

# ~~The Great~~ The Fake Controversy

**New Revised, Third Edition**

**By Dirk Anderson**

An investigation into the teachings of Ellen White's *Great Controversy*

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Unless otherwise noted, Bible verses are from the King James Version.

Unless otherwise noted, references to *Great Controversy* are from the 1911 edition of that book.

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# PREFACE

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The preface of the 1886 edition of *Great Controversy* clearly states that:

Apart from the Bible, this book presents the most wonderful and interesting history of this dispensation, to the complete restitution of all things, that has ever been published.

Without giving credit to any other source or author on this earth, it goes on to say:

...we believe that the writer has received the illumination of the Holy Spirit in preparing these pages. ... the Christian experience of the author has been truly remarkable. From her childhood she was noted for her reverence and devotion and her love for the word of God. ... we believe that no one who knows what it is to hold communion with our heavenly Father, will fail to realize that the writer of these pages has drawn from the heavenly fountain, and received help from the Sanctuary.

In the light of those claims we have taken that early edition that does not give human credit to anyone and traced where each chapter, paragraph and sentence has come from. With the underlining we have done showing where all the copy work has come from, we have also underlined the Bible texts used. One can see that there is no room left for God to work his will or way on Ellen's mind unless we create a concept of that God that we have never had and few would be willing to accept. She was a human being and as such did what humans do in her position with her human knowledge: she copied what she wrote from others as all the proof shows. Any human being, atheist, non-believer, scholar could and has done the same as she has done. Indeed, some of those scholars did help her in the forming of the *Great*

*Controversy*, but did not claim the same contact with God that she did.

If one were to take the time, and some of us have, it can be shown and has been proven that Ellen was influenced and driven by the books she read, and was *inspired* by whatever *vision* others she copied from had. There is no evidence whatsoever in this world that God endorsed, approved, or influenced her to copy what she copied. If we claim such then we make God Himself a liar. In the light of this and other research on Ellen's works is it not time that we accept the fact that Ellen did not get any special *vision* or help from God directly or otherwise for what has been handed the world as "help from the sanctuary" and "heavenly fountain" above?

If we would say that she was "impressed" or "influenced by what she read" and was a very human being speaking for her time and place in history, we might save what good she and her helpers did. If not, we only continue to create a false prophet when her sayings have been proven wrong and tie her to a God that is too human to believe as an eternal God.

*Walter T. Rea*

# INTRODUCTION

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The year was 1994. I parked my car outside of an apartment building. I hopped out and strode briskly up to the front door of an apartment and knocked. The door opened a crack and a white-haired lady stared out suspiciously at this young man in a white shirt and dark tie who was thrusting a book towards her.

“Here is the book you requested, ma’am,” I said smiling.

“Thanks.” She half-mumbled and extended her hand.

“God bless you,” I replied and returned to my car.

That year I handed out over 1,000 free copies of Ellen White’s *Great Controversy*. It all started two years earlier when a small group of young, zealous SDA men got together and decided to share the “truth for the end times” in our city in Florida. At our own expense, we mailed out 110,000 small flyers offering a free copy of Ellen White’s *Great Controversy*.

Why? We were absolutely convinced this book contained God’s final warning message to the world. Our goal was to give “lost souls” (that is, non-Seventh-day Adventists) an opportunity to read this “heaven-sent warning.”

Yes, I was Adventist to the core. It was not uncommon for me to attend *historic* SDA meetings carrying my Bible in

one hand, and the *(New, Illustrated) Great Controversy*, in the other hand. I believed what SDA pastors and teachers whom I trusted had taught me—that Ellen White was a



*Dirk Anderson delivers another copy of The Great Controversy.*

Florida SDA Conference's  
*Florida Focus* magazine

prophet of God and her writings were just as inspired as the Bible. They reverently referred to her books as the “Spirit of Prophecy” and *good Adventists* did not question them. I felt privileged and awe-inspired to be part of the *only* true church—one with a modern prophet through whom God instructed His people.

I was living my life inside a bubble built by well-intentioned folks. I grew up attending SDA schools and they indoctrinated me over and over again into what they called “the truth.” I learned that all other denominations were Babylon and Apostate Protestantism. They told me that folks in those “fallen” churches would one day persecute and try to kill me for keeping Saturday as a day of worship. Thus, I grew up in the SDA bubble with a strong suspicion of anyone on the “outside.”

All that changed one day when a man named Dale Ratzlaff convinced me to examine the writings of Ellen White with an open mind. I have since spent over 25 years researching Ellen White. During that time the truth penetrated my mind. The illusion I was living under faded away as I discovered the reality of Biblical truth. As I started looking at the bright light of the Bible, the “lesser light” faded into nothingness.

If you are afraid of the truth, put this book down right now and never open it again. Because after you read this book, you will understand the awful truth and the terrible deception practiced in the making of *Great Controversy*!

*Brother Anderson*



# CHAPTER 1

## *Who Inspired Ellen White?*

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A brilliant idea for a book was born in 1858. The concept was to paint a panoramic view of human history to illustrate the great controversy raging between good and evil. This battle started before the world began, and finally concludes when the earth is cleansed of all evil. The author traced down through the events of Earth's history, showing how mankind has been engaged in an ongoing controversy with God. Then at the end of the book, the author plunged ahead to the future to unveil the final conflict between good and evil. In 1858, an Adventist published this book, which was entitled *The Great Controversy*. And who was that author? Ellen White? No, it was a man named Horace Lorenzo Hastings!

Many Seventh-day Adventists [SDAs] are stunned when they learn that in 1858, a Sunday-keeping Adventist named H.L. Hastings published a book entitled, *The Great Controversy Between God and Man: It's Origin, Progress, and Termination*. Even more intriguing is the fact that the book was published *before* Mrs. White's 1858 *vision* at Lovett's Grove in which she was supposedly given a view of the great controversy between good and evil throughout history.<sup>1</sup>

What an amazing stroke of coincidence that Ellen White would receive her *vision* right after H.L. Hastings published his epic book on the great controversy! What did Mrs. White see in that *vision*? She purportedly had a panoramic view of a great controversy raging between good and evil throughout the annals of human history! Was the timing of her "great controversy" *vision* simply mere happenstance? Is Hastings' book completely unrelated to her *vision*? Or could it be that

Mrs. White obtained her great controversy theme from Hastings rather than from visions?

## The Whites and Hastings

H.L. Hastings was no stranger to James and Ellen White. In the late 1850s, the Adventist community was still in its infancy. Leaders such as Hastings were well-known within the greater Adventist body. James White's familiarity with Hastings' writings is evidenced by the fact that the *Review and Herald* published three of Hastings' articles in 1854 and 1855, all of which were later incorporated into Hastings' *Great Controversy* book.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to being familiar with these articles, it is also probable the Whites read Hastings' book *before* Mrs. White's great controversy vision. On March 14, 1858, Ellen White was said to have received her famous "great controversy vision" at Lovett's Grove. Interestingly enough, a mere four days later, on March 18, 1858, a review of Hastings' *Great Controversy* appeared in the *Review and Herald* magazine of which James White was the editor. While there is no written record of Mrs. White reading the book, it is highly probable she at least read the articles in James' *Review*. From the evidence that will be presented later in this chapter, it would appear she was quite familiar with the book itself. In fact, it would have been unusual for her *not* to have read Hastings' book, being that he was so well known and respected among the early Adventists.<sup>3</sup>

Not long after the arrival of Hastings' book, the Whites published their own book focused on the theme of the great controversy. In September of 1858, the Whites' rendition of the great controversy appeared under the title *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 1. The third and fourth volumes of *Spiritual Gifts* appeared six years later in 1864, and expanded upon the 1858 volume. Later, in 1884, these writings were expanded upon further and republished as *Spirit of Prophecy* (volume 4). In 1888, the book was expanded upon and reprinted under

the title for which it is known today, *Great Controversy*. The book was revised a final time in 1911, and this version is sold today by the SDA Church.

While Hastings' book was a mere human production, Mrs. White wrote in the introduction to *Great Controversy* that her version of the great controversy came through visions. Some may suspect that by the final version of the book in 1911, Ellen White's *vision* from 1858 may have gotten a little fuzzy in her mind. However, Mrs. White assured her followers this was not the case, writing:

The book *The Great Controversy*, I appreciate above silver or gold, and I greatly desire that it shall come before the people. While writing the manuscript of *The Great Controversy*, I was often conscious of the **presence of the angels** of God. And **many times the scenes about which I was writing were presented to me anew in visions of the night, so that they were fresh and vivid in my mind.**<sup>4</sup>

This statement suggests that the book was the product of visions and divine instruction by God and His angels. However, did Ellen White *really* receive *Great Controversy* through visions? Or was she inspired by H.L. Hastings and other authors?

All serious scholars agree that Mrs. White's book is not a direct plagiarism of Hastings' book. It would, after all, have been a bit foolhardy for Mrs. White to plagiarize a book that was just advertised by James in the *Review*—a book so many Adventists were no doubt familiar with and had read. Therefore, how can one ascertain whether or not Mrs. White borrowed the ideas of her book from Hastings?

## Hastings' Book Used as a Template

While direct plagiarism of Hastings is scant, there is an astonishing similarity in the main themes, the topics, and the structure of his book and her book, including similarities in the introductions and closings. It appears Mrs. White

followed Hastings' *Great Controversy* as an outline or a template in developing her own *Great Controversy*, writing upon many of the same topics in the same order. (See Appendix 2)

One of the most formidable pieces of evidence of Mrs. White's dependence upon Hastings is the fact that there are instances where Hastings expounds on Bible events, adding his own conjectures that are not found anywhere in the Scriptures, and Mrs. White incorporates those *same* conjectures into her *inspired* writings. For example, Hastings speculates that when the animals entered the ark, the wicked were not impressed at all by that miraculous event. Mrs. White picks up this same extra-biblical idea and incorporates it into her version of the event. (See Appendix 2 for this and other examples)

### ***Improved Version of Hastings' Book***

In the review of Hastings' *Great Controversy* that appeared in the March 1858 *Review*, the author<sup>5</sup> pointed out that the book needed some improvements. James and Ellen would later take it upon themselves to make the necessary improvements to Hastings' book. The *Review* lamented, "We could wish he had reminded the revolters [*sic*] of a certain law that reposes in that ark."<sup>6</sup> Mrs. White remedied Hastings' lack of focus on the Old Covenant law when she published her version of the great controversy in *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 1. In chapter 28, "The Third Angel's Message," she addresses the importance of the law that resides in the heavenly ark.

The *Review* also expressed a wish that Hastings had spent more time, "on the points of man's rebellion, and the terms of reconciliation."<sup>7</sup> In her version of the great controversy, Mrs. White made up for these perceived shortcomings by writing two chapters dealing with these subjects: "Chapter 2, The Fall of Man," and "Chapter 27, The Sanctuary."

There is no doubt that Mrs. White's version of the great controversy differed from Hastings' view. She incorporated Seventh-day Adventism's distinct doctrines and interpretations of Bible prophecy into her book. Are these the parts of the book that came from her Lovett's Grove vision?

