-imparting ministry of Jesus and His faithful, consecrated apostles had elevated the stricken

church to where complete stabilized victory would have been theirs, they still fell away into depth of the dark ages. Until the bright lights of the Protestant Reformation appeared which began the dissipation of that darkness, men stumbled on searching for light but finding very little.

But the commencement of the Protestant Reformation marked the turning of the tide. While from time to time the members of the “city” and the “church” which He is building find themselves obliged to rest awhile, there has been, such as during the tarrying time of the parable of the ten virgins, no loss of any of the truth which has been unfolded up to that point has taken place.

Study the steady step-by-step progression of truth from the Reformation until the present day. We could concentrate on the teachings on prophecy, and second then on the Bible doctrines such as the State of the Dead, and thirdly on the great messages of righteousness. Of course, none of these themes should be separated from each other. They all have a single common Source, the same life-force and vitality within them and are closely related to each other.

The Final Showdown

God is the eternal Source of all light, knowledge, and wisdom, the Only begotten Son is the channel through whom all the light flows from the Father to the Son and, in turn, on to His precious children, the helpless receivers of that light.

It is an inspiring revelation that, though so often trampled underfoot, despised, ridiculed, and rejected, there is the most absolute certainty that in the end, God’s principles will emerge triumphant.

The bringing all things to such a state of irretrievability, requires that the great enemy be obliged to at first gather, and then commit his total forces together with those who support him to be examined to the most careful degree to determine the real nature of his claims against the government of God. He must expose himself once again as he did when Christ, the great champion of

His people hung on Calvary. The wonderful result was that the king of the North exposed his real character in the eyes of the loyal angels, and thus certified the success of God's eternal kingdom of light, peace and glory.

But the work was not fully accomplished back then. Men failed to see the full nature of Satan's devisings and that all sin, loss, and suffering come only from him. Satan, in his desperate determination to usurp Christ's place, will draw on his last reserves including all the nations of the earth until there is no one to help him. And so he will come to his end, and there will be absolutely no one to help or save him.

Never until the soon-coming future will the king of the North at last have the entire world at his command. There remains only the threat from the east and the north—which is Christ and His armies who fight and make war in righteousness. Who those armies are will be the subject of our next chapter.

73. The Fall of Babylon

Messenger and News Review, December 2000

Daniel 11:44-45

This article includes some additions from the original unpublished draft.

IN OUR last chapter, we were able to identify King Cyrus the Monarch of Medo-Persia as he who generated the tidings from the north and the east.

However, in a chapter now well behind us, we chose to reject the geographical system of interpretation in favor of the symbolic. Our justification for this is founded on the principle that it is not where you are, but it is what you are, that makes you to be who you are.

Having settled the application of that principle in our minds, even though we might be unable for the moment at least to understand who is the king of the North and who is he who brings news from the east, we are ready to advance in our knowledge of these things.

King Herod and Tidings from the East

To aid us in our understanding, there is available a very distinct re-enactment of the various elements and events involved in the king of the North's being greatly disturbed when tidings reached him of news from the east whereupon he went forth in fury and slew a great number of the innocent.

Let us dwell for a moment on the prediction God gave to Isaiah:

Isaiah 45

¹¹ Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and His Maker: Ask me of things to come concerning my sons; and concerning the work of my hands, you command me.

¹² I have made the earth and created man on it. I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host I have commanded.

¹³ And I have raised Him up in righteousness, and I will direct all His ways; he shall build my city and let my exiles go free, not for price nor reward, says the Lord of hosts.

This prophecy is a direct description of the work of both Cyrus and the promised Messiah. Jesus Christ is the One whom the Father has personally commissioned to reveal the beauty and perfection of the Father. Jesus is the Almighty Creator who is revealed in the previous chapters—He had been raised up by God in righteousness and it was His commission to set His people free.

But it is also true that Cyrus would build God's city, and would permit His exiles to go free. This he would do, neither for price nor reward. He also had been raised up by God in righteousness, and he would be directed in all his ways by the Lord. Looking beyond the earthly type of Cyrus, the only being who completely fits this description is the mighty Prince who stands up for His people.

Daniel 12

¹ And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which stands for the children of your people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time your people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

In *Daniel* 11:44 reference is made to the king of the North, of whom we read that:

Daniel 11

⁴⁴ Tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him.

