

"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

EZEKIEL'S KNOTHOLE!¹

Ezekiel, chapters eight and nine, constitute one vision, and should be studied together, though an arbitrary chapter division has been made in the translation as found in our King James Version. No doubt there was a current application for the prophet saw "sins that were practiced in Jerusalem."² But we are here concerned with a secondary application to the present time because "Satan is working that the history of the Jewish nation may be repeated in the experience of those who claim to believe present truth."³ What lessons can we learn from this vision of Ezekiel?

The prophet was taken from the company of his captured countrymen in Babylon and in the Spirit set down in the temple courts at Jerusalem so that he could see the mercy of Jehovah still exercised toward the obdurate rebels claiming to be the chosen people of God, yet despising His leniency and departing further from His service and worship each day. The God of Justice MUST soon deal according to their misdeeds!

If Ezekiel were living today, the Spirit would have brought him to the vicinity of the General Conference offices in Takoma Park. Such is the import of the analogy. In Jerusalem, the spokesman for Jehovah was invited to look carefully about at the evils within the church, and the prophet did not have to journey far to see too much for his delicate spiritual sensibilities.

At the North Gate was placed an image of a particularly revolting nature. The New English Version calls it the image of Lust; the King James Version names it, Jealousy. Certain it is that it represented personality traits that should be en-

tirely foreign to the loyal followers of Jehovah. And why the North Gate? Satan had said - "I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the North."⁴ Mount Moriah, the site of Solomon's Temple, was called the Mount of the Congregation. Satan had succeeded very well in Ezekiel's time. Has he now brought about a repetition of Judah's downward trek to perdition in our own church in accordance with his long-laid plans?

The prophet was permitted to consider only briefly the image to selfish desires. Brought next to the wall of the temple (General Conference office at Jerusalem), he discovered a knothole and was invited to look within. The narrow hole was enlarged at the angel's insistence so that the prophet might observe clearly all he should see and report. What a sight! Surrounded by the odor of sanctity - the cloud of incense from their censers - were the seventy elders engaged in secret adoration of ~~the most hateful and disgusting of the idols of Judah's neighbors. Why the seventy?~~ Moses had chosen seventy as counselors and administrators in his day.⁵ In Ezekiel's day, this was none other than the entire General Conference Committee!

The vile objects of worship portrayed around the walls were well known objects of adoration among the Baal worshipping neighbors of Judah. Observe that the Seventy had set these up "in the chambers of their imagery" - evidently not for public display - but nevertheless secretly adored. Do we have any modern idols secretly set up among us? Surely WE wouldn't do THAT! Let us look about in the chambers of OUR imagery and see what we see. We read:

No outward shrines may be visible, there may be no image for the eye to rest upon, yet WE may be practicing idolatry. It is as easy to make an idol of cherished ideas or objects as to fashion gods of wood or stone. Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal.⁶

Could we see in this day as Ezekiel saw in his day, and with God-given insight see OUR idols as heaven sees them, would we be able to consider ourselves superior in

spirituality to the seventy elders of Judah? Have WE renounced the idol of worldly possessions, the worship of academic degrees, the desire for public acclaim, the quest for admiring subordinates - possible sycophants?

From the contemplation of the secret sins of Judah's spiritual leaders, Ezekiel was directed to greater offenses to Jehovah. At the door of the temple on the side looking toward the image of unregenerate Self were a group of women "weeping for Tammuz". Just who was Tammuz? The perfect lover-boy, Adonis of Phoenician mythology, whose day of worship was marked by sexual excess, particularly distasteful to loyal followers of Jehovah. Does history have a repeat performance in our midst? Do any sisters in following modern fashions expose too much of the anatomy thus calling attention to the parts having to do with sexual gratification? - and are they surprised by the natural reaction to such exposure! "Obedience to fashion is pervading our Seventh-day Adventist churches, and is doing more than any other power to separate our people from God."⁷ Evidently in the eyes of Jehovah this sin was more abhorrent than the secret sins of the leaders.