## **The Great Compilation**

*Great Controversy* is actually a "great compilation" from the writings of other authors, mostly without giving credit:

- Josephus' *The Jewish War*
- J.N. Andrews' *History of the Sabbath* and *Review* articles
- Jean-Henri d'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation*
- Sylvester Bliss' *Memoirs of William Miller*
- Henry Melville's *Book of Sermons*
- Uriah Smith's *Sanctuary, Daniel and Revelation*, and *Review* articles
- James White's *Life Incidents* and *Review* articles
- J.A. Wylie's *History of the Waldenses*

Many of Mrs. White's writings on prophecy found in later versions of the *Great Controversy* are a rehash of James White's book *Life Incidents*, first published in 1868. Comparisons done by Walter Rea show that "words, sentences, quotations, thoughts, ideas, structures, paragraphs, and even total pages were taken" from it and put into the 1888 version of *Great Controversy*.<sup>8</sup>

Interestingly, much of *Life Incidents* was taken primarily from J. N. Andrews' 1860 book entitled, *The Three Messages of Revelation XIV*.<sup>9</sup> Walter Rea explains that Ellen White's ideas about unique SDA doctrines ultimately originated with J.N. Andrews and Uriah Smith:

Andrews had begun to write about his own views of the great controversy in the early editions of the 1850 *Review and Herald*. There in the 1850s and 1860s both he and his brother in law, Uriah Smith advanced the ideas that Adventists came to accept as ideas coming from Ellen White, such as the Sabbath, the Sanctuary, 2300 Days, Judgment, much of the details of the second coming of Christ, the Millennium, the mark of the beast, the United States in prophecy, spiritualism as part of last day events and Adventism as the center of the great controversy and closing events. All of these subjects as well as others were written upon in the *Advent Review* in those early years...<sup>10</sup>

Thus, most, if not all, of the prophetic interpretations in *Great Controversy* were in place *before* Mrs. White's "great controversy" vision or the writing of her book. There is every indication that the teachings in *Great Controversy* originated in the fertile minds of J. N. Andrews and Uriah Smith—not from visions. Perhaps these men should be honored as the *real* prophets in the SDA sect.

While Mrs. White relied primarily on SDA authors for the prophetic section of *Great Controversy*, she relied on non-SDA authors throughout most of the historical section. It is certainly baffling as to why a "prophet" who received a vision of historical events would need to resort to historical authors for material and follow their writings in exacting detail, but that is what Ellen White did.

One non-SDA source of inspiration for Ellen White was the eminent 19th-century Swiss Protestant Reformation historian Jean-Henri Merle d'Aubigné. She plagiarized from his writings more than from any other author. SDA scholar William Peterson acknowledged this, writing:

Some of the earlier chapters of *The Great Controversy* are based almost exclusively on d'Aubigné—that is, **virtually every paragraph is a quotation, close paraphrase, or summary of d'Aubigné.**<sup>11</sup>

Her son, W.C. White, born in 1854, provides some insight into her dependence on d'Aubigné:

When I was a mere boy, I heard her [Ellen White] read d'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation* to my father. She read to him a large part, if not the whole, of the five volumes. She has read other histories of the reformation. This **has helped her to locate and describe many of the events** and the movements presented to her in vision.<sup>12,13</sup>

This candid admission from W.C. indicates Mrs. White read these books long before she later copied their content into *Great Controversy*. Indeed, Mrs. White used d'Aubigné's book to "describe many of the events" in chapters 4-12 and 14-15 of *Great Controversy*. No credit was given to d'Aubigné in the 1888 version of the book.

The evidence collected from years of research by Walter Rea and others demonstrates that most, if not all, of the content for the *Great Controversy* came from other authors. A synopsis showing the vast extent of the plagiarism problem is found in Appendix 3.

### Ellen White's Bookmaker

Marion Davis has been described as Ellen White's "bookmaker." Davis was a talented author who assisted Mrs. White in writing her books, articles, and letters for decades. Davis was tasked with putting together the 1888 version of *Great Controversy*. Another SDA author, Fannie Bolton, assisted her. E.S. Ballenger explains what happened as Davis got involved in revising the book:

[Marian Davis] often talked with Sister Fannie about it [revising the 1888 *Great Controversy*], and Sister Fannie found that **many of her ideas and expressions went into the book**. One day she expressed the opinion that the chapter "Modern Revivals" was too harsh, and afterward Marian Davis said Sister White and Eld. W. C. White wanted her to write out her ideas on the subject, that they might see them. She did so and Sister

Davis came to her afterward and said, “Sister White and her son say that your chapter will not do.” “Will nor do for what?” “For a chapter in *Great Controversy*.” “Of course it won’t do for a chapter in *Great Controversy*: it does not belong there. That writing and that thot [thought] is mine, and does not belong in the book.” But in spite of this, **many things that she had written were put into the chapter “Modern Revivals.”**<sup>14</sup>

Thus, one of the sources of inspiration for *Great Controversy* was Fannie Bolton.

## Plagiarism Discovered

John Harvey Kellogg explains how he discovered Ellen White’s plagiarism in the 1888 *Great Controversy*:

When the *Great Controversy* came out and the chapters of the history of the Waldenses, my attention was called to it by somebody right away. I could not help but know about it because there was the little book, Wylie’s *History of the Waldenses* right there on the Review and Herald book counter, and here was the *Great Controversy* coming out with extracts from it that were scarcely disguised, some of them. There was disguise because words were changed; it would not have been proper to use quotation marks because words were changed in the paragraph so they were not exact quotations but at the same time were borrowed.<sup>15</sup>

Kellogg shared his concerns with W.C. White, but W.C. was unwilling to pull the plug on the project. The SDA sect knowingly went ahead and sold the books without any acknowledgement to the real authors. However, the sect later partially addressed the problem in the 1911 version. It cited d’Aubigné 41 times and Wiley 35 times.

Students of history soon discovered that Mrs. White did not merely copy historical facts from other authors. She also copied their moral lessons and even their mistakes.



## Laden with Errors

Historical gaffes and theological flaws abound within *Great Controversy*. Unfortunately, the scholarship of J.N. Andrews, Uriah Smith, and James White was not always of the highest caliber. The mistakes they made in their writings crept into *Great Controversy*. This presented a problem for SDA leaders. Errors in such a prominent book—one that had been promoted to the people as the product of “visions” and “angels”—could not be swept easily under the rug.

Foremost in discovering the errors were theology students and professors at the sect’s college. W.C. White lamented that the professors and students at Battle Creek College were “bringing into our work questions and perplexities without end, and always increasing.”<sup>16</sup> Behind closed doors, the sect’s leaders grappled with the serious problems they were discovering in *Great Controversy*. Before the release of the 1911 edition, Professor W.W. Prescott was called upon to review the book. After spending considerable time on it, he sent W.C. a lengthy 39-page letter containing suggested corrections, and concluded by saying:

Allow me to say in closing, that it has been quite a **shock to me to find in this book so many loose and inaccurate statements**; and what I have submitted for your consideration will indicate how much of an undertaking it will be to revise this book so that it will be in harmony with historical facts...<sup>17</sup>

Yes, it must have been quite a shock for Prescott to discover “so many loose and inaccurate statements” in a book that was supposedly written out from heavenly visions with the divine assistance of angels! He must have been appalled to discover it was out of “harmony with historical facts.”

While some of Prescott’s 105 changes were rejected for unknown reasons, over half were included in the 1911 revision of the book. Thus, Prescott could add his name to a growing list of individuals who supplied material for the book. W.C. White was given the unenviable task of

explaining to the sect's followers why a prophet's words were out of alignment with historical facts. He wrote:

On pages 50, 563, 564, 580, 581, and in a few other places where there were statements regarding the Papacy which are strongly disputed by Roman Catholics, and **which are difficult to prove from accessible histories**, the wording in the new edition has been so changed that the statement falls easily within the range of evidence that is readily obtainable.<sup>18</sup>

It is clear from this that the brethren rewriting the book had little confidence in Ellen White's production unless it was backed up by a historical document. To avoid future embarrassment for the sect, no "vision-inspired" history would be carried forward into the 1911 version without historical facts to support it.

One example is found on page 272 of the 1888 edition, in which Mrs. White writes that the St. Bartholomew's massacre began with the tolling of a bell at the "palace." Mrs. White reportedly heard this bell tolling in a vision.<sup>19</sup> Professor Prescott pointed out that the signal actually came from an entirely different location. He said it was "given by the ringing of the bell of the church of St. Germain."<sup>20</sup> After some discussion, the brethren decided the best way to handle this discrepancy was to drop the location from the 1911 edition.<sup>21</sup>

## Cannot Live Up to the Claims Made for It

*Great Controversy* has been marketed to the SDA flock as a supernatural and divinely inspired message. In the introduction, these bold claims of inspiration are presented:

**Through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the scenes of the long-continued conflict between good and evil have been opened to the writer of these pages.**<sup>22</sup>

**As the Spirit of God has opened to my mind the great truths of His Word, and the scenes of the past**

**and the future**, I have been bidden to make known to others that which has thus been revealed - to trace the history of the controversy in past ages...<sup>23</sup>

Mrs. White makes it abundantly clear that she wrote the book with the assistance of angels and visions:

**While writing the manuscript of *The Great Controversy*, I was often conscious of the presence of the angels of God.** And many times **the scenes** about which I was writing were **presented to me anew in visions** of the night, so that they were **fresh and vivid** in my mind.<sup>24</sup>

**God gave me the light contained in *The Great Controversy*...**<sup>25</sup>

Events in the history of the reformers have been presented before me.<sup>26</sup>

When I am using my pen, wonderful representations are given me of past, present, and future.<sup>27</sup>

Her son, W.C., assures the sect of the divine origin of her books:

You ask if Sister White was dependent upon history as any other writer would have been and having read that history and being acquainted with it she wrote the history appearing in these books. **I answer emphatically, no. The scenes presented to her were very comprehensive.**<sup>28</sup>

These statements paint the picture of a prophet who received divine visions of events throughout history and then wrote those out in *Great Controversy* with the supernatural guidance of God's angels. However, the immense volume of plagiarism, along with the presence of serious errors in the book, points to a quite different origin. It reveals a fake prophet who got her inspiration more from other authors than from supernatural sources. Rather than angels helping her, Smith, Andrews, Davis, Bolton, and Prescott aided her.

Rather than witnessing scenes in vision, she viewed them on the pages of d'Aubigné's and Wylie's books.

## A Rehash of Other's Writings

In 1919, a conference regarding the *Spirit of Prophecy* was secretly held among SDA leaders. At this private conference, the sect's leaders grappled over how *Great Controversy* came into being:

B. L. House:- As I understand it, **elder J. N. Andrews prepared those historical quotations** for the old edition [1888 *Great Controversy*], and Brother Robinson and Brother Crisler, Professor Prescott and others furnished the quotations for the new edition. **Did she write the historical quotations in there?**

A.G. Daniells:- **No.** ...

W.W. Prescott:- You are touching exactly the experience through which I went, personally, because you all know that **I contributed something toward the revision of *Great Controversy*. I furnished considerable material** bearing upon that question. ... When I talked to W.C. White about it (and I do not know that he is an infallible authority), he told me frankly that when they got out *Great Controversy*, if they did not find in her writings any thing on certain chapters to make the historical connections, **they took other books, like [Uriah Smith's] *Daniel and the Revelation*, and used portions of them...**<sup>29</sup>

Sister White had more than God and the angels assisting her. The other brethren in the sect not only supplied her with material but also incorporated that material into her book.

Today's *Great Controversy* is a *great compilation* made by SDA writers and theologians, not a prophet of God. McAdams stated it best when he announced at the special 1980 meeting of SDA leaders in Glendale, California:

If every paragraph in the book *Great Controversy*, written by Ellen White, was properly footnoted, then **every paragraph would have to be footnoted.**

Even the guardians of Ellen White's reputation—the Ellen G. White Estate—have been forced to admit that at least half the book was copied from others:

There was no question in Ellen G. White's mind about the overall inspiration of the *Great Controversy*, although possibly **50 percent or more of the material in the book was drawn from other sources.**<sup>30</sup>

## Purpose of the Book

Although the introduction to *Great Controversy* provides no hint that Mrs. White relied on human sources of inspiration, in recent years, SDA leaders have admitted Mrs. White borrowed considerable material from other authors. However, they assure the sect's followers that they have nothing to worry about because the Holy Spirit was guiding those efforts.<sup>31</sup> While no one would expect *Great Controversy* to be infallible or perfect in every detail, one would certainly expect that a book written from visions—with the further aid of angels and the Holy Spirit—would be free from major blunders. Mrs. White made great claims about the inspiration of this book, so a reader should expect nothing less than an accurate book.