These troubles were generated for Babylon by Cyrus. Although the Babylonian king in those days was very confident that his would be an eternal kingdom, he was troubled by these tidings of approaching danger.

Similarly at a later time, when the coming of Christ to this world was announced, this news was "tidings out of the east" which brought troubles to the reigning king of the North in that day. Thus the prophecy was fulfilled again in the visit of the wise men to Jerusalem and Bethlehem to find the infant Prince of Peace.

This piece of history was enacted in the visit of the wise men to Jerusalem and Bethlehem to find the infant Prince of Peace. Let us

compare the last verses from *Daniel* 11, with the story of the wise men from the east to see how accurately the one is the repetition of the other.

The record of the visit is found in *Matthew* 2:1-13. Here we find the king of the North being so disturbed by tidings from the east, that he went forth in fury and slew a great number of innocent children. The tidings reaching the ear of King Herod were:

Matthew 2

¹ Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold wise men from the east came to Jerusalem,

² Saying, Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.

By the permission of Rome, Herod was king over the peoples of Judea at this time. As such, he was a representative of the king of the North. We can accurately identify him as a king of the North, not because of where we find him, but by his character.

When Pharaoh voiced his atheistic rejection of God in the presence of Moses and Aaron, he spoke for the entire nation. Thus his confession of what he was, placed both him and his people in the category of the king of the South.

In like manner, Herod stood as a representative of the people. Apart from the scattered few who were still faithful to the living God, all were possessed of the same evil spirit as each other. More or less at heart, they were all liars and murderers, people of like spirit who inhabited Judea, and reigned from Jerusalem.

When there was a stirring in the east, and the Christ-child was born, the king of the North had very good reason to be alarmed or deeply troubled. King Herod had no illusions as to what the outcome would be for his kingdom of unrighteousness, a kingdom perpetually beset by the deadly fear that another, either by stealth or by violence, was about to usurp his most prized positions and accumulations of wealth, or even take his life itself.

The tidings from the east were the intimation that this Child was to grow up to be the King of all kings, and Lord of all lords. He would champion the cause of truth from victory unto victory until one pulse of peace would bind the universe in an everlasting unity and harmony.

Though King Herod did not realize all the implications of the wise men's search for this rival to his throne, yet that particular king of the North could not ignore such a positive threat. And so we read in the Scriptures,

Matthew 2

³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

What then was his response? He gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together and inquired where the Christ was to be born. In their reply, the Jewish leaders referred him to *Micah 5:2*, the prophecy which explicitly identified Bethlehem as the birth place of the coming king.

In their answer to the king, they spoke the truth as far as they knew it, and Herod believed them. Then, this king of the North responded by manifesting himself in the usual garb of his character—that of a liar—in preparation for the execution of his final rebellion against God and His people. That final, merciless act, was his attempt to destroy the coming King completely and eternally.

To achieve this, he first pretended to desire to show Him all reverence. This strategy was designed to hide his true intentions. Then he ordered the destruction of all the baby boys born in the Bethlehem area from two years and under, covering the period of the time it was thought the Saviour would be born. After Herod had eliminated all those whom he considered might be a candidate for the throne of the king of the North, great was the sorrow and loud were the lamentations which followed in Israel as a consequence.

Character of the King of the North

The prophecy of *Daniel* 11 is a wonderfully clear revelation of the character of the king of the North. At first he is seen to be a great liar,¹³¹ and then as a terrible slayer of God's people.¹³² His ascent to the throne is slippery with the blood of others, and no sacrifice is considered too great for him to demand of others so that he might come into possession of his unholy ambitions. He demonstrates the spurious cross of Satan—the exaltation of self, no matter what the cost be to others. His is the very antithesis to the cross of Christ.

When any king of the North is advised that an active phase of the everlasting gospel is in operation, invading the hearts of his subjects, and thus threatening his dominion over sinners, he is greatly disturbed and roused to take positive measures against such a threat. This has been the response of the king of the North in every age ever since righteous Abel was slain by his brother Cain.

Throughout history, whenever tidings from the east and the north have caused trouble, he has responded by going forth with great fury to destroy as many as he can, and he has been all too successful on many occasions. Sometimes this has resulted in so great a slaughter, that unless those times had been shortened and the persecutions halted, there would have been no flesh saved.¹³³

Wherever he is to be found, sooner or later the king of the North will always act according to the same pattern. Throughout the millennia since he first came into existence, right down until the ultimate showdown, his slippery pathway may be traced. Finally, he will meet his end with no one to support his cause anymore. But in the meantime, we have to develop the ability to identify the deceiver accurately, despite his many disguises.

