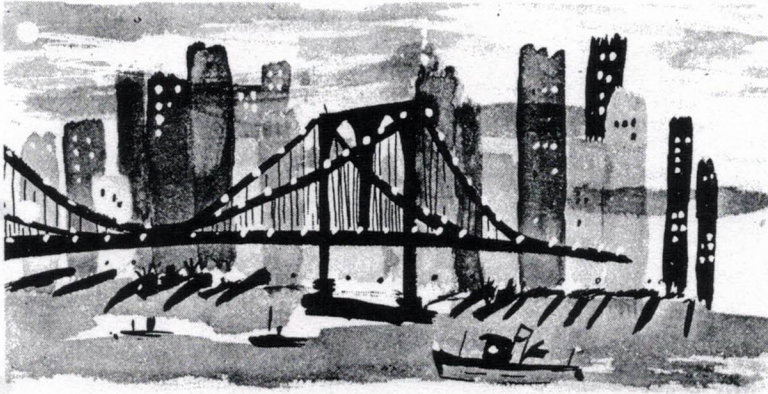


Read again

May 173-



"Watchman, what of the night?"

The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

Jesus stimulated the minds of the disciples by shattering their complacency. Their trust and hopes were in the Temple. After hearing Jesus declare to the Jewish hierarchy - "Behold your house is left unto you desolate,"¹ they showed Him "the buildings of the temple" "how [they were] adorned with goodly stones and gifts."² To their utter astonishment, Jesus replied, "See ye not all these things? Verily I say to you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."³ Silence reigned. It was not until they had retired to the Mount of Olives that they again asked Jesus any questions. And their questions revealed their thinking. If the temple was to be completely devastated, that had to be the end of the world. So they questioned Jesus - "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming and the end of the world?"⁴

In answering these questions, Jesus outlined certain specific *events* which were to take place, that His followers might know how to relate themselves to the times in which they would find themselves. We do well to consider what Jesus had to say. Note the events, He said would occur:

1) When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.⁵

When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains.⁶

2) Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven.⁷

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the seas and the waves roaring.⁸

3) And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.⁹

To understand these things, Jesus directed the disciples to the prophecy of Daniel stating - "Whoso readeth, let him understand." The prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem in Daniel is closely connected with the explanation Gabriel gave concerning the Seventy Weeks and the 2300 Days. The angel stated:

After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: [Here is where we often stop in our study, but not so the divine explanation] and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, [Again we stop at this point in our study] and for the overspreading of abominations He shall make it desolate, even unto the consumation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.¹⁰

In introducing this period of time, as a section of the 2300 Day period, Gabriel had stated - "Seventy weeks are determined upon [cut off for] thy people."¹¹ This was the time allotted to the Jewish nation as a special called people of God. In other words, this was the "times of the Jews." When then did this time as a favored nation end? When were the "seventy weeks" finished? The answer is 34 A. D. What took place? The stoning of Stephen. What caused the furor?

Stephen had been preaching in the synagogue of the Grecian Jews. His testimony was unanswerable. He was finally hailed before the supreme council and accused of teaching that *the Temple* would be destroyed.¹² In his defense, he clearly stated - "Solomon built Him a house. Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands."¹³ This was too much for the Sanhedrin to hear. They had heard with their own ears his teachings. Stephen was stoned to death without the approval of the Roman authorities.

This single event apparently involved one lone individual. The mainstream of Jewry was not effected. But in that one event, the Jewish leadership sealed the doom of a nation. The times allotted to the Jews - seventy weeks - were now completed. At the death of Stephen, one stood by watching - Saul of Tarsus. From that day, his life was never again the same. He had been convicted by the testimony and witness of Stephen. In the years that followed, he came to understand what had happened in that one event. Following the sermon in Antioch where the Jews "filled with envy" spoke against the gospel, Paul declared:

It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us.¹⁴

The times of the Gentiles had come. But the Jewish temple services continued on. It was business as usual at Jerusalem. God-fearers, and proselytes were still attending the synagogues for Sabbath worship. All outward appearances were contrary to the prophecy of Daniel 9:24. How was this to be understood? How was Paul to make it clear that no longer was the temple, and the city of Jerusalem to be the center of the hope of the Christian Jew? Prophetic time had been completed, and literal time was running out for the city of Jerusalem itself. In writing to the Romans, Paul called attention to the experience of Elijah. Elijah had been concerned, and thought himself alone, when there were seven thousand that had not bowed the knee to Baal. Then Paul concluded: - "Even so *at this present time also there is a remnant* according to the election of grace."¹⁵ The period of time between the end of the seventy weeks and the destruction of Jerusalem was the time of the gathering of a remnant of Israel from the doomed nation, and bringing in of wild olive branches into *one* tree based on the root of the "olive tree."¹⁶

Christ had given a sign - when the armies of Rome would surround the city - then those that believed might know that the destruction of the city was imminent.