One way to demonstrate that Mrs. White obtained her material from others rather than from the Holy Spirit, angels, and visions, is to highlight the errors in *Great Controversy*, because, presumably, the angels would have alerted her to these errors. Through the remainder of this book, historical errors and theological falsehoods will be examined in detail so that the reader can make an educated decision regarding the inspiration of this book.

## Conclusion

While some find *Great Controversy* to be a thought-provoking book, it can hardly be considered an original work. All of the major themes in the book were developed earlier and written out by other authors, many of whom were non-SDA. Considerable material for the book was supplied by Prescott and assembled by Mrs. White's book editors. It is difficult, if not impossible, to point to any prophetic or historical fact that originated with Ellen White. The few original writings that she put in earlier versions of the book, such as her description of Satan having a physical body, were removed by the time the 1911 version was published.

The only conclusion that can be drawn is that if Mrs. White did indeed receive a vision at Lovett's Grove in 1858, it contained no new light that had not already been written out by other Adventists and non-Adventists.

There is one profound sentence from Hastings' *Great Controversy* that is **not** found anywhere in Ellen White's *Great Controversy* or any of her other writings:

**There is no other light than the Word of God.<sup>32</sup>**

Hastings did not believe in a "lesser light"—he believed in one light: The Holy Bible. As you proceed to the next chapters, comparing the doctrines of *Great Controversy* with the Bible and with historical facts, you will better understand the relevance of his statement.

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Years: 1827-1862*, 1 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1985), 366.

<sup>2</sup> H.L. Hastings, *Review and Herald*, December 19, 1854; January 23, 1855; February 6, 1855.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. White herself apparently thought highly enough of him to keep at least one of his books in her personal library. At her death Mrs.

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White had a copy of H.L. Hastings' book, *The Signs of the Times; or, A Glance at Christendom as It Is* (1863), in her personal library.

- <sup>4</sup> Ellen White, Letter 56, 1911, to F.M. Wilcox. (*Colporteur Ministry*, 128). It is easy to understand why Mrs. White appreciated the *Great Controversy* "above silver or gold." The sales of this book generated plenty of "silver and gold" to fill her coffers and those of her children.
- <sup>5</sup> The author of the review was most likely James White, since he was the editor. However, he was traveling during the time before the publication, so some have suggested the review may have been authored by Uriah Smith.
- <sup>6</sup> Unsigned book review published in the March 18, 1858, issue of the *Review*, vol. 11, #18.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> Walter Rea, *The White Lie* (Turlock, CA: M&R Publications, 1982), 222-224. See Appendix 3 for examples.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid. The full title of Andrews' book is: *The Three Messages of Revelation XIV, 6-12, and particularly The Third Angel's Message and The Two-Horned Beast*.
- <sup>10</sup> Walter Rea, Introduction to a manuscript entitled "Great Controversy" (1983).
- <sup>11</sup> William S. Peterson, "Ellen White's Literary Indebtedness," *Spectrum* (Autum, 1971): 55-72.
- <sup>12</sup> W.C. White, letter, July 23, 1911.
- <sup>13</sup> W.C. White, *Selected Messages*, book 3 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1980), Appendix A, 437.
- <sup>14</sup> E.S. Ballenger, *The Gathering Call*, Feb. 1932, 16-22.
- <sup>15</sup> J.H. Kellogg Interview with Geo. W. Amadon and A. C. Bourdeau, 1907.
- <sup>16</sup> W. C. White letter to L. E. Froom, January 8, 1928. See also *Selected Messages*, 3, 454-455.
- <sup>17</sup> W.W. Prescott letter to W.C. White, Apr. 26, 1910, cited in Desmond Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, A-224.
- <sup>18</sup> W. C. White, letter, July 24, 1911 (also 3SM, 436).
- <sup>19</sup> Arthur White, *Ellen White: The Later Elmhaven Years, 1905-1915*, 6, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1982), 330.
- <sup>20</sup> W.W. Prescott, letter to W.C. White, April 26, 1910.
- <sup>21</sup> "Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day," *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, extracted on 3/18/2014.
- <sup>22</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1950), x.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., xi.
- <sup>24</sup> Ellen White, Letter 56, 1911.

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<sup>25</sup> Ellen White, Manuscript 23, 1890.

<sup>26</sup> Ellen White, Letter 48, 1894.

<sup>27</sup> Ellen White, Letter 86, 1906. 4MR (1990), 66.

<sup>28</sup> W. C. White, Letter to J.C. Stevens, July 25, 1919 (White Estate).

<sup>29</sup> “The Bible Conference of 1919,” *Spectrum* 10, no. 1 (1979): 23-57.

<sup>30</sup> Robert Olson, “Ellen G. White's use of Historical Sources in The *Great Controversy*,” *Adventist Review*, February 23, 1984. Emphasis supplied. Prior to 1980, the White Estate maintained that less than 10% of White's writings were copied. Walter Rea's discoveries and their own internal research forced them to admit it was higher.

<sup>31</sup> See Arthur White, “Inspiration and the Ellen G. White Writings,” (1979), <https://whiteestate.org/legacy/vault-inspiration-html/>.

<sup>32</sup> H.L. Hastings, *Great Controversy*, 15.



# CHAPTER 2

## *The Sabbath*

*Great Controversy* Chapters 3 and 25 Examined

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For Seventh-day Adventists, the Sabbath is the key that unlocks end-time Bible prophecy. One of the foundations of the sect's teachings is that observance of the seventh day Sabbath is the "Seal of God" of the book of Revelation. They also teach that those who are not Sabbath-keepers will receive the apocalyptic "Mark of the Beast." The entire SDA end-time prophetic scenario revolves around the Sabbath-Sunday issue. Mrs. White wrote that the "object" of *Great Controversy* was to "...to show the holy, unchanging nature of His law."<sup>1</sup> By "unchanging" Mrs. White is no doubt referring to the fourth commandment, whose day of observance was *changed* from Saturday to Sunday. Hence, the purpose of her book is to convince readers to obey the Ten Commandments, with primary emphasis upon the Sabbath commandment. Thus, it should be no surprise that one of the first subjects Mrs. White introduces to her readers is the Sabbath-Sunday issue. This chapter will compare Mrs. White's *inspired* writings about the Sabbath with the historical facts.

### **The Origin of Sunday Worship**

On pages 52-53 of *Great Controversy* Mrs. White makes the following claim:

In the **first centuries the true Sabbath had been kept by all Christians**. They were jealous for the honor of God, and believing that His law is immutable, they zealously guarded the sacredness of its precepts.

Notice here that the word “centuries” is plural. This indicates that for a minimum of two centuries “all Christians” observed the seventh day Sabbath. Mrs. White goes on to write that all Christians observed the Sabbath until “the early part of the fourth century [when] the emperor Constantine issued a decree making Sunday a public festival throughout the Roman Empire.”<sup>2</sup> This took place in 321 AD.

This view was first proposed by SDA pioneer J.N. Andrews in his epic book, *History of the Sabbath*. This book was first published in 1854, long before Ellen White’s “great controversy” vision. The accuracy of this book has long been questioned by non-SDA scholars; however, in recent years it has come under closer scrutiny by SDA scholars as well. Samuelle Bacchiocchi, a well-known SDA scholar from Andrews University, authored several books on the Sabbath subject, and was recognized as one of the world’s foremost experts on Sabbath history. Bacchiocchi had the unique opportunity of being able to study ancient documents in the vaults of the Vatican while he was a doctoral student at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Bacchiocchi explains the problem with Ellen White’s statement:

The earliest documents mentioning Sunday worship go back to Barnabas in 135 and Justin Martyr in 150. Thus, **it is evident that Sunday worship was already established by the middle of the second century.** This means that to be historically accurate the term “centuries” should be changed to the singular “century.”<sup>3</sup>

In the first centuries of Christianity, varied opinions existed regarding the day of worship. Many Jewish converts continued to observe the seventh day Sabbath along with other parts of the Mosaic Law. Some Christians observed both days, while others gathered for worship only on Sunday. There is evidence that Sunday-keeping was widely practiced by Christians by the generation following the apostles, and perhaps even while some of the apostles were

still alive. The document mentioned in Bacchiocchi's quote above—the Epistle of Barnabas—is dated by scholars to have originated between 70 and 131 A.D., with 100 A.D. being the most likely date.<sup>4</sup> It was most likely written in Alexandria, Egypt. So, at the time of writing, the author indicates Sunday was being kept by Christians in his region:

Moreover God says to the Jews, “Your new moons and Sabbaths I cannot endure.” You see how he says, “The present Sabbaths are not acceptable to me, but the Sabbath which I have made in which, when I have rested [heaven: Heb 4] from all things, I will make the beginning of the eighth day which is the beginning of another world.” **Wherefore we Christians keep the eighth day for joy, on which also Jesus rose from the dead** and when he appeared ascended into heaven.<sup>5</sup>

Ignatius of Antioch, an influential figure in early Christianity, emphasized the Lord's Day (Sunday) as the primary day of Christian worship and life. In his Epistle to the Magnesians, written around 110 A.D., Ignatius directly addressed the issue, cautioning believers against *Judaizing* practices, which included the keeping of the Sabbath in the Jewish way. He states:

Let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner, and rejoice in days of idleness. ... But let every one of you keep the Sabbath after a spiritual manner, rejoicing in meditation on the law, and **not in the rest of the body**, admiring the workmanship of God, and not eating things prepared the day before, nor using lukewarm drinks, and walking within a prescribed space, nor finding delight in dancing. And after the observance of the Sabbath, let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's Day as a festival, the resurrection-day, the queen and chief of all the days [of the week].<sup>6</sup>

This passage clearly indicates Ignatius's view that for Christians, the Lord's Day held a new and central significance, rooted in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. While

not directly abandoning Sabbath observance, he refutes the idea that it be kept according to the dictates of the fourth commandment, which commands physical rest upon the Sabbath.

Ignatius served in a prominent role as the Bishop of Antioch. His writings reflect the beliefs and practices of the early, largely unified Christian Church before the major denominational divisions that emerged in later centuries. Scholars sometimes refer to this period as proto-Orthodox Christianity. Therefore, Ignatius represented the developing Orthodox Christian or mainstream tradition of the time.

Justin Martyr, another prominent Christian representing the mainstream of Christianity, held similar views. In his First Apology, written around 155 A.D., he provides a detailed description of Christian worship on Sunday. He explains to the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius the reasons for this practice, connecting it to both the creation and the resurrection of Christ:

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place... **Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly,** because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, Sunday observance was well-established in mainstream Christianity by the middle of the second century. Other early Christian leaders provide supporting evidence of this:

**Tertullian** (155–240 A.D.): This early Christian author from Carthage also mentions the Christian observance of the Lord's Day. In his work *De Corona* (211 A.D.), while discussing Christian practices not found in Scripture, he includes the practice of not fasting or kneeling in prayer on the Lord's Day, indicating its special status. He also, in *Apology* (197 AD), defends Christians against the accusation

of sun worship, acknowledging that Christians made Sunday a day of festivity through worship, but clarifying their reasons were related to Christ's resurrection, not pagan sun worship.

**Cyprian of Carthage** (200–258 A.D.): Cyprian, another North African Church Father, also refers to the “Lord’s Day” and its significance for Christians, linking it to the resurrection.

**Origen** (185–254 A.D.): Origen, an influential theologian from Alexandria, also makes reference to the Lord’s Day, contrasting Christian practice with Jewish Sabbath observance.