¹³¹ *Daniel* 11:27, 30, 32.

¹³² *Daniel* 11:28, 30-35; 41, 44.

¹³³ *Matthew* 24:22.

Struggle Over Divine Order

In order to understand the behavior and character of the king of the North we need to go back to when sin began. Rebellion began on the issue of divine order, and this order was continually challenged by the events that occurred as evil developed.

We know that the mighty stream of life-giving forces, which extend to the farthest reaches of the universe, come from God, the everlasting Source of light, life, and power. In heaven, Lucifer accepted this simple fact, but he had a problem as well. He raised objections to the fact that nothing came to him or any other living creature except through Christ. Only through Christ were all the wonders of creation and the other mysteries made plain.

There is good reason for Christ's ministry being exclusive. The only Person who can qualify for the position of Connector must be both Creator and creature at the same time. This glorious combination is necessary in order to maintain a continual communication between God and His creatures. Throughout the entire universe, there was only one Being who was qualified to fill this position. By virtue of His dual nature, Christ stood closest to the ultimate Source of all light and truth.

Next to Christ stood Lucifer. The very highest position of power and authority available to a created being at that time was given to this covering cherub. He stood closest to God, where the light shines the very brightest. This brilliant covering cherub was the foremost angel in seeking to gain a deeper knowledge of the infinite One.

His efforts in this respect were not a problem, for God is very pleased with His children when they search into the mysteries of both science and salvation. In the earth made new nothing will be closed against the redeemed. As the centuries roll by, their acquirement of truth will be matched by their hunger for it and they shall be abundantly satisfied.

The Great Controversy, p. 677-678:

All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless

flight to worlds afar—worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God's handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation—suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator's name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed.

And he years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise.

In heaven, Lucifer was the foremost of all created beings in seeking the knowledge of the Infinite. We know this because he stood closest to God as one of the brilliant covering cherubs where the light to be found anywhere was the very brightest. This is also revealed in his name, Lucifer, which means "light bearer."

Only one Being stood closer to the Father, and that was Jesus Christ, who by virtue of His spotless Divinity being clothed with a creature nature, had access to God the ultimate source of all light and truth. He was God in the creature, the glorious combination which enabled communication between God and the created beings to be constantly maintained.

Lucifer did not understand this mystery. Looking upon his brightness and beauty, he could see no reason why he should not also share the privileges of Christ. Looking at things this way,

with his mind filled with pride, the only conclusion that he could draw, was that God was unfairly favoring Christ.

In Lucifer's mind, God and Christ were selfishly keeping vital information hidden from their subjects, the kind of information that would lead to them being exalted to equal positions with Christ. He now began to study God's mysteries with the aim to unlock this "forbidden knowledge" that would give him the power he craved.

How to Seek for Light

There is more than one way of seeking light and the position which goes with it. The two principal ways are:

1. To seek light in order to become a more effective servant;
or
2. To seek light in order to gain an advantage of power over others.

The first of these two ways brings only blessing and God's approval, while the second is the way of death and is loaded with the curse of the Almighty.

This distinction is laid out for us very clearly in the revelations given to the prophet Ezekiel about the king of Tyre. This king must have been so abandoned to the practice of iniquity that he was a fit symbol for Satan. In *Ezekiel 28* we find God's specific exposure of Lucifer's determined efforts and the bitter consequences of gathering light to himself in order to dominate others.

Ezekiel 28

¹ The word of the Lord came to me again, saying,

² Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord God: Because your heart is lifted up, and you say, I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods, in the midst of the seas, yet you are a man, and not a god, though you set your heart as the heart of a god

³ (Behold, you are wiser than Daniel! There is no secret that can be hidden from you!

⁴ With your wisdom and your understanding you have gained riches for yourself, and gathered gold and silver into your treasures;

⁵ By your great wisdom in trade you have increased your riches, and your heart is lifted up because of your riches),

⁶ Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you have set your heart as the heart of a god,

⁷ Behold, therefore, I will bring strangers against you, the most terrible of the nations; and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom, and defile your splendor.

⁸ They shall throw you down into the pit, and you shall die the death of the slain in the midst of the seas.

⁹ Will you still say before him who slays you, I am a god? But you shall be a man, and not a god, in the hand of him who slays you.