This event was not based in time, *for time was no longer a test for the Jewish nation after 34 A. D.* The test was the gospel of truth as revealed in Jesus. But the event was not something that could be overlooked by those who accepted the truth as it was in Jesus. The Romans did come. Cestius surrounded the city with his armies. Josephus tells us that after several skirmishes, "He retired from the city, without any reason in the world."¹⁷ This was the signal, the event had occurred. The Christians left the city and fled across the Jordan river.

Christ gave other signs - the darkening of the sun, the falling of the stars. These have all occurred. The Dark Day was May 19, 1780, and the falling of the stars took place on November 13, 1833. These were specific historical events in time which cannot be gainsaid. What did they mark? The period of the 2300 Days was about to end in 1844. Soon Jesus was to come "in the clouds of heaven" unto "the Ancient of Days" to begin the Judgment in which He would receive a kingdom, dominion, and glory.¹⁸ The inhabitants of the world were notified by these events that something of supreme importance was about to begin. A parallel movement was raised up on earth to give men the interpretation of these things.

After 1844, *time would no longer be a test.* The angel of Revelation who held in his hand the open book of Daniel declared - "There should be time no longer."¹⁹ All understanding of prophecy based in a time sequence was ended. But there was still one more event which Christ designated for His servants to understand. Jerusalem was to be trodden under the foot of the Gentiles until "the times of the Gentiles" would be completed. After long centuries as Jerusalem and Judea passed from the control of the Romans, Saracens, Norsemen, Turks, Crusaders, and Arabs, finally a new state of Israel was established in 1948. But still the old city of Jerusalem was held by the Jordanians, until the Six Day War, when the victorious Israeli occupied the old city, and re-established the full boundaries

of Judea to the Jordan river on the East. This date was June 7, 1967! It was a literal event in history, even as all the other signs that Jesus gave. The times of the Gentiles are now completed. What is before us? The testimony of Jesus gives us another event to watch for its unfolding:

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.²⁰ ???

We are thus between two events - the times of the Gentiles having ended, and the decree establishing the papal Sabbath. How long will it be? We know not, for *time is no longer a test*. This time for us parallels the same time that Paul was concerned about which reached from 34 A. D. to 70 A. D. Could it be again the time for the gathering of a remnant? The Spirit of Prophecy speaks of a time in the closing work "for" [not "of"] the church, which is declared to be "the sealing time of the 144,000." Note carefully this reference:

The true people of God, who have the spirit of the work of the Lord, and the salvation of souls at heart, will ever view sin in its real, sinful character. They will always be on the side of faithful and plain dealing with sins which easily beset the people of God. Especially in the closing work for the church, in the sealing time of the one hundred and forty-four thousand who are to stand without fault before the throne of God, will they feel most deeply the wrongs of God's professed people.²¹

Again consider:

After the truth has been proclaimed as a witness to all nations, every conceivable power of evil will be set in operation, and minds will be confused by many voices crying, "Lo, here is Christ; lo, He is there. This is the truth, I have a message from God, He has sent me with great light." Then there will be a removing of the landmarks, and an attempt to tear down the pillars of our faith.²²

If words mean anything - "the witness to all nations" - must come during the "times of the Gentiles". This period ended June 7, 1967 - the event occurred. What has happened? It says - "After. . . Then." Have there been attempts to remove the

landmarks and to tear down the pillars of our faith? The most concerted effort has been the publication of the book - Movement of Destiny - which was approved by sixty leading scholars of the church. The book carried in its preface the official endorsement of the President of the General Conference, and the Vice President for the North American Division.²³ Then add to this the booklet - The Man the World Needs Most - which has been used in our evangelistic programs.