**Victorinus of Pettau** (died 304 A.D.): In his commentary on the Apocalypse, Victorinus associates the Lord’s Day with the resurrection and the “eighth day” of new creation.

**Eusebius of Caesarea** (260–340 A.D.): As a Church historian, Eusebius provides valuable insights into the practices of earlier Christians. In his *Church History*, he notes the early Christian custom of observing the first day of the week for worship in commemoration of Christ’s resurrection.

**Athanasius of Alexandria** (296–373 A.D.): Athanasius also contrasts the Christian observance of the Lord’s Day with the Jewish Sabbath, highlighting the Lord’s Day as the beginning of the “second creation” through Christ’s resurrection.

These non-biblical sources, spanning the late 1st to the 4th centuries, collectively demonstrate the widespread and established practice of Christians gathering for worship on the first day of the week. This practice was seen as a mark of Christian identity distinct from Jewish Sabbath observance. Further evidence for the early emergence of Sunday observance is well documented in Bacchiocchi’s book, *From Sabbath to Sunday*. Thus, Seventh-day Adventism’s own

scholars have proven the practice of Sunday-keeping began much earlier than Ellen White taught in *Great Controversy*.

## Catholicism's Role in Changing the Sabbath

Another theme introduced early in *Great Controversy* is rabid anti-Catholicism. In her book, Mrs. White describes the “bishop of Rome” as the “representative of Satan.”<sup>8</sup> After dwelling on various failures of the early Catholic Church, she writes that the Catholic Church is intent on overthrowing the Sabbath and instituting Sunday worship, which she calls the “child of the papacy.”<sup>9</sup> This is in spite of the fact that the historical evidence indicates widespread Sunday observance began long before the Roman Bishop ascended to a position of influence within Christianity.

Ellen White claims that the change of the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday was accomplished by the Pope using the “power of the state”:

It was on behalf of Sunday that popery first asserted its arrogant claims; and its first resort to the power of the state was to compel the observance of Sunday as “the Lord's Day.”<sup>10</sup>

She makes another similar statement later in the book:

Royal edicts, general councils, and church ordinances sustained by secular power were the steps by which the pagan festival [day of the Sun] attained its position of honor in the Christian world.<sup>11</sup>

Bacchiocchi assesses the accuracy of these two passages:

**Both statements just cited are inaccurate**, because the secular power of the state did not influence or compel Christians to adopt Sunday during the second and third centuries. At that time the Roman emperors were rather hostile toward Christianity. They were more interested to suppress Christianity than to support church leaders in their promotion of Sunday worship. The bishop of Rome could not have resorted

to “the power of the state to compel the observance of Sunday as the Lord's Day.” Eventually, beginning with the fourth century, some Roman emperors actively supported the agenda of the church, but this was long after the establishment of Sunday observance.

... the Bishop of Rome did indeed pioneer the change in the day of worship, but **he did it without the help of the Roman government.** What precipitated the need to change the Sabbath to Sunday, was the anti-Jewish and anti-Sabbath legislation promulgated in 135 [A.D.] by the emperor Hadrian.

After suppressing the Second Jewish revolt... Emperor Hadrian decided to deal with the Jewish problem in a radical way by suppressing the Jewish religion. ... To accomplish this objective Hadrian outlawed in 135 the Jewish religion in general and Sabbath-keeping in particular.

It was at this critical moment that the Bishop of Rome took the initiative to change the Sabbath to Sunday in order to show to the Roman government the Christians' separation from the Jews and their identification with the cycles of the Roman society. But, **at this time the Bishop of Rome could not call upon ‘the power of the state to compel the observance of Sunday as the Lord's Day,’ because in the eyes of the Romans Christianity was still a suspect religion to be suppressed, rather than to be supported.**<sup>12</sup>

It is obvious from Bacchiocchi's research that the pope did not resort to the power of the state to enforce Sunday as a day of worship, as Mrs. White claimed. Rather, according to Bacchiocchi, the Roman Bishop instituted Sunday observance without any assistance from the state.

## Sabbath Condemned by Church Councils?

Mrs. White wrote in *Great Controversy* about “vast councils” that supposedly attempted to “press down” the Sabbath in order to exalt Sunday in its place. She writes:

Vast councils were held from time to time, in which the dignitaries of the church were convened from all the world. In nearly every council **the Sabbath which God had instituted was pressed down a little lower**, while the Sunday was correspondently exalted.<sup>13</sup>

There were seven church councils held between 325 and 787 AD.<sup>14</sup> Did they *really* demote the Sabbath at these councils? Bacchiocchi explains:

The problem is with the second part of the statement which speaks of the Sabbath as being “pressed down a little lower” in almost every general council. In all my reading of the seven ecumenical councils, **I have not found a reference to the Sabbath/Sunday question being debated in such councils**. Presumably the reason is that **Sunday observance was no longer a debated question—it had become widely accepted by Christians**.<sup>15</sup>

How could the Sabbath have been “pressed down” a little lower in these councils when it was not even discussed? In reality, Sunday worship was already well established throughout most of Christendom *before* the first council in 325 A.D. This is simply a case of Mrs. White putting the stamp of inspiration upon the flawed history that she was copying into her books from J.N. Andrews and others.

## The Fake Controversy

The entire *Great Controversy* theme revolves around a battle raging between the forces of good and evil. At stake is obedience to the law of God—namely the Old Covenant law. In brief, the “good” people are those who obey the Ten Commandments and worship God on Saturday, and the



“evil” people are Christians who break the fourth commandment by worshipping on Sunday. The greatest of all villains is the Pope, who is labeled in *Great Controversy* as “the representative of Satan.”<sup>16</sup> The Pope is supposedly leading people to follow Satan by deceiving them into worshipping on Sunday instead of Saturday.

To support this worldview, Ellen White and SDAs take the events of history and twist them to make them fit into their preconceived prophetic interpretations. The problem with this approach is that the events of history simply do not align with SDA teachings. For example, Ellen White, while copying ideas written out earlier by Uriah Smith, claimed that the papacy was the “little horn” of Daniel 7 who tried to “change times and laws” (Dan. 7:25). Following Smith’s lead, she claimed that *times* refers to the changing of Sabbath to Sunday.<sup>17</sup> However, the papacy fails to fit many of the descriptions of the “little horn” in Daniel 7.

One problem with making the papacy the little horn is how to identify the three horns that were uprooted by this power. Uriah Smith proposed that the Vandals, Ostrogoths, and Heruli were destroyed by the Pope of Rome. Such a revision of history is nothing less than pure fiction. None of these tribes were destroyed by the Pope. The Heruli were defeated by another tribe (the Lombards) in 508 A.D. The Lombards were Arians and avowed enemies of the Catholic Church, so this did not help the papacy at all. The Vandals and Ostrogoths were both uprooted by the Byzantines (the Eastern Roman Empire, not the Papacy) between 533 and 553 A.D. The fact that the Byzantines were responsible for the demise of those tribes further weakens the claim that the Papacy was the direct or sole agent in the “plucking up” of these three specific horns. The Lombards were identified by Smith as one of the ten horns. Therefore, if the tribes were actually horns, then one of the ten horns (Lombards) uprooted another horn (Heruli), two horns were uprooted by an outside power (the Byzantines), and the little horn did not uproot anyone! Thus, to make the papacy fit Mrs. White’s

understanding of Daniel's prophecy, history had to be *invented* to make it seem plausible.

Even if the little horn was the papacy, there is no reason to believe that *times* refers specifically to the Sabbath. The Catholic Church changed the Biblical festivals (Passover, Feast of Tabernacles, etc.), which were given at specific appointed "times" (Hebrew: mo'edim), by a new liturgical calendar of man-made feasts and holy days, such as Easter and Christmas. The papacy also adopted and promoted the idea that a day begins at midnight, aligning with Roman civil timekeeping rather than Biblical reckoning (sunset to sunset). Finally, under Pope Gregory XIII, the Julian calendar was reformed into the Gregorian calendar in 1582. Although this was primarily an astronomical correction, it could be understood as a symbolic assertion of the Church's authority over sacred time. Therefore, even if the little horn was the papacy, the *times* are far more easily associated with these events than the change of the Sabbath, which happened hundreds of years before the first pope.<sup>18</sup>

Instead of rebuking Andrews and Smith for creating false historical accounts, Ellen White followed their lead because it supported the narrative she was inventing. She told her followers the papacy changed the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday, when all the historical evidence reveals that Sunday observance was practiced widely long before the establishment of the papacy. Then, she wrote that the papacy repeatedly attacked God's Sabbath in their councils, when in fact, the preeminent SDA sabbath scholar can find no evidence for those attacks in the historical records of those councils. Then, Mrs. White relied on a false narrative of identifying the little horn of Daniel 7 as the papacy in order to accuse it of changing the Sabbath. Thus, instead of *Great Controversy* being a factual account of history, it is a mishmash of fake history designed to dupe non-SDAs into believing the SDA self-serving interpretation of Bible prophecy.

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<sup>1</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, xiv.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>3</sup> Samuelle Bacchiocchi, *Endtime Issues* 87, (Aug. 2002).

<sup>4</sup> Wikipedia, “Epistle of Barnabas”, discusses the dating of the Epistle: Many scholars today believe it was probably written in the years 70 – 131, and addressed to Christian Gentiles. ...16.3-4...clearly places Barnabas after the destruction of the temple in AD 70. But it also places Barnabas before the Bar Kochba Revolt of AD 132, after which there could have been no hope that the Romans would help to rebuild the temple. The document must come from the period between the two revolts.

<sup>5</sup> The Epistle of Barnabas, 100 AD, 15:8f, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* 1, 147.

<sup>6</sup> Ignatius, *Epistle to the Magnesians*, chapter 9.

<sup>7</sup> Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chapter 67.

<sup>8</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 50.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 447.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 574.

<sup>12</sup> Bacchiocchi, *Endtime Issues* 87, (Aug. 2002).

<sup>13</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 53.

<sup>14</sup> Nicaea I – 325, Constantinople I – 381, Ephesus – 431, Chalcedon – 451, Constantinople II – 553, Constantinople III – 680, Nicaea II – 787.

<sup>15</sup> Bacchiocchi, *Endtime Issues*, 87, (Aug. 2002).

<sup>16</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 50.

<sup>17</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 51-52.

<sup>18</sup> Pope Leo I (400-461 A.D.), is widely considered to be one of the first Roman bishops to have significantly and effectively exercised and articulated a claim to authority that extended broadly across the Christian world of his time. He served several hundred years after the widespread adoption of Sunday observance in the second century.

# CHAPTER 3

## *The Albigenses*<sup>1</sup>

*Great Controversy* Chapters 6 and 15 Examined

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The Albigenses were a religious sect that flourished in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in southern France.<sup>2</sup> They separated from the Catholic Church and were regarded by Catholicism as “heretics.”

J.N. Andrews, in his 1862 book *History of the Sabbath*, in a chapter entitled “Traces of the Sabbath During the Dark Ages,” mentions the Albigenses twice, but in each case, they are described as a branch of the Waldenses.<sup>3</sup> However, the two groups were quite different and the most reliable and comprehensive historical accounts of the Albigenses do not indicate they observed the Sabbath. In *Great Controversy* Ellen White describes the Albigenses in glowing terms:

Century after century the blood of the **saints** had been shed. While the Waldenses laid down their lives upon the mountains of Piedmont “for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ,” similar **witness to the truth** had been borne by their brethren, the **Albigenses** of France. In the days of the Reformation its disciples had been put to death with horrible tortures.<sup>4</sup>

Thus Rome decreed that the light of God's word should be extinguished and the people should be shut up in darkness. But **Heaven had provided other agencies for the preservation of the church.** Many of the Waldenses and **Albigenses**, driven by persecution from their homes in France and Italy, came to Bohemia. ... **Thus the true faith was preserved from century to century.**<sup>5</sup>

From these quotes, the following three facts can be ascertained about the Albigenses:

1. They were “saints” who were a “witness to the truth.”
2. They were an agency “provided” by “heaven” to preserve the church.
3. They were instrumental in preserving the “true faith” “from century to century.”