¹⁰ You shall die the death of the uncircumcised by the hand of aliens; for I have spoken, says the Lord God.

That the king of Tyre was not the actual devil in person is evident from the fact that while Lucifer had been one of the covering cherubim serving the divine government at its very heart, the king of Tyre had never been physically in the sanctuary in heaven. It is therefore to the author of rebellion that the following words were addressed:

Ezekiel 28

¹² Thus says the Lord God: You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

¹⁴ You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy Mountain of God, you walked back and forth in the midst of the fiery stones.

¹⁵ You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created till iniquity was found in you.

¹⁶ By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; Therefore, I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones.

Had Lucifer's attitude been to learn more about the mysteries of God as a humble, dependent receiver, with the intention of using the acquired knowledge for the blessing of others, he would not have been disappointed. But his proud determination to gain

knowledge about divine things with a spirit of mistrust and self-seeking was doomed to be frustrated.

Attempting to Take Christ's Place

Throughout history, Satan has labored tirelessly to gain the position he believes to be rightfully his, as a god. Time and again, he seemed to be almost successful in establishing himself in place of the Connector, Christ. But on each occasion he came short of his goal and was compelled to wait for another day of opportunity. The time is rapidly approaching, when, in sheer desperation, he must make his final stand. When that time comes, he will...

Daniel 11

⁴⁵ ...plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain.

This is precisely the position occupied by Jesus Christ, of whom the king of the North is the counterfeit. What is the meaning of the phrase,

Daniel 11

⁴⁵ ...plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain?

First, we notice that the language is symbolic. This is confirmed by the fact that there is not a single glorious holy mountain to be found on the earth today. This very mountain has already been introduced to us in *Daniel* 2:35 and 44, along with the information that a mountain symbolizes a kingdom. The kingdom itself may be righteous and everlasting, or corrupt and certain to pass away. In *Daniel* 11, the kingdom is described as “glorious” and “holy,” which are terms that can only be applied to the kingdom of God. Therefore, the “glorious holy mountain” symbolizes God’s eternal kingdom.

What do the seas represent? In Bible prophecy, seas represent people as it is written,

Revelation 17

¹⁵ The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.

In *Daniel* 11 is pictured the final effort on the part of our great enemy to restructure the kingdom according to his ideas of how it should be organized. He wants to replace Jesus Christ with himself. He wants to set himself between the everlasting Source and the dependent receivers. That is the all-important goal in Lucifer's heart and mind. He is determined to achieve this and will make no concessions.

He is totally committed to the absolute realization of his unholy ambition despite the sufferings he has brought upon himself, his followers, humanity, the loyal angels, God, and His beloved Son. In this heaven-daring rebellion, the enemy of God and man will attempt to plant the tabernacle of his palace between the people and the kingdom of God.

The orderly system by which light and power were transmitted to all created beings, was as follows: from God, the everlasting single Source of light, life, and power, there flowed the mighty stream of these life-giving forces to the farthest reaches of the universe.

It was not however with this simple fact that Lucifer had a problem. That to which he raised his objections was the fact that none of anything came to him or any other creature in existence except through Christ. The difficulty began for him, and developed in his mind to the point where it was nothing short of rebellion.

Through Christ and Christ alone all the wonders of creation and of salvation are made plain. There is good reason for His having an exclusive ministry. It is because in order to qualify to fill such a position, one must be truly the Creator while, at the same time having a creature nature. Throughout the entire universe, there was only one person who was this two in one—this God in the flesh—this humanity clothed with divinity.

This is a truth so unutterably profound that the coming eternity given to the most earnest study of it by the most powerful of minds will still not have learned all that there is to have learned of this theme.

We understand, of course, that the Everlasting Father has now many sons who have become so qualified, and that each and every one will occupy a position in the forthcoming kingdom that Satan originally demanded as his, but could not have because he was unqualified to fill it. The redeemed however will receive it because, through the saving, sacrificial ministry of Christ, they shall have become qualified to sit with Him on His throne.¹³⁴

The Tents of His Palace

But what about the “tents [or tabernacles] of his palace”? Certainly, these are not God’s sanctuary, for they belong to the destroyer, of whom it is said that he...

Daniel 11

⁴⁴ ...shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many.

