

"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

LIFT UP YOUR HEADS (Out of the Sands)

One of the most controversial papers read at the Bible Conferences this past year was the presentation by the associate editor of the Review, Dr. Herbert E. Douglass. It was entitled, "The Unique Contribution of Adventist Eschatology." It was "billed" as the explanation as to why we are still in this world, and why the Second Advent of our Lord has been so long delayed. Dr Douglass, himself, in presenting what he termed, "the harvest principle," stated: "The reason for the delay in the Advent is contained in the harvest principle."¹

No one, I care not who he may be, nor how sincere his motives and intentions, can arrive at truth, and exclude from consideration those factors which the Lord Jesus Himself stated were to be signs. This the editor in his presentation did, and as a result made some very erroneous statements. He stated categorically that "Adventists do not see theological importance in. . . the annexation of Old Jerusalem in 1967."² Having made this exclusion, he then made this generalization - "No prophecy concerning world conditions remained unfulfilled a century ago except those that describe events that will take place after God decides His people are ready for these events to take place, such as the latter rain, loud cry, shaking time experiences, and those events which are reactions in the secular world to the unprecedented thrust of the church into the public arena."¹ By so *excluding*, and by so *concluding*, Dr Douglass was able to remove one of the objections which he

noted would be raised by his presentation of the "harvest principle". He admitted that in setting forth this principle as the explanation of the delay in our Lord's return, some would raise the question in regard to the Seventh-day Adventist Church's failure over these lengthening decades. He stated it thus: - "The question is sometimes raised as to how long the Church's failure can postpone the will and plan of the Lord for the Advent. That is, will there come a time when God's justice will demand that His mercy give way, recognizing that there is a time 'when the inhabitants of the earth have filled up the cup of their iniquity?'"³

The pivotal point upon which the Douglass presentation rests is the exclusion, Does the annexation of Old Jerusalem in 1967 have any bearing on our present position?

The servant of the Lord gave some very specific counsel to editors - counsel which apparently the associate editor overlooked. She wrote in 1901:

In the twenty-first chapter of Luke, Christ foretold that which was to come upon Jerusalem, and with it He connected the scenes which were to take place in the history of this world just prior to the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.⁴

In analyzing this counsel, it might be argued that the servant of the Lord was merely stating that Jesus, in replying to the disciple's dual question in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world,⁵ was simply mingling signs that would be connected with the two events. There could be some merit in such an argument, for a study of the parallel accounts in Matthew 24, and Mark 13 reveals that this is exactly what Jesus did. But in the specific counsel given to editors, the servant of the Lord singles out Luke - omitting the mention of Matthew and Mark - and specifically states that what was to come upon Jerusalem was connected with scenes to take place just prior to the coming of the Son of man the second time. And it is in Luke *only* that the specific sign is given that Jerusalem would be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles is fulfilled.⁶ Because

Jesus gave the sign, and then in the Testimony of Jesus we are counseled specifically in regard to that which "was to come upon Jerusalem" as recorded in Luke, no student of eschatology (study of last day events) dare exclude this factor from his study, and expect to arrive at truth.

While the inclusion of this specific sign given in Luke gives validity to the very objection which the editor wished to remove by its exclusion, namely, the failure of the church, we should, before pursuing that factor, carefully analyze what is recorded in Luke 21. This we shall do in this thought paper.

It will be impossible to quote verbatim the verses in Luke 21 in such a condensed form as is followed in the writing of these thought papers; therefore, it is suggested that you study carefully the outline noted with your Bible open to Luke 21.

Luke 21:5-7 gives the setting which brought forth Christ's prophetic outline of the future. In verses 8-19 we find general signs, plus what will happen to God's people as a result of their witness for the truth's sake. Beginning with verse 20, and continuing through verse 24 is the specific outline of events which were to occur in regard to Jerusalem - its destruction and its control by Gentile powers till a specific time. Then follows references to major signs in the sun, moon and stars - verse 25 - with a description of the break-up of the nations of earth. In verses 28 - 36 is found warning and admonition as how to relate to the fulfillment of the signs that would be observed. In the heart of these verses is found that definite pronouncement of Jesus which has caused much explanation with the lengthening shadows of time. Said Jesus, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away."⁷ And when all that Jesus said is considered - involving Jerusalem - these words take on new and significant meaning. Consider their import.