Where are we in the unrolling of the prophetic scroll? Note the words of the angel of Revelation 10. After stating that time should be no longer, the messenger of heaven to John declared - "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin [Greek - μελλη = about] to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets."²⁴ That mystery is Christ in us the hope of glory.²⁵ This will be finished in the sealing of the 144,000, who are to reflect the image of Jesus fully.²⁶

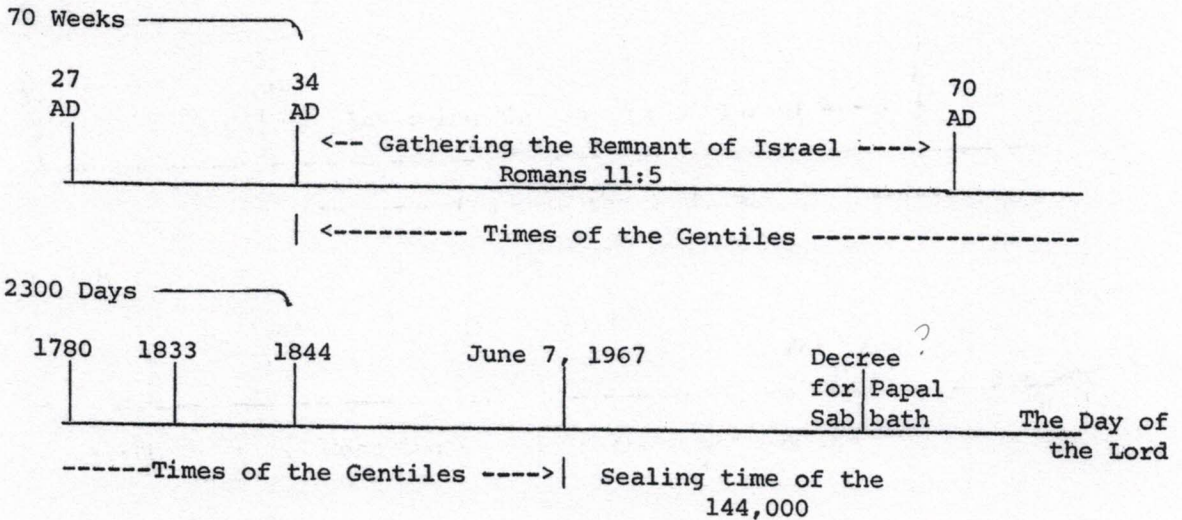
Then when the seventh angel does sound - what takes place?

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The Kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. . . And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.²⁷

Thus we are in a period of time of an unknown duration, from the end of the times of the Gentiles - June 7, 1967 - to the sign of the decree enforcing the papal Sabbath. But we can know what must be done. There must be a gathering a second time of a remnant from the midst of Israel, who will be sealed with the seal of the living God. The day of the Lord is about to begin. And only those whose lamps are trimmed and burning will enter into the festive inauguration of the kingdom.

- 1 Matthew 23:38
- 2 Matt. 24:1; Luke 21:5
- 3 Matt. 24.2
- 4 Matthew 24:3
- 5 Matt. 24:15
- 6 Luke 21:20-21
- 7 Matthew 24:29
- 8 Luke 21:25
- 9 Luke 21:24
- 10 Daniel 9:26-27
- 11 Daniel 9:24
- 12 Acts 6:9-15
- 13 Acts 7:47-48
- 14 Acts 13:46-47
- 15 Romans 11:5
- 16 Romans 11:13-17
- 17 Josephus. Wars of the Jews, Book 2, Chapter 19
- 18 Daniel 7:13-14
- 19 Revelation 10:6
- 20 Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, pp. 464-465
- 21 Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 266
- 22 Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, December 13, 1892
- 23 See An Interpretive History of the Doctrine of the Incarnation as Taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, pp. 82-87
- 24 Revelation 10:7
- 25 Col. 1:26-27
- 26 Ellen G. White, Early Writings, p. 71
- 27 Revelation 11:15, 18

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This issue of "Watchman, What of the Night?" is a thought paper in the purest sense. It is hoped that all who read will follow the example set by the Bereans, who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so." Acts. 17:11. Tremendous issues, relationships, and understandings are at stake!

Note carefully - The next issue of the thought paper will be dated, September, 1973, and will be mailed on or about August 15. If your address changes prior to that date, please let us know.

Due in a few weeks - The Holy Flesh Movement 1899 - 1901. Further announcement will be forthcoming.

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