The fact that he, the king of the North, is a devastating destroyer, proves that these are not the tabernacles of God. We have long since learned that God does not destroy no matter how attractive such a solution might be. Even if He could save His beloved Son and millions of His devoted followers from the cruelest of deaths, if only He himself would use His personal power to punish the wicked, He will never do so.

Instead, He permits the king of the North to advance the symbols of his supposed triumph to the point where he plants the “tents of his palace” between the seas and the glorious holy mountain. These “tents,” or “tabernacles,” are in opposition to the sanctuary of God in heaven. They must therefore be earthly sanctuaries, or churches, and their priests or ministers, which are set up to draw the attention of people away from Christ’s ministry in the sanctuary in heaven.

But at that terrible point where he has almost succeeded in his attempt to place himself and his worship between the people and Christ, he will come to an end so total that there will be none to support him. From that depth of absolute degradation, he will never rise again.

¹³⁴ *Revelation 3:21.*

End of the Counterfeit King of the North

Time after time since the fall of man, the malignant forces of the prince of darkness have closed in around the armies of the living God with overwhelming confidence that they would totally annihilate them. Each time, a wound has been administered so deadly and all-embracing that it appeared as if the end had come for God's cause in the world.

But instead, there arose a fresh manifestation of divine power which invested a new charge of life-giving energy into the situation, and righteousness began the ascendancy once more. This fact has been a very heartening feature of the struggle between light and darkness, and it guarantees the ultimate triumph of the interests of the Most High and His people.

The Eternal One will not permit our deadly foes to drag us down to utter and final destruction. He will cut short the repetition of the miserable "succeed and fail, succeed and fail" existence which has been the experience of His church in the past. There is coming such an end to the great controversy as will admit no further rebellion to mar the beautiful handiwork of the Creator. *Daniel 11:40-45* is the story of that climactic ending.

Obviously, the enemy, who is the Devil and Satan, will not yield the contest without an all-out struggle. He knows that this is his last hope, and that if he should fail to win this battle Christ will come, and that will be the end of him. Accordingly, he will sally forth with great fury to eliminate all opposition, no matter how many must be slain to ensure his success.

Let us remember that it is only people-power, money-power, and the terrible forces of nature upon which the wily foe can depend in his quest for supremacy. In contrast to this, God's people are dependent on none of these. They will ever find their source of strength in Him who leads forth the invincible armies of heaven to utterly vanquish every one of His mighty enemies.

The children of God do not fight with the same weapons as those employed by the unrighteous. In their struggle they follow

their Master, and together they make war in righteousness. The ten commandments are the expression of God's righteousness and, as such, define the limits of the behavior of his children. God has even declared that He will not use His almighty powers to kill anyone. It is not in Him to do such, for the law assures us that the righteous—including God himself—do not kill. How plainly this principle is laid out in the following statement:

The Desire of Ages, p. 759:

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.

The great, final showdown will reveal the merits or deficiencies of the one system above the other:

- The way of violence versus non-violence;
- The way of righteousness versus unrighteousness;
- The way of law-keeping against law-breaking.

The world knows only one way of solving the problem of personal security and achieving its selfish ambition, and that is through the use of force. Such was the course of action followed by King Nebuchadnezzar when he threatened the world with death in the fiery furnace should they refuse to bow to the great golden image.

In the coming terrible, world-wide reaction to the Holy Spirit's mighty ministry, the greatest fury ever to have been directed by rebellious humanity against God, His people, and His cause will be developed by the enemies of truth. It is written:

Daniel 11

⁴⁴ ...therefore he shall go out with great fury and annihilate many.

Wild and infuriated as King Nebuchadnezzar's terrifying performance was, it is nothing in comparison to the exhibitions of rage that will issue from the king of the North in the last days, before he comes to his end.

We can rest in the sure word of prophecy given to us through Daniel which promises us that the king of the North, like the king of the South who came to his end before him, will...

⁴⁵ ...come to his end with none to help him.

This is the assurance that the long-standing controversy will end with the victory of God—who prevails without ever resorting to the weapons of force. This victory will be achieved through the simple outworking of the principles of righteousness which will stand on their own merits.

It therefore behooves every one of us to absorb these principles now, while there is still time, so that we will be fitted for the final battle, and may be found to be without...