In the ascending scale of abominations divulged to the horrified prophet there remained yet another of a nature particularly repugnant to Jehovah. Israel had been instructed according to the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple to pray toward that place.⁸ Daniel was careful to do so.⁹ Hence, the position of the worshippers as was shown to Ezekiel was indicative of the very greatest insult that they could render to their God. In the area between the porch and the altar, sacred in the performance of the ministerial duties, were twenty-five men worshipping the sun toward the East. Consider the import of this. Here were priest-ministers consecrated by the most solemn of dedicatory rites to the service of Jehovah, yet they bowed in the Oriental manner - not a mere inclination of the head, not by resting upon both knees only - but by resting on both hands and knees with the forehead to

the earth. In doing so they presented not only the back, but the backside to the temple and altar of Jehovah in open defiance of Divine instructions, even as any other Baal (Evangelical) worshipper would do. Why will our leaders - at least some - urge that we join Baal devotees insofar as possible? Why will our local pastors - an ever growing number - join with, and hold office in, the local ministerial associations? And why will modern priests of Baal be invited into the pulpit to conduct worship for the people on the Sabbath? Such practices, whether joining in worship with, or permitting such to officiate at the Altar, were plainly forbidden by Jehovah.

Now look back. From the insight end of our knothole, can we find in the chambers of OUR IMAGERY any of the offensive idols found among the Baal worshippers? My favorite Scottish poet wrote:


O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us.¹⁰

Are there not on Sunday morning, excellent sermons by prophets of Baal we would hate to miss? To what extent do we enter into their services? Do we not love Billy Graham? Could there be other idols? Re-think - - -

No outward shrine may be visible, there may be no image for the eye to rest upon, yet we may be practicing idolatry. It is as easy to make an idol of *cherished ideas* or objects as to fashion gods of wood or stone. Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshipping the true God as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place?⁶

"Let a man examine himself"¹¹

That this vision is vital to us is shown by the fact that these disclosures lead directly and at once to the sealing work, the cleansing of the church preparatory to the Latter Rain, the Loud Cry, and the Second Advent of our Lord. The time is NOW!

 ¹Ward P. Hill, author of our guest thought paper is a laymen residing in Lodi, California.

- ²Ellen G. White, Prophets & Kings, p. 448
³Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk. ii, p. 111
⁴Isaiah 14:13 ⁵Numbers 11:16
⁶Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, p. 173
⁷Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 647
⁸II Chronicles 6:21 ⁹Daniel 6:10
¹⁰Robert Burns, "To a Louse" (seen on a lady's bonnet in the kirk.)
¹¹II Corinthians 11:28

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Brother Hill Takes Us on a Single Volume Safari for IDOLS

Why go on a safari? Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, p. 164, par. 2
Identification of our game. Ibid., p. 250, par. 2
Difficult game. Ibid., p. 231, par. 2
A trophy buck. Ibid., p. 337, par. 2
A sneaky creature. Ibid., p. 75, par. 2
Safari could be short. Ibid., p. 205, par. 1
Where game once abounded. Ibid., p. 190. par. 4. Could be again. Let's go hunting!

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"ADVENTIST INNOVATION" - This is the title that the editor of Christianity Today (April 11, 1975, p. 21) gave his book review of God Is With Us. This book written by Jack W. Provonsha was published by the Review & Herald. Commenting on Provonsha's assertion - "Rational certainty is an impossibility" - Lindsell remarked, "Except this proposition itself, which must be a certainty." In other words, the only certainty to life is uncertainty, according to Provonsha. The editor further notes that "in his effort to lead men to God through men, Provonsha, who speaks constantly of the unity of God, does make mention of Jesus Christ, but nowhere gives the reader any reason to suppose that the Holy Spirit has any real part in the salvatory process or even that He exists." The final paragraph of the Review reads: - "This is the first Review & Herald book I have seen that departs from normative Adventist theology. Whether this was an accident or represents a decided trend in the denominational stance remains to be seen." The Book Committee of the Review & Herald owes an explanation to the laity of the church whether this was an accident or not. When one realizes that Dr Provonsha teaches our medical students at Loma Linda University, there is little left to explain why so many depart from the fundamental faith of the Advent Movement which has been the heritage of many from the family altar at home.

"An Agency of the Proud" - This is the title of the tape this month available of Elder David Bauer's recent presentation in Carmichael, California. The message covers three Cassette tapes, and can be obtained by writing direct to Mrs Jeanne D. Colston, Gen. Del., Al Tahoe Sta., South Lake Tahoe, Calif., 95702. For the three tapes, the cost post paid will be \$7.00.