## Historical Facts about the Albigenses

Were the Albigenses indeed a repository of truth during the dark ages? It depends upon your definition of *truth*! Fred Zaspel writes about the Albigenses:

The Albigenses (so-called because they were most numerous near Albi, in Southern France), or Cathari (from the Greek word, *katharoi*, meaning pure ones), although claiming New Testament authority for their beliefs, were **a heretical sect** formed in the Roman Catholic Church during the twelfth century and **resembling the Gnostics** and Paulicians. Dualism was at the heart of their teachings—**two gods**, one evil and one good, matter being the essence of evil, etc. **The evil god was the Jehovah of the Old Testament.** With matter being evil, they, of course, **rejected the incarnation of Christ; Christ, they taught, had no real body; it only appeared so.** Since matter is evil, they rejected all the sacraments of the church; the one sacrament which they held to was the consolamentum—the giving of the Spirit by the laying of hands and the Gospel of John on the head. They were extremely ascetic, **avoiding marriage with its fleshly and therefore evil pleasures, oaths, war, milk, meat, cheese, and eggs.** The use of anything material in worship was forbidden.<sup>6</sup>

Does this sound like the agency that God provided to preserve the *truth*? The *Columbia Encyclopedia* adds the following insight:

An occasional practice was suicide, preferably by starvation; for if this life is essentially evil, its end is to be hastened.

In 1233, Pope Gregory IX established a system of legal investigation in Albigensian centers and put it into the hands of the Dominicans; this was the birth of the medieval Inquisition. **After 100 years of the Inquisition, of tireless preaching by the friars, and of careful reform of the clergy, Albigensianism was dead.**<sup>7</sup>

It should be no surprise that a sect that practiced suicide and forbade marriage would eventually die out, even without the inquisition!

It is evident this sect did not preserve any distinctive “truth” worth preserving. Even if they had, how could the “truth” have been preserved by this sect “from century to century” when it only existed little more than a century?

Modern SDA scholars have struggled to understand Ellen White’s statements. Ed Christian admitted in the *Adventist Review* that there were some serious issues with the Albigensian sect:

I know people who, because of a few comments in Ellen White’s book *The Great Controversy*, have a great fondness for the Albigensians (or Cathars), who were also considered heretics. Many were killed for their faith. These Cathars were very different from the Waldensians. **They believed that Jesus was an angel, denied Jesus was really a man who died and was resurrected, and believed the Old Testament came from Satan. They discouraged marriage.** They were in their day what David Koresh’s Branch Davidians are in ours.<sup>8</sup>

The historical evidence reveals the Albigenses were a heretical sect filled with the spirit of antichrist rather than a church established by heaven to preserve the truth. There are three proofs of that. First, they denied that Christ came in the

flesh. Notice what the Bible says about those who teach that doctrine:

And every spirit that **confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist**, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world (1 John 4:3).

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist (2 John 1:7).

Why would heaven use “antichrist” as its agency to preserve the truth?

Second, they taught there were two gods: “The good god of light usually referred to as Jesus in the New Testament and the god of darkness and evil usually associated with Satan and the ‘God of the Old Testament.’”<sup>9</sup> Not only did they make the preposterous and blasphemous claim that the God of the Old Testament was an evil god, but they also claimed the Old Testament itself was the work of Satan. This is the polar opposite of what Jesus and the apostles taught. They respected the Old Testament and quoted from it as if they believed it to be inspired.<sup>10</sup> The Bible teaches:

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, [it is] because **[there is] no light in them**. (Isaiah 8:20)

**Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil;** that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (Isaiah 5:20)

In addition to pronouncing a woe upon them, Isaiah says that those who call good evil are “rotten” (Isa. 5:21 ISV).

Third, the Albigenses avoided marriage and the eating of meat. The Bible teaches:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall **depart from the faith**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking

lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; **forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats**, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

Why would heaven use a church that was (1) antichrist, (2) rotten, and (3) departed from the faith, as its agency to preserve the true faith? The reality is that the Albigenses did not preserve truth in any way, but were heretical purveyors of false doctrines. This evidence demonstrates that if Ellen White actually saw the Albigenses preserving the truth in vision, it was not a vision from God.

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<sup>1</sup> Some material for this chapter provided by Jeremy Graham in his article "The Albigensians," <http://nonsda.org/egw/gc2.shtml>.

<sup>2</sup> Kevin Knight, "Albigenses," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, (2012).

<sup>3</sup> John Nevins Andrews, *History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week Showing the Bible Record of the Sabbath* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the SDA Publishing Assn., 1862), 297,299. Andrews quotes two authors who both seem to equate the Albigenses with Waldenses.

<sup>4</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 271.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>6</sup> Fred G. Zaspel, "Baptists: Their Historical Relation to the Protestant Reformation and the Roman Catholic Church," (1985).

<sup>7</sup> "Albigenses," *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia* (Columbia University Press, 2022).

<sup>8</sup> Ed Christian, "One Person's Heretic Is the Next Person's Martyr," *Adventist Review*, Nov. 20, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Matt Slick, "Albigenses," Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry, <https://carm.org/albigenses>, extracted on Aug. 21, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Jesus and the apostles frequently referred to the Old Testament as "Scripture" (e.g., Matthew 21:42; John 10:35; Romans 1:2). This terminology implies a recognition of its sacred and authoritative nature.



# CHAPTER 4

## *The Waldenses*

*Great Controversy* Chapters 4 and 35 Examined

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One of the themes emphasized in *Great Controversy* is that God has always had a small group of true believers who adhered to the Bible and “hallowed the true Sabbath” even during the long periods of church apostasy.<sup>1</sup> William Miller popularized this theory among the Adventists in the early 1840s.<sup>2</sup> According to this theory, during the Dark Ages, groups such as the Albigenses and Waldenses kept the *truth* alive until the Protestant Reformation dawned.

Ellen White wrote of the Waldenses as the “foremost” of the groups opposing “papal power” during the era of papal supremacy and she devoted an entire chapter to this group.<sup>3</sup> Following the lead of Uriah Smith, she portrayed the Waldenses as an important component of the church that fled into the “wilderness” for 1,260 days (years) while the papacy ruled the world (Rev 12:6).

### **Were the Waldenses Sabbath-Keepers?**

Perhaps one of the reasons Mrs. White was so fond of the Waldenses is that she could relate to them as a small group of Sabbath-keepers who withdrew from a fallen church, much akin to the way the small group of Adventists withdrew from their former churches after 1844. She writes that one of the “leading causes that had led to the separation” of the Waldenses from Catholicism was the Catholic Church’s “hatred” of the “Bible Sabbath.”<sup>4</sup> The problem with this statement is that there is no evidence that the Sabbath had anything to do with the Waldenses leaving Catholicism.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, a false theory was promulgated by some Sabbath-keepers that the Waldenses kept the Sabbath. However, that assumption was based on weak scholarship. Modern scholarship has since refuted the theory that the Waldenses were Sabbath-keepers.

The idea that the Waldenses kept the Sabbath was advanced within Seventh-day Adventism by J.N. Andrews who promoted the idea in the second edition of his book, *History of the Sabbath*, which was published in 1873. Fifteen years later, Ellen White put the divine stamp of approval on his conjectures by including his theory about Waldensian Sabbath observance in the 1888 version of *Great Controversy*. She singled out the Waldenses as a Sabbath-keeping group that kept the *truth* of the Sabbath alive during the Dark Ages:

Through ages of darkness and apostasy there were Waldenses who denied the supremacy of Rome, who rejected image worship as idolatry, and who **kept the true Sabbath**. Under the fiercest tempests of oppositions they maintained their faith.<sup>5</sup>

Some of whom [Waldenses] **were observers of the Sabbath**.<sup>6</sup>

Were the Waldenses *really* observers of the Sabbath and preservers of the truth about the Sabbath?

Andrews made four arguments in favor of the Waldenses being Sabbath-keepers. First, he quoted several Protestant historians who said that the Waldenses kept the “Sabbath” and the commandments of the Decalogue.<sup>7</sup> The problem with his argument is that Protestants of that era routinely referred to Sunday as “Sabbath.” When they wrote about keeping the commandments of the Decalogue, they were referring to keeping Sunday as a day of rest. This is acknowledged in the Appendix of recent versions of *Great Controversy*, where the editors admit that the Latin historical documents about the Waldenses containing the phrase “*Dies Dominicalis*, or Lord’s day (Sunday)” were translated into

English by the reformers as “Sabbath.”<sup>8</sup> It appears Andrews may have been unaware of this and made the false assumption the Waldenses kept the Sabbath based upon a mistranslation.

A second argument made by Andrews involves the practice of referring to the Waldenses as *Insabbatati* or *Sabati*. It was believed these names, being similar to the Latin and Italian names for Sabbath, must indicate that they worshipped on Saturday.<sup>9</sup> Andrews quotes the Swiss historian Melchior Goldastus who wrote that the Waldenses were called *Insabbatati* “because they kept the Jewish Sabbath.”<sup>10</sup> Is this true? Does the label *insabbatati* demonstrate that the Waldenses were Sabbath-keepers?

First, Goldastus was not a contemporary of the Waldenses he was writing about. He was writing four centuries after the events he was describing. Furthermore, his comment about *insabbatati* appears in a footnote, not the main text of his book. Furthermore, in that same footnote, he offered more than one theory on the meaning of *insabbatati*. Goldastus notes that the word could also refer to the “upper part of the shoes, which they call the *Sabbatum*.”<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the two theories mentioned by Goldastus, other scholars suggest the label was given to the Waldenses because they did not keep the Catholic feast days—known at that time as sabbath days. Harvey Newcomb writes, “They were called *Insabbathists*, or Sabbath breakers...they were supposed by the Papists to do so, because they would not keep the saints’ days as they [the papists] did.”<sup>12</sup> William Jones concurs, writing: “Because they would not observe saints’ days, they were falsely supposed to neglect the Sabbath also, and called *Inzabbatati* or *Insabbathists*.”<sup>13</sup> Another possibility is offered by Johann Döllinger, who writes that the Waldenses were called *Insabbatati* because the Waldenses wore “the spiritual sign of a shield in the upper part of their shoes.”<sup>14</sup> SDA scholar Bacchiocchi laments that it is not possible to identify the Waldenses as Sabbath-keepers because of the label *insabbatati*:

Unfortunately **the term *insabbati* has no connection to Sabbathkeeping.** As Adventist Church Historian, Daniel Augsburger explains in the symposium *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, the Waldenses were often called *insabbati*, not because they kept the Sabbath, but because they wore sandals. ‘The Latin word for sandals is *sabbatum*... The sandals were an outward sign of their being imitators of the apostles...’ In other words, the Waldenses were often called *insabbati* (sandal-wearers), because many of them wore sandals cut away at the top in their itinerant ministry of preaching the Gospel.<sup>15</sup>

In conclusion, many scholars today agree with the SDA historian Ausburger, that *insabbatati* refers to shoes and not to the Sabbath. Even if it did refer to the Sabbath, it most likely meant those who did not keep the Catholic sabbath (feast) days. It could not have meant Sabbath-keepers for the simple reason that the Waldenses were never known for keeping the seventh day Sabbath.