Ephesians 5

²⁷ ...spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Appendix: The Study of Daniel and the Revelation

By Ellen G. White

From: Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 112-119

Original Section Title: The Study of the Books of Daniel and the Revelation
(compiled from various publications, and from manuscripts of large circulation)

GOD'S Spirit has illuminated every page of Holy Writ, but there are those upon whom it makes little impression, because it is imperfectly understood. When the shaking comes, by the introduction of false theories, these surface readers, anchored nowhere, are like shifting sand. They slide into any position to suit the tenor of their feelings of bitterness....

Daniel and *Revelation* must be studied, as well as the other prophecies of the Old and New Testaments. Let there be light, yes, light, in your dwellings. For this we need to pray. The Holy Spirit, shining upon the sacred page, will open our understanding, that we may know what is truth....

There is need of a much closer study of the word of God; especially should *Daniel* and the *Revelation* have attention as never before in the history of our work. We may have less to say in some lines, in regard to the Roman power and the papacy; but we should call attention to what the prophets and apostles have written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit has so shaped matters, both in the giving of the prophecy and in the events portrayed, as to teach that the human agent is to be kept out of sight, hid in Christ, and that the Lord God of heaven and His law are to be exalted.

Read the book of *Daniel*. Call up, point by point, the history of the kingdoms there represented. Behold statesmen, councils, powerful armies, and see how God wrought to abase the pride of men, and lay human glory in the dust....

The light that Daniel received from God was given especially for these last days. The visions he saw by the banks of the Ulai

and the Hiddekel, the great rivers of Shinar, are now in process of fulfillment, and all the events foretold will soon come to pass.

Consider the circumstances of the Jewish nation when the prophecies of Daniel were given.

Let us give more time to the study of the Bible. We do not understand the word as we should. The book of *Revelation* opens with an injunction to us to understand the instruction that it contains.

Revelation 1

³ Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, [God declares,] and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

When we as a people understand what this book means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival. We do not understand fully the lessons that it teaches, notwithstanding the injunction given us to search and study it.

In the past teachers have declared *Daniel* and the *Revelation* to be sealed books, and the people have turned from them. The veil whose apparent mystery has kept many from lifting it, God's own hand has withdrawn from these portions of His word. The very name "Revelation" contradicts the statement that it is a sealed book. "Revelation" means that something of importance is revealed.

The truths of this book are addressed to those living in these last days. We are standing with the veil removed in the holy place of sacred things. We are not to stand without. We are to enter, not with careless, irreverent thoughts, not with impetuous footsteps, but with reverence and godly fear. We are nearing the time when the prophecies of the book of *Revelation* are to be fulfilled....

We have the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, which is the spirit of prophecy. Priceless gems are to be found in the word of God. Those who search this word should keep the mind clear. Never should they indulge perverted appetite in eating or drinking.

If they do this, the brain will be confused; they will be unable to bear the strain of digging deep to find out the meaning of those things which relate to the closing scenes of this earth's history.

When the books of *Daniel* and *Revelation* are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such glimpses of the open gates of heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realize the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart.

The Lord will bless all who will seek humbly and meekly to understand that which is revealed in the *Revelation*. This book contains so much that is large with immortality and full of glory that all who read and search it earnestly receive the blessing to those "that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein."

Result of True Study

One thing will certainly be understood from the study of *Revelation*—that the connection between God and His people is close and decided.

A wonderful connection is seen between the universe of heaven and this world. The things revealed to Daniel were afterward complemented by the revelation made to John on the Isle of Patmos. These two books should be carefully studied. Twice Daniel inquired, "How long shall it be to the end of time?"

Daniel 12

⁸ And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?

⁹ And He said, Go your way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

¹⁰ Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

¹¹ And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

¹² Blessed is he that waits, and comes to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

¹³ But go your way till the end be: for you shall rest, and stand in your lot at the end of the days.

It was the Lion of the tribe of Judah who unsealed the book and gave to John the revelation of what should be in these last days.

Daniel stood in his lot to bear his testimony which was sealed until the time of the end, when the first angel's message should be proclaimed to our world. These matters are of infinite importance in these last days; but while...

¹⁰ Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried,...the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand.

How true this is! Sin is the transgression of the law of God; and those who will not accept the light in regard to the law of God will not understand the proclamation of the first, second, and third angel's messages. The book of *Daniel* is unsealed in the revelation to John, and carries us forward to the last scenes of this earth's history.

Will our brethren bear in mind that we are living amid the perils of the last days? Read *Revelation* in connection with *Daniel*. Teach these things.

