



"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

ANALYSIS - II

In this thought paper we continue the analysis of the prophecy of Jesus as found in Luke 21:24. What does the fact that "the times of the Gentiles" have been fulfilled in this generation before our eyes mean to us? What is God saying to us? This is the all-important question.

Our spiritual forefathers who were faced with questions concerning their own experience as they had related to the message of 1844, turned to the study of the sanctuary to find enlightenment. From the Heavenly Sanctuary they received light which assured them of God's leading in their past experience and revealed to them their present duty resulting from God's action in the Sanctuary above. Of this we read:

The subject of the sanctuary was the key which unlocked the mystery of the disappointment, showing that God had led His people in the great Advent movement. It opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, and revealed present duty as it brought to light the position and work of God's people.¹

The key - the Word - produced faith in the hearts of this little company of Advent believers, and they came to understand what was to be "the closing work of the church". This likewise is described by the servant of the Lord in these words:

Another class [after 1844] firmly held that the Lord had led them in their past experience; and as they waited and prayed to know the will of God, they saw that their great High Priest had entered upon another work of ministration, and, following Him by faith, they were led to understand also the closing work of the church, and were prepared to receive and give to the world the warning of the third angel of Revelation 14.²

We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the leading of the Lord, and His teaching in our past history. We, too, must look to the sanctuary to find, if possible, what God is saying to us by permitting this sign - the fulfilling of the times of the Gentiles - to come to pass. In 1844, the Ancient of Days caused "thrones to be placed", and the judgment to sit.³ We have understood this to be the beginning of the Final Session of the atoning work of Christ as the High Priest in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary. There from above the Cherubim, in a special sense, the decisions the Eternal would be pronounced according to the intercession of the Son of man. We have also understood that when the Son of man would cease His intercession, probation's hour would close, and all human destiny would be fixed.

It is obvious that human probation has not ceased with the completion of the "times of the Gentiles." Can we, therefore, find in the Bible a revelation of any specific activity on the part of God in the sanctuary above that takes place prior to the close of probation that would have a dynamic bearing on the work of God in the earth? There is such a prophecy. Note what it states in Ezekiel 9:

He cried also in mine ears with a *loud voice*, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, . . . and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar.

And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, *whereupon He was*, to the threshold of the house. And He called to the man clothed with linen which had the writer's inkhorn by his side: And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.⁴

According to this prophecy, the Ancient of Days stands up from the cherub, "whereupon He was," and goes to the threshold of the house to command a special work to begin in the church. To use a human comparison - when an earthly judge arises prior to the final verdict of the court, the court goes into recess until

the judge is reseated. Is God, therefore, saying to us, that the Heavenly Court has gone into recess as of 1967, and that when reconvened, the final verdict will be rendered quickly? Do we have any counsel as to how this prophecy of Ezekiel 9 is to be understood? Note the following most carefully:

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*. This is forcibly set forth by the prophet's illustration of *the last work* under the figure of the men each having a slaughter weapon in his hand. One man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side.⁵

Several points need to be considered from this reference. Two groups of people are brought to view - "the true people of God" and "God's professed people." The work is defined as "the last work", "the closing work for the church." How does this relate to the sign that the times of the Gentiles are up? Let us note this point.

To the Church was committed a special work - "the closing work of the church" (See quotation under footnote #2). This has been described in another reference:

In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchman and light-bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning message for a perishing world. On them is shining light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import, - the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance.⁶

This threefold message of Revelation 14 was to go to every nation - the Gentiles.⁷ (The same word for nations in the Greek is also used for Gentiles - $\tau\alpha\ \epsilon\theta\nu\eta$.) In a special sense, God appointed the Seventh-day Adventist Church as His instrument to give the final warning to the nations of earth. Thus when the times of the Gentiles or nations are fulfilled, there is only one of two conclusions to draw. Either the church has completed her work, or else the church has failed to do the task assigned, and God Himself has to enter the picture. The latter conclusion

is presented in Ezekiel, and God orders the closing work *for* the church to commence - the sealing of the 144,000 - so that He can complete through them the work which the whole of the church failed to do.