A third argument used by Andrews involves a little-known sect of mountain-dwelling Christians called the Passaginians. This group kept the Sabbath and adhered to most of the Law of Moses, except for the sacrificial laws. Andrews calls them a “portion” or subset of the Waldenses for seemingly no better reason than the Latin name *passagini* could refer to passages, pilgrims, or travelers.<sup>16</sup> The problem with classifying the Passagini as Waldenses is that they likely pre-dated the Waldenses.<sup>17</sup> Another issue is that the Passagini kept the Law of Moses, including circumcision and dietary restrictions, whereas the Waldenses did not.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the Waldenses adhered to the doctrine of the Trinity while the Passaginians did not. These differences in doctrine and practice are sufficient to demonstrate that the Passaginians were a separate and distinct sect. The fact that this separate sect kept the Sabbath provides no evidence that the Waldenses also kept the Sabbath.

A fourth argument by Andrews involves a second-hand account from Erasmus (1466-1536) who wrote of Sabbath-keepers in Bohemia during the early years of the Reformation:

Now I hear that among the Bohemians a new kind of Jews are springing up, whom they call *Sabbatarii*, who serve the Sabbath with great superstition.<sup>19</sup>

According to Andrews, this is “strong presumptive proof” that the Waldenses of Bohemia were Sabbath observers.<sup>20</sup> The operative word here is “presumptive.” Andrews presumed that the Sabbath-keepers in Bohemia that Erasmus was describing were related somehow to the Waldenses but there is no evidence of that. There is, however, evidence of two Sabbath-keeping groups in Bohemia at the time when Erasmus wrote his comment. Gerhard Hasel notes that the Anabaptists were active in Bohemia during the sixteenth century.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the Picards were also known to observe the Sabbath in Bohemia during this period.<sup>22</sup> These groups should not be confused with the Waldenses who did not observe the Sabbath.

Despite sporadic anecdotal stories of Sabbath-keeping, there is no solid evidence that the Waldenses as a sect ever kept or advocated the seventh day Sabbath. In all of the official Catholic documents describing the heresies of the Waldenses, Sabbath-keeping is never even mentioned.<sup>23</sup> This is profound because the Catholic Church wrote vehement diatribes against other sects for keeping the Jewish Sabbath. If the Waldenses had been observing the Sabbath, then one would expect to find voluminous denunciations of them in the same papal bulls outlining all of their other so-called heresies. The fact that Rome did not condemn the Waldenses for Sabbath-keeping speaks volumes.

Bacchiocchi was also unable to find any evidence that the Waldenses ever observed the seventh-day Sabbath:

I spent several hours searching for an answer in the two scholarly volumes *Storia dei Valdesi* (*History of*

*the Waldenses*), authored by Amedeo Molnar and Augusto Hugon. These two books were published in 1974 by the Claudiana, which is the official Italian Waldensian publishing house. They are regarded as the most comprehensive history of the Waldenses. To my regret **I found no allusion whatsoever to Sabbathkeeping among the Waldenses.**<sup>24</sup>

There is no credible historical evidence that the Waldenses ever observed the Sabbath. The Waldenses were not Old Testament Christians. J.M. Cramp explains that the Waldenses “refused to obey any laws relating to religion which were not to be found in the New Testament.”<sup>25</sup> Since the Sabbath commandment is found in the Old Testament, and not the New Testament, then according to Cramp, the Waldenses would have refused to obey that law. This fact is supported by one of the laws of the Waldensian community, which states: “We are to cease from working on no day except the Lord’s Day—that the holidays of saints are to be rejected—and that there is no merit in observing the fasts instituted by the Church [of Rome].”<sup>26</sup> The phrase “Lord’s Day” was understood as *Sunday*, meaning the Waldenses did **not** cease from work on the Sabbath. Therefore, they were Sabbath-breakers, not Sabbath-keepers.

Even though many histories have been written about the Waldenses, there is a complete absence of historical evidence of Sabbath-keeping. No serious history of the Waldenses mentions Waldensian Sabbath-keeping. J. A. Wylie, from whom Ellen White copied substantially, never mentions the Waldenses keeping the Sabbath in his book, *The History of the Waldenses*. Andras Szalai contacted a Waldensian minister in Italy and asked if the Waldenses ever kept the Sabbath. Here is his response:

**The Waldensians did not keep the Sabbath** and were not guardians of the “Sabbath Truth” as you call it. ... We can therefore say very clearly that **the Waldensians were not Seventh-day Sabbath**

**keepers** and they were not persecuted for keeping Saturday as the Sabbath!<sup>27</sup>

Every credible source of historical evidence on the Waldenses denies Sabbath-keeping was ever a doctrine taught or practiced by the sect. While it is possible some individuals or offshoots started keeping the Sabbath in the early years of the Reformation, it was definitely not a teaching or practice amongst the larger Waldensian community. The Waldenses were not Sabbath observers nor did they preserve the truth about the Sabbath.

## A Thousand Years?

Another inaccurate statement written in *Great Controversy* by Mrs. White about the Waldenses regarded the period of the group's existence:

Behind the lofty bulwarks of the mountains... the Waldenses found a hiding place. Here the light of truth was kept burning amid the darkness of the Middle Ages. Here for **a thousand years**, witnesses for the truth maintained the ancient faith.<sup>28</sup>

The Waldensian movement was established by Peter Waldo (Valdes), who began preaching on the streets around 1177.<sup>29</sup> The Waldenses were declared “schismatics” by the French Catholic Church in 1184, and “heretics” by a church council in 1215. At some point during this period, they sought refuge from persecution in the mountains of Piedmont.<sup>30</sup> The persecution of the Waldenses largely subsided by the late 1600s. Therefore, even if they had the “truth,” it would be impossible for the Waldenses to have kept the “light of truth” burning for “a thousand years” in the mountains during the Middle Ages. 500 years is a more likely number.

## Waldenses First to Obtain Scriptures?

Another inaccuracy in *Great Controversy* is about whether the Waldenses were the first Europeans to obtain a translation of the Bible. Mrs. White writes:

The Waldenses were the **first** of all the peoples of Europe to obtain a translation of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>31</sup>

This occurred around the year 1180.<sup>32</sup> However, according to I. M. Price, there were at least two earlier European translations, including the Gothic, dating from the fourth century.<sup>33</sup> Following are the translations available in native languages throughout the Dark Ages and Middle Ages:

| Language             | Translator   | Time Period              |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Latin (Vulgate)      | Jerome       | 382 and 420 A.D.         |
| Gothic               | Ulfilas      | 4 <sup>th</sup> century  |
| Armenian             | Saint Mesrob | 5 <sup>th</sup> century  |
| Syriac               |              | 5 <sup>th</sup> century  |
| Coptic               |              | 5 <sup>th</sup> century  |
| Old Nubian           |              | 5 <sup>th</sup> century  |
| Ethiopic             |              | 5 <sup>th</sup> century  |
| Georgian             |              | 5 <sup>th</sup> century  |
| English (John)       | Bebe         | 735 AD                   |
| German (Matthew)     |              | 748 AD                   |
| Slavonic             | Methodius    | 863 AD                   |
| Saxon (Heliand)      |              | 9 <sup>th</sup> century  |
| English (gospels)    |              | 990 AD                   |
| French <sup>34</sup> |              | 13 <sup>th</sup> century |
| Czech                |              | 1360 AD                  |
| English              | Wycliffe     | 1383 AD                  |

Once again, Mrs. White did not have the facts straight about the Waldenses. They were not the *first* to obtain a translation of the Bible in their language. At least half a dozen European translations had already been completed before the advent of the Waldenses.

In conclusion, the idea that the Waldenses kept the Sabbath truth alive for a thousand years prior to the



Reformation is fake. While the Waldenses were heroic New Testament believers who fought for reforms in Catholicism, they are not the Sabbath-keeping people that Ellen White has made them out to be.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 61.

<sup>2</sup> William Miller, *Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ, about the Year 1843; in a Course of Lectures* (Boston: Moses A. Dow, 1841), 146.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 577.

<sup>7</sup> John Nevins Andrews, *History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1873), 413-414.

<sup>8</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 684. These comments appear in the Appendix which contains revisions adopted by the E. G. White Trustees on November 19, 1956, December 6, 1979, and January 8, 1993.

<sup>9</sup> Saturday is *Sabbata* or *Sabbatum* in Latin, and *Sabato* in Italian.

<sup>10</sup> Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, 410. The event that Goldastus wrote about in the seventeenth century took place in 1220 A.D., which is some 400 years before he wrote about it.

<sup>11</sup> See footnote on page 303 of Robert Robinson, *Ecclesiastical Researches* (Cambridge, 1792).

<sup>12</sup> Harvey Newcomb, *The History of the Waldenses*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Sabbath School Society, 1849), 11.

<sup>13</sup> William Jones, *The History of the Christian Church* (Philadelphia: R. W. Pomeroy, 1832), 308.

<sup>14</sup> Johann Döllinger, *Beiträge zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters* (Munich: Beck, 1890), vol. II, 7.

<sup>15</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "A Reply to Criticisms Part I 'The Use of Ellen White's Writings in Interpreting Scripture,'" *Endtime Issues* 87, (August 1, 2002).

<sup>16</sup> Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, 417.

<sup>17</sup> John Henry Blunt, *Dictionary of Sects, Heresies, Ecclesiastical Parties and Schools of Religious Thought* (London, Oxford and Cambridge: Rivingtons, 1874), 408-9. Blunt writes of this sect appearing in Lombardy in the late twelfth century but notes that they

probably originated earlier in the East. They were condemned by the Pope in 1184, which indicates they had settled in Lombardy earlier than that date.

<sup>18</sup> Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans, editors, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1969), 173–185. David Benedict, *General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World*, vol. II (Boston: Lincoln & Edmands, 1813), 414.

<sup>19</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, “Amabili Ecclesiae Concordia,” *Opera Omnia* vol. V, 505, 506.

<sup>20</sup> Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, 464.

<sup>21</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, “Sabbatarian Anabaptists of the Sixteenth Century,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 114.

<sup>22</sup> See Dirk Anderson, “Errors about the Waldenses Found in Great Controversy Chapter 4,”

<https://www.nonsda.org/egw/waldenses.shtml>.

<sup>23</sup> Reinarius Saccho, *Of the Sects of the Modern Heretics*, 1254 (translated into English).

<sup>24</sup> Bacchiocchi, *Endtime Issues* 87 (August 2002).

<sup>25</sup> J.M. Cramp, *Baptist History from the Foundation of the Christian Church to the Close of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Elliot Stock, 1868), 91.

<sup>26</sup> Jones, *History*, 245.

<sup>27</sup> E-mail from Pastor Thomas Soggin of the Waldesian Church in Bergamo to Andras Szalai, director of Apologia Research Center (CFAR Hungary), June 21, 2006.

<https://www.lifeassuranceministries.org/studies/waldenses.html> extracted Dec. 8, 2023.

<sup>28</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 65-66.

<sup>29</sup> Wikipedia, “Waldensians”, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waldenses>, extracted Aug. 9, 2008.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> White, *Great Controversy* (1888), 65.

<sup>32</sup> Harold Snide, “The Development of My Ideas Concerning the Divine Inspiration of Mrs. E. G. White: A Personal History,” (1950).

<https://www.nonsda.org/egw/snide.shtml>.

<sup>33</sup> I.M. Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, 104.

<sup>34</sup> Clive R. Sneddon, “A Neglected Mediaeval Bible Translation,” *Romance Languages Annual* 5, no. 1 (1993): 11-16. “The complete Bible was translated into Old French in the late 13th century. Parts of this translation were included in editions of the popular *Bible Historiale*, and there is no evidence of this translation being suppressed by the Church.”