Unconquerable Forces Waiting

Those who eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God will bring from the books of *Daniel* and *Revelation* truth that is inspired by the Holy Spirit. They will start into action forces that cannot be repressed. The lips of children will be opened to proclaim the mysteries that have been hidden from the minds of men.

We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Many of the prophecies are about to be fulfilled in quick succession. Every element of power is about to be set to work. Past history will be repeated; old controversies will arouse to new life, and peril will beset God's people on every side. Intensity is taking

hold of the human family. It is permeating everything upon the earth....

Study *Revelation* in connection with *Daniel*, for history will be repeated....We, with all our religious advantages, ought to know far more today than we do know.

Angels desire to look into the truths that are revealed to the people who with contrite hearts are searching the word of God and praying for greater lengths and breadths and depths and heights of the knowledge which He alone can give.

As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study. The last book of the New Testament Scriptures is full of truth that we need to understand. Satan has blinded the minds of many so that they have been glad of any excuse for not making the *Revelation* their study. But Christ through His servant John has here declared what shall be in the last days; and He says,

Revelation 1

³ Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.

The books of *Daniel* and the *Revelation* should be bound together and published. A few explanations of certain portions might be added, but I am not sure that these would be needed.

This is the suggestion that I made to Elder Haskell which resulted in the book he published. The need is not filled by this book. It was my idea to have the two books bound together, *Revelation* following *Daniel*, as giving fuller light on the subjects dealt with in *Daniel*. The object is to bring these books together, showing that they both relate to the same subjects.

A message that will arouse the churches is to be proclaimed. Every effort is to be made to give the light, not only to our people, but to the world. I have been instructed that the prophecies of *Daniel* and the *Revelation* should be printed in small books, with the necessary explanations, and should be sent all over the world.

Our own people need to have the light placed before them in clearer lines.

The vision that Christ presented to John, presenting the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, is to be definitely proclaimed to all nations, people, and tongues. The churches, represented by Babylon, are represented as having fallen from their spiritual state to become a persecuting power against those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. To John this persecuting power is represented as having horns like a lamb, but as speaking like a dragon....

As we near the close of time, there will be greater and still greater external parade of heathen power; heathen deities will manifest their signal power, and will exhibit themselves before the cities of the world; and this delineation has already begun to be fulfilled.

By a variety of images the Lord Jesus represented to John the wicked character and seductive influence of those who have been distinguished for their persecution of God's people. All need wisdom carefully to search out the mystery of iniquity that figures so largely in the winding up of this earth's history....

In the very time in which we live, the Lord has called His people and has given them a message to bear. He has called them to expose the wickedness of the man of sin who has made the Sunday law a distinctive power, who has thought to change times and laws, and to oppress the people of God who stand firmly to honor Him by keeping the only true Sabbath, the Sabbath of creation, as holy unto the Lord.

The perils of the last days are upon us, and in our work we are to warn the people of the danger they are in. Let not the solemn scenes which prophecy has revealed be left untouched. If our people were half awake, if they realized the nearness of the events portrayed in the *Revelation*, a reformation would be wrought in our churches, and many more would believe the message.

We have no time to lose; God calls upon us to watch for souls as they that must give an account. Advance new principles, and crowd in the clear-cut truth. It will be as a sword cutting both ways. But be not too ready to take a controversial attitude. There will be times when we must stand still and see the salvation of God. Let *Daniel* speak, let the *Revelation* speak, and tell what is truth. But whatever phase of the subject is presented, uplift Jesus as the center of all hope,

Revelation 22

¹⁶ ...the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star.

Dig Deeper

We do not go deep enough in our search for truth. Every soul who believes present truth will be brought where he will be required to give a reason of the hope that is in him. The people of God will be called upon to stand before kings, princes, rulers, and great men of the earth, and they must know that they do know what is truth. They must be converted men and women.

God can teach you more in one moment by His Holy Spirit than you could learn from the great men of the earth. The universe is looking upon the controversy that is going on upon the earth. At an infinite cost, God has provided for every man an opportunity to know that which will make him wise unto salvation. How eagerly do angels look to see who will avail himself of this opportunity!

When a message is presented to God's people, they should not rise up in opposition to it; they should go to the Bible, comparing it with the law and the testimony, and if it does not bear this test, it is not true. God wants our minds to expand. He desires to put His grace upon us. We may have a feast of good things every day, for God can open the whole treasure of heaven to us.