There is a further deduction to be drawn. In the reference found in Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 9, there is the reoccurrence of the word - "entrusted," and concepts meaning the same. To the Church "has been *entrusted* the last warning message for a perishing world." "The most solemn truths ever *entrusted* to mortals has been given to us to proclaim to the world." "God's people are to be true to the *trust* committed to them."⁶ How we have handled this sacred trust determines the decision to be rendered upon the Church in the sanctuary, for we read:

In the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist church is to be weighed. She will be judged by the privileges and advantages that she has had. If her spiritual experience does not correspond to the advantages that Christ, at infinite cost bestowed upon her, if the blessings conferred have not qualified her to do the work *entrusted* to her, on her will be pronounced the sentence, "Found wanting." By the light bestowed, the opportunities given, will she be judged.⁸

When God, therefore, recognizes that the city - spiritual Jerusalem or the church⁹ - has failed Him in doing the work "entrusted" to her, He arises and takes things into His own hands, and orders the sealing work to commence. Thus we can conclude that in 1967, God told us that the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a corporate body had been weighed in the balances of the sanctuary and had been found wanting. The eternal results to each member of the church will be how each relates to the decision of heaven in regard to the church as a corporate body. It is how one relates to God's revealed will that determines the destiny of each individual. Those who are sealed out of spiritual Jerusalem, the Church, are those that sigh and cry for all the abominations that have been done in the midst thereof. Those who do sigh and cry - have "held forth the words of life", "reproved, counseled, and entreated. Some who had been dishonoring God, repented and humbled their hearts before Him. But the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel, although many still

continued the forms of religion, His power and presence were lacking."¹⁰

Are there any outward events that occurred in the official actions of the church in 1967 which could cause the corporate body to pass over the unseen line of their probation, even as the Jewish nation stepped over that line in 34 A. D.? The answer is - Yes! Note the following facts:

Because the General Conference is responsible for a large pool of capital, the controlling investment and securities committee decided in 1967 to retain professional counsel. . . Lionel D. Edie & Company, Inc., of New York City, was chosen to do the research, analysis, and selection of securities [stocks and bonds] for the General Conference portfolio.¹¹

The Seventh-day Adventists have had representation on the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches since 1967. They have also been full participants in the annual meeting of the Secretaries of the various World Confessional Families. . . ¹²

It is the Faith and Order Commission which engages in doctrinal analysis of the differences separating the various confessions of Christendom with the view of finding common ground for fellowship. Since 1967, this commission has been holding study consultations in different parts of the world in regard to the Holy Eucharist so as to find a common basis so that all - Catholics and Protestants alike can celebrate the Lord's Supper together. (The Catholics call it the Mass.) At the World Council gathering in Uppsala, the official communion service held in the cathedral did see Catholic observers in attendance take part unofficially, and without any publication of the fact.¹³ We had observers at this gathering, including the editor of the Review.¹⁴ It would be interesting to know if any of the observers from the Seventh-day Adventist church took part.

We shall pursue our analysis of the times of the Gentiles as to its meaning and significance in the next thought paper - "ANALYSIS - III"

- ¹Ellen G. White, Spirit of Prophecy, IV, p. 268
- ²Ibid., pp. 271-272
- ³See Daniel 7:9-10 ARV
- ⁴Ezekiel 9:1-4
- ⁵Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 3, p. 266
- ⁶Ibid., Vol. 9, p. 19
- ⁷Revelation 14:6
- ⁸White, Op. cit., Vol. 8, p. 247
- ⁹Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 267
- ¹⁰Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 210
- ¹¹Robert E. Osborn, "Investment Practices of the General Conference", Spectrum, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1973, p. 52
- ¹²Gerald F. Moede, Commission on Faith and Order, World Council of Churches, Letter to M. Ireland, dated 27th March, 1974.
- ¹³Ibid., Letter dated February 8, 1974.
- ¹⁴See Review & Herald, July 25, 1968, p. 1

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

Adventist Representative - According to Gerald F. Moede, the representative of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the World Council of Church's Commission on Faith and Order is Dr. Raoul Dederen of Andrews University. Your tithe is used to help pay the salary of this representative.

Priorities for Ordination - Under a photo in the Review & Herald, March 13, 1975 appeared this caption - "Richard M. Davidson, president of the Flagstaff, Arizona, Ministerial Association and pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in Flagstaff, Winslow, and Page, was ordained to the gospel ministry during camp meeting in Prescott." p. 16.

What If? - The Zidonian Herald, Samaritan edition, had on a certain day in the year B. C. 865 carried the following news release: -"Jezreel, Imperial Palace. Elijah, president of the Ministerial Alliance of Baal, and prophet of Jehovah had a very friendly and profitable audience with King Ahab at the sixth hour today. Elijah remained as dinner guest of the King."

Bauer tape of the month - "Overcoming". Send direct to Mrs Jeanne D. Colston for your copy. The address is - Gen. Del. Al Tahoe Sta., South Lake Tahoe, California, 95702. The cost per cassette copy is \$2.50.

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