# CHAPTER 5

## *Wycliffe*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 5 Examined

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Mrs. White wrote the following about Protestant reformer John Wycliffe:

Again Wycliffe was called to defend the rights of the English crown against the encroachments of Rome; and being appointed a royal ambassador, he **spent two years in the Netherlands**, in conference with the commissioners of the pope.<sup>1</sup>

Wycliffe was indeed appointed as a diplomat representing England in meetings with the papacy. However, he was not sent to the Netherlands. The conference was held in the city of Bruges. At the time of the conference, this region was known as Flanders in the territory of Burgundy. Today this region is located in the nation of Belgium. Bruges is “the capital and largest city of the province of West Flanders in the Flemish Region of Belgium.”<sup>2</sup> Bruges, being a Flemish city, was never part of the Dutch Netherlands. The historical record shows that Wycliffe was an ambassador in Belgium, but never in the Netherlands.

There is also some doubt about whether Wycliffe spent a full two years in Bruges. While some early historians agree with Ellen White about the “two years,” later historians dispute that. The English historian Dr. Henry Milman writes that: “Wycliffe was at Bruges not quite two months.”<sup>3</sup> Milman substantiates this with Wycliffe’s account of his travel expenses reimbursed by the English Treasury. These records show he was reimbursed for the dates of July 27 to

Sept. 14, 1375.<sup>4</sup> Milman's period of two months is corroborated by several other modern historians.<sup>5</sup>

## Opened the Word of God to England?

Mrs. White writes about the Wycliffe Bible translation:

At last the work was completed—the first English translation of the Bible ever made. **The word of God was opened to England.**<sup>6</sup>

To begin, Mrs. White's statement leaves the impression that the people of England did not have the Word of God prior to this translation, but that is not the case. First of all, Latin was the common language of education in Europe throughout the Middle Ages. Dag Norberg explains, "Whatever one's national language happened to be, the basis of education was Latin."<sup>7</sup> Not only was it the language of education, but it was also the language of Christianity, science, and philosophy. Gillian Pollack explains that in medieval England, Latin "was the standard language for Christian learning and for Christian prayer, so quite a few people knew it."<sup>8</sup> The Bible in Latin (the Vulgate) was available in medieval England long before Wycliffe translated it into English. Therefore, educated English people had access to the Word of God long before Wycliffe translated it into English.

Secondly, Wycliffe's Bible was not the first attempt at translating scriptures into English. Before Wycliffe's translation, parts of the Bible had been translated into English and circulating for centuries. According to the United Kingdom's Bible Society:

In the seventh century, a poet named Caedmon translated a series of biblical stories into 'Old English' verse. **There were copies of parts of the Bible in Old English**, the language of the common people, from as early as **the eighth century AD.**

The monk and scholar Bede translated the gospel of John into Old English in 735.... In the tenth century, a

stand-alone edition of the gospels was translated into West-Saxon. Next, at the turn of the eleventh century a priest named Aelfric translated the Pentateuch and other parts of the Old Testament into Old English. ...

A scribe called Eadwine translated the book of Psalms into 'Anglo-Norman,' the language of the upper classes, in 1160. The hermit and writer Richard Rolle translated the Psalms into 'Middle English,' the language of the common people, around 1340. His writings were very popular and were widely circulated.

With this in mind, a number of scholars have argued that **English people knew the Bible very well during the Middle Ages**. One of the reasons for this is that illustrated Bible storybooks in English sold like hot cakes across medieval England.<sup>9</sup>

Third, the primary problem of opening the Bible to England was not the language but the painstaking effort required to carefully hand-copy an entire Bible. There were few Latin Bibles in circulation due to the expense of copying them. Likewise, when Wycliffe's Bible was made available in English in the 1380s, it was not available to all of England. Only a very small number of hand-written copies of the full Bible were made.<sup>10</sup> As Mrs. White observes, "It was only by slow and wearisome labor that copies of the Bible could be multiplied."<sup>11</sup> She even admits later on in *Great Controversy* that the ones who could afford the book were the "wealthy" and "nobles"—the educated class who were also most likely educated in Latin and could have also obtained Jerome's Vulgate Bible. Mrs. White writes of Wycliffe's Bible:

It had never been printed, and the cost of manuscript copies was so great that **few but wealthy men or nobles could procure it**; and, furthermore, being strictly proscribed by the church, it had had a comparatively narrow circulation.<sup>12</sup>

It was not until the mid-fifteenth century that the first Bibles were printed on a press. Thus, it was the advent of the

printing press that allowed the Word of God to be made available to the masses in England, not Wycliffe's handwritten translation. While Wycliffe's translation was ground-breaking and important, few copies were made, and it by no means opened up the Word of God to the masses in England. It was not until after William Tyndale's English translation was printed on a press in 1525, that the scriptures were truly available to the English masses.

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<sup>1</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 84.

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia, "Bruges," extracted on August 25, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Hart Milman, *History of Latin Christianity Including that of the Popes to the Pontificate of Nicolas V.*, vol. 8, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (London, 1872), 170.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. The Exchequer is a government department of the U.K responsible for the collection of taxes. (Wikipedia)

<sup>5</sup> S.G. Green, *John Wycliffe, the First of English Reformers* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1899), 6. George S. Innis, *Wycliffe: The Morning Star* (New York, 1907), 106. John Eadie, *The English Bible: An External and Critical History of the Various English Translations of Scripture* (London, 1876), 47.

<sup>6</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 88.

<sup>7</sup> Dag Norberg, *Manuel Pratique de Latin Médiéval* (Paris, 1980), English translation by R.H. Johnson.

<sup>8</sup> Gillian Polack, "Languages in Medieval England," <http://www.triviumpublishing.com/articles/languages.html>, extracted on Aug. 25, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Bible Society, "How did we get the Bible in English," <http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/our-work/the-bible-style-guide/how-did-we-get-the-bible-in-english/>, extracted on Aug. 25, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> "General Prologue of the Wycliffe Bible," *Wikipedia*. 250 copies survived to modern times, and 21 are complete Bibles.

<sup>11</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 88.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 245.

# CHAPTER 6

## *Huss and Jerome*

*Great Controversy* Chapters 6 Examined

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Donald McAdams, assistant professor of history at Andrews University, examined chapter six of *Great Controversy* in depth. He compared Ellen White's hand-written manuscripts with Wylie's book *History of Protestantism*, and he made some disturbing discoveries:

McAdams discovered to his amazement that in this chapter, consisting of 34 paragraphs, only four paragraphs were original from EGW, the rest was copied from Wylie's *History of Protestantism*. But when the *Great Controversy* was being published, those four paragraphs had been removed!<sup>1</sup>

McAdams later published his startling conclusions:

What we find when we examine the historical portions of the *Great Controversy* is that large sections are selective abridgements and adaptations of historians. **Ellen White was not just borrowing paragraphs here and there that she ran across in her reading, but in fact following the historians page after page,** leaving out much material, but using their sequence, some of their ideas, and often their words. In the examples I have examined **I have found no historical fact in her text that is not in their text. The hand-written manuscript on John Huss follows the historian so closely that it does not even seem to have gone through an intermediary stage, but rather from the historian's printed page to Mrs. White's manuscript, including historical errors and moral exhortations.** The material taken from historians is not an insignificant part, but, if my

samples are characteristic, a substantial part of the book.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that Mrs. White copied historical errors indicates that no angels were guiding her on what to take and what to leave as she pilfered from the writings of other authors. She plagiarized wholesale, even incorporating the “moral exhortations” of other authors. Thus, if there is any inspiration found in these chapters of *Great Controversy*, then, ironically, it originates from the very non-SDA authors whose faith she so often vilified as “apostate” and “Babylon.”

McAdams’ evidence was so compelling that even the White Estate admitted that Ellen White “made several erroneous historical statements which are now deemed to be historically inaccurate.”<sup>3</sup> White Estate Secretary Robert Olson said with a healthy dose of skepticism, “It is difficult for me to believe that the Lord gave Mrs. White a vision or a series of visions which, for fourteen pages, coincided in so many details with Wylie.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, even a White Estate Secretary found it difficult to swallow the idea that *Great Controversy* was the product of visions.

McAdams’ findings cast considerable doubt on the myth that Ellen White saw the events of *Great Controversy* in vision because some of the events she described did not happen the way she claimed:

By more nearly discovering what actually did happen, it can be shown that **Ellen, at times, described events inaccurately.**<sup>5</sup>

## **The Interdicts of 1411 and 1412<sup>6</sup>**

Two of the events Ellen White described inaccurately in *Great Controversy* were the interdicts<sup>7</sup> of 1411 and 1412. Historian Matthew Spinka explains what happened when the Protestant Reformer John Huss was ministering in Bohemia at the time of the first interdict:



King Wenzel (Wenceslas) was extremely angry at the curia that all his efforts on behalf of Huss had been so cavalierly ignored. He deeply resented the aspersion of heresy thus cast on his country by the cardinal and his own archbishop. . . . The king now . . . issued an order commanding the stoppage of payments to . . . the priests of the cathedral, as well as to the pastors of the churches in Prague. He gave as his reason that they had spread lies about the realm.

By this time Zybenek (the archbishop) was so determined to exercise all his ecclesiastical powers that, being instigated to it by his advisors, he pronounced (on June 20) an Interdict over Prague and its environs for two miles around. The terrible weapon normally stopping all church services and ministrations such as baptisms, weddings, funerals, and granting of all sacraments, failed of effect. The king simply forbade its observance. Those priests and prelates who defied his order were deprived of their positions, which were then filled by such as were obedient to his will. The canons of St. Vitus fled and their places were taken by others. This obviously hopeless struggle continued to be waged by the archbishop for only two weeks. On July 3, he, along with the remaining prelates and priests who remained faithful to him, accepted the arbitration proffered him by the king.<sup>8</sup>

The next year, in 1412, the Pope issued a second interdict against Prague. Unlike the first, this one was obeyed. This interdict caused such turmoil that Huss had to leave the city. In December of 1412, he wrote in a letter:

If I have withdrawn from the midst of you, it is to follow the precept and example of Jesus Christ, in order not to give room to the ill-minded to draw on themselves eternal condemnation, and in order not to be to the pious a cause of affliction and persecution. . .

This quote from Huss is found in *Great Controversy*, with the above description of the terrible effect of an Interdict.

However, it is described by her in the context of the first interdict (of 1411). That Huss wrote the letter in December, is clear from the sentence: “My beloved, the day is at hand, that we will remember the birth of our Lord.”<sup>9</sup> However, in December 1411, there was no reason for Huss to write such a letter regarding his absence, because the Interdict of June 1411 was ineffective—a fact that is indisputable. The sequence of Ellen White’s historical account is simply not correct.<sup>10</sup>

Ron Graybill of the White Estate admitted that Mrs. White’s citation of the letter “is a historical error known as an anachronism.”<sup>11</sup> How does this align with Mrs. White’s claim that she had seen those historic events in vision? Graybill went on to admit, “She has not presented us with a book in which it is possible for us to distinguish the items drawn solely from historical sources and the material presented on the authority of vision.”<sup>12</sup> This sums up the present quandary with Ellen White’s writings. No one knows what parts, if any, came from *visions*. What is known is that Mrs. White copied extensively from others in putting together *Great Controversy*. And if Donald McAdams’ statement is true...

If every paragraph in the book *Great Controversy*, written by Ellen White, was properly footnoted, then **every paragraph would have to be footnoted.**

...then it suggests that the entire book came from the pens of other authors, and none of it came from *visions*.

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<sup>1</sup> Asmund Kaspersen, *Ellen G. White: The Myth and the Truth* (1999), chapter 10.

<sup>2</sup> Donald McAdams, unpublished manuscript “Ellen G. White and the Protestant Historians: The Evidence from an Unpublished Manuscript on John Huss,” 19. See also, Donald McAdams, “Shifting View of Inspiration,” *Spectrum* 10, No. 4 (March, 1980).

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<sup>3</sup> Walter Rea, *White Lie*, 255.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Olson, "Questions and Problems Pertaining to Mrs. White's Writings on John Huss," (1975). Op. Cit. *White Lie*, 255.