Jesus had stated - "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."⁸ The Roman armies came. In 66 A. D.,

Cestius surrounded the city of Jerusalem. Then he suddenly withdrew his Roman legions. To those who understood and believed the words of Jesus, this was the sign of Jerusalem's imminent destruction. They fled the city and the province. Four years later, Titus resumed the siege, and Jerusalem was taken with terrible carnage resulting literally in "days of vengeance." *Thus the very generation which saw the specific sign - "Jerusalem compassed with armies" - did not pass away till all things in regard to Jerusalem's destruction were fulfilled!*

Jesus gave some other signs - in the sun, moon and stars. He declared - "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven."⁹ These signs occurred. The Dark Day was May 19, 1780. The stars fell, November 13, 1833. What did they signify? What were they saying to the inhabitants of the world? Note this illuminating statement from the pen of inspiration:

And while wholly unconscious of their condition and their peril, the church and the world [prior to 1844] were rapidly approaching the most solemn and momentous period of earth's history, - *the period of the revelation of the Son of man*. Already had the signs which Christ Himself had promised, - the sun clothed in darkness by day and the moon by night, - declared His coming near.¹⁰

In 1844, the Son of man came in the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days to receive His kingdom.¹¹ The generation which saw the signs in the sun, moon, and stars did not pass away until the longest time prophecy in the Bible - Daniel 8:14 - which marked the day when Christ would come before the Ancient of Days was fulfilled. The generation that saw the specific signs lived to hear the proclamation that those with eyes of faith saw - Jesus entering into the Most Holy place for the final atonement. *Thus the generation that saw the signs did not pass away until the time of "the period of the Son of man" commenced.*

Then Jesus gave one final sign - Jerusalem would be trodden down of the Gentiles "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."⁶ In 1967, the armies of the

victorious Israeli re-established Jewish rule over Old Jerusalem. So it is to this day, in spite of all the political maneuvering, and another Jewish-Arab War. Whether such will continue is not now the question. The fact is that the sign that Jesus gave as recorded by Luke, has occurred.

In all solemnity read - *"This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled."* The generation that saw the Roman armies surround Jerusalem did not pass away; neither did the generation that saw the major signs in the heavens pass away till Jesus entered His final ministry, and neither will this generation which has now witnessed the return of Jerusalem to Jewish control pass away till all things will be fulfilled, and Jesus will come in the clouds of glory to take the Kingdom awarded to Him in the judgment session before the Ancient of Days. Indeed lift up your heads - your redemption draweth nigh!

After noting the fact that we should consider the twenty first chapter of Luke, the messenger of the Lord wrote:-

Mark the words: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."⁴

¹Herbert E. Douglass, "The Unique Contribution of Adventist Eschatology", p. 15, North American Division Bible Conferences, 1974

²Ibid., p. 6

³Ibid., p. 14

⁴Ellen G. White, Counsels to Writers and Editors, pp. 23-24

⁵Matthew 24:3

⁶Luke 21:24

⁷Luke 21:32-33

⁸Luke 21:20

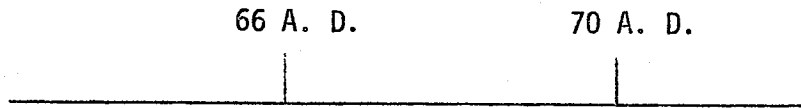
⁹Matt. 24:29

¹⁰Ellen G. White, Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 4, p. 195

¹¹Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

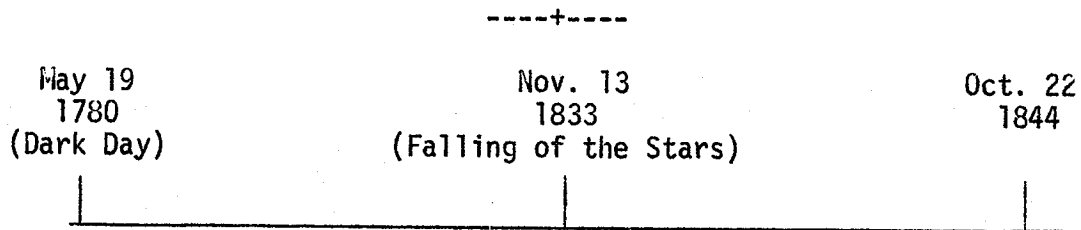
++++++

A Graphic Representation of the Message of Luke 21.



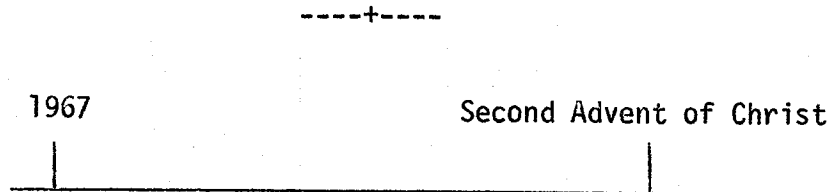
Luke 21:20 - "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."

The generation that saw this specific sign, saw the event fulfilled!!!



Luke 21:25 - "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars"

The generation that saw these signs also lived to hear the proclamation of what the signs signified - the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of Days. See Daniel 7:13-14. Also Footnote #10 of the thought paper.



Luke 21:24 - "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." Luke 21:32-33

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:28

----+----