<sup>5</sup> McAdams, 44.

<sup>6</sup> Material for this section provided by Dieter Heimke, "The Interdicts of 1411 and 1412," <https://www.nonsda.org/egw/egw98.shtml>, translated from German to English by J. Krahne.

<sup>7</sup> An interdict is a prohibition or a penalty imposed by a religious authority, such as the Catholic Church, restricting certain sacraments or religious services in a particular region or community. The interdict could be a response to perceived disobedience or defiance of church authority.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew Spinka, *John Huss: A Biography*, (Princeton, 1968), 124-125. Ron Graybill, former associate director of the White Estate, quotes from Spinka in the publication "Historical Difficulties in the *Great Controversy*," published by the Ellen G. White Estate on Jan. 30, 1978, and revised in June 1982, pages 3-4. It is therefore considered an authoritative publication by the SDA Church.

<sup>9</sup> Graybill, 6. (Not known by Ellen White).

<sup>10</sup> Graybill then answers two points which are brought up by SDAs attempting to save face for Ellen G. White:

1 - She meant the interdict of 1412 - which is impossible, because she unmistakably spoke of two interdicts.

2 - She had given only a general description of the interdicts - which is irrelevant, because the opposite happened in 1411.

<sup>11</sup> Graybill, 6. Anachronism is defined by the *Heritage Dictionary* as: "The representation of someone as existing or something as happening in other than chronological, proper, or historical order."

<sup>12</sup> Graybill, 6, 7.

# CHAPTER 7

## *Luther a “Noble Example”?*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 7 examined

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In 1977, Ronald Graybill of the White Estate was commissioned to analyze the Martin Luther chapter within the 1911 edition of *Great Controversy*. His analysis revealed:

There does not appear to be any objective historical fact in Mrs. White’s account that she could not have gained from the literary sources on which she was drawing except in one detail. ...[her] historical narrative **was based on the work of historians, not on visions.**<sup>1</sup>

Graybill’s conclusion that this chapter did not have a divine origin will become obvious as the reader examines the evidence in this chapter.

### **A Noble Example?**

Ellen White held up Martin Luther to her followers as a man to emulate and imitate:

We who are living so near the close of time should **emulate the noble example of the great Reformer.** Like Luther we should seek a deep and thorough knowledge of the word of God. It should be our highest ambition to stand firm as a rock when the strongholds of truth are assailed by an unbelieving world and an ungodly church. In the near conflict, **thousands will be called to imitate Luther's constancy** and courage.<sup>2</sup>

While there is no doubt about Luther’s courage and determination in fighting against papal errors, did he *really* leave a “noble” example for Christians to imitate? In this

chapter it will be necessary to review the historical record in order to ascertain the truth of Mrs. White’s statement. This chapter will focus on three areas:

1. Did Martin Luther leave Christians a “noble example” to emulate?
2. Did Martin Luther teach freedom “to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience”?
3. How did Martin Luther give Christians an example in regards to the “word of God”?

Mrs. White extolled Luther as one laboring to restore the “moral restraints” of society. In *Great Controversy*, she wrote:

The elector saw that there was a **general breaking down of the moral restraints of society**. A great work of reform was needed. The complicated and expensive arrangements to restrain and punish crime would be unnecessary if men but acknowledged and obeyed the requirements of God and the dictates of an enlightened conscience. He saw that **Luther was laboring to secure this object**, and he secretly rejoiced that a better influence was making itself felt in the church.<sup>3</sup>

This passage would lead one to believe Mrs. White had some insight into the elector’s “secret” thoughts, and that the elector was rejoicing at the work Luther was doing to morally reform society. The historical evidence, however, indicates quite the opposite to be true. Rather than restraining the moral breakdown in society, Luther, through his teachings and personal example, was a major contributor to that breakdown.

## **Luther: Our Actions not Important**

Although Luther often encouraged his followers to act morally, the evidence presented in this chapter will show that through his own personal conduct, and through his “believe

and do as you please” philosophy, his influence actually weighed against moral restraint.

First, his philosophy of obedience to moral laws will be examined. Luther wrote:

You owe nothing to God except faith and confession. In all other things **He lets you do whatever you like. You may do as you please, without any danger of conscience whatsoever.** The body has nothing to do with God. In this respect one can never sin against God, but only against one’s neighbor.<sup>4</sup>

Luther appears to minimize the significance of even wanton sin in the life of a believer:

The Christian or baptized man cannot, even if he would, lose his soul by any sins however great, unless he refuses to believe; for no sins whatever can condemn him, but unbelief alone.<sup>5</sup>

According to historian Peter F. Wiener, Luther over-emphasized justification to the point where, “what we do and how we act does not matter in the least. All that matters is our belief.”<sup>6</sup>

Wiener continues to quote Luther’s philosophy:

**“It does not matter what people do; it only matters what they believe.”** “God does not need our actions. All He wants is that we pray to Him and thank Him.” Even the example of Christ Himself means nothing to him. **“It does not matter how Christ behaved—what He taught is all that matters”** (E29, 196), is Luther’s subtle distinction.

Since Luther had this curious idea that our actions have no connections whatsoever with our thoughts, and that as long as we think in a Christian way, we need not behave accordingly, it is not surprising that he did not hesitate to authorize the commitment of sins. “What does it matter whether we commit a fresh sin?” he asks sarcastically. “Faith cancels all sin” is his simple counsel. “No other sin exists in the world save

unbelief,” is his doctrine. Indeed, his old enemy, Satan, is once more coming to light in order to give an excuse to sinners. **“Sometimes it is necessary to commit some sin out of hatred and contempt for the Devil.” “What matters if we commit a sin?”** (E16, 254).

...

Indeed, he frequently demands that one ought to commit a sin. **“Be a sinner, and sin boldly**, but believe more boldly still.” Not only men, but the Saints and Apostles must be sinners. “The Saints must be good, downright sinners.” “The Apostles themselves were sinners, yea, regular scoundrels...I believe that the prophets also frequently sinned grievously” (E62, 165).<sup>7</sup>

In the following sections, it will be demonstrated how these internal beliefs manifested themselves in the life of the man Ellen White advised her followers to emulate.

## Luther on Sex and Marriage

On the subject of sexual relations within marriage, Luther taught that all such relations were somehow sinful:

“In spite of all the good I say of married life, I will not grant so much to nature as to admit that there is no sin in it...**no conjugal due is ever rendered without sin.**” **“The matrimonial duty is never performed without sin.”** The matrimonial act is, according to Luther, “a sin differing in nothing from adultery and fornication.” (W8, 654).<sup>8</sup>

Since Luther viewed marital relations as a sin no different from adultery or fornication, it should be no surprise that he was not opposed to extra-marital relations:

But the Reformer surpasses himself when he says: “If you do not want, someone else does. **If the wife does not want, take your servant.**” (E20, 72).

From this is only a step to Luther’s permitting his followers “to satisfy their desires outside marriage,

when they were not married, in order to give relief to natural feelings which they could not resist.” He says quite plainly: **“It is not forbidden that a man should have more than one wife.”** (E33, 327.). These teachings Luther did not fail to translate into practice in his own life. In accordance with his teachings against monasteries and convents, he and his disciples began systematically to undermine the mentality of the nuns. .... “After a rape of nuns which took place on the night of Holy Saturday, 1523, Luther calls the citizen Koppe, who organized the exploit, a ‘holy and blessed robber.’”

Luther himself has several of these escaped nuns living with him. But he does not intend to marry. In November, 1524, he writes: “Not as though I do not feel my flesh and my sex, for I am neither of wood nor of stone, but I have no inclination to marry.” One of these nuns, Catherine von Bora, tried to marry one of Luther’s friends. But it is clear that his own relations to her were anything but blameless. In April, 1525, he refers to himself as “a famous lover” who has **“three wives” but “no intention whatsoever to marry.”**

It is quite obvious that there was a good deal of scandal about Luther’s relations with Catherine before they married. **“Your example is permanently quoted by those who visit brothels,”** is one of the typical comments. Even his best friend, Melancthon, has to admit with a sigh that “Luther was more than a reckless man.”<sup>9</sup>

And what were the results of Luther’s “reckless” example that people are supposed to imitate?

As Heinrich Heine said, **German history at that time was, thanks to Luther’s example, almost entirely composed of sensual disturbances.** Looking at the devastated state of Germany, one of Luther’s contemporaries spoke the truth when he shouted at the Reformer: **“This is due to your carnal teaching and stinking example.”** To enumerate or give a clear picture of the abhorrent state of affairs of the morals in



Germany, would take pages and volumes. The important factor is that “Luther not merely robbed marriage of its sacramental character, but also declared it to be a purely outward carnal union, which has nothing whatsoever to do with religion and church” (Janssen, *History of the German People*, vol. 16, p. 137).<sup>10</sup>

## Luther a Heavy Drinker

Luther spoke strongly against the vice of alcohol as destroying his nation of Germany. However, according to historians, the example of his life was one of over-drinking:

...Luther admitted himself, “I know that I don’t practice what I teach” (Enders, 2, 312). The Germans preferred to imitate Luther’s practical example and to ignore his teachings. And Luther himself drank a good deal. ...Luther himself drank, occasionally in excess, and showed no moderation whatsoever, set no example which the Germans could possibly follow.

More than once Luther says that he drinks in excess. “I am here,” he writes from the Warburg, “idle and drunk” (Enders III, 154). ... In 1540 he states: “God must count drunkenness as a minor sin, a small daily sin. We can really not stop it.” At another time he feels more guilty. “According to the saying, we have to comply with the habit. The days are bad, people are worse, our acts more than bad. Up to now drunkenness has prevented me from writing, or reading anything readable; living with men, I had to live as they do.” It is abundantly clear that Luther liked drinking—and often not within reason. “I have brought on headache by drinking old wine in the Coburg, and this our Wittenberg beer has not yet cured. I work little, and I am forced to be idle against my will because my head must have a rest.” “If I have a can of beer, I want the beer-barrel as well.” “I am but a man prone to let himself be swept off his feet by society, drunkenness, the movements of the flesh” (W9, 215,

13). And again, “What is needed to live in continence is not in me.” ...

His bad state of health in his later years, he ascribed himself to drink. “For almost a month past I have been plagued not only with noises but with actual thundering of my head, due, perhaps to the wine, perhaps to the malice of Satan.” “I am troubled with a sore throat such as I never had before; possibly the strong wine has increased the inflammation, or perhaps it is a buffet of Satan.” The opinion of his contemporaries on the subject is unmistakable. They all agree that Luther “was addicted to over-drinking” (Th. Brieger: “Aleander and Luther”, pp. 170, 307).<sup>11</sup>

## Luther on Honesty

Luther also seemed to approve of dishonesty in certain situations:

Already in his early years when he was at war with the Catholic Church he frankly admitted that it was not necessary to stick to the truth. “I consider everything allowable against the deception and the depravity of the Papal antichrist,” was his excuse.<sup>12</sup>

Not only was lying appropriate when fighting against the papacy, but Luther apparently felt lying was appropriate if it could further a good cause:

What harm could it do if a man told a good lusty lie in a worthy cause and for the sake of the Christian Churches?<sup>13</sup>

Or one could lie simply for convenience:

To lie in a case of necessity or for convenience or in excuse—such lying would not be against God; He was ready to take such lies on Himself.<sup>14</sup>

At one point he even went so far as to call lying a “virtue”:

**“Lying is a virtue** if it is indulged in for the purpose of preventing the fury of the Devil, or made to serve the

honor, the life, and the welfare of one’s fellow-men.”  
 “The lie of service is wrongly termed a lie . . . it may be  
 called Christian and brotherly charity.”<sup>15</sup>

After studying the life of Luther, historian Wiener concluded:

I have, reluctantly, come to the conclusion that Luther’s biographer was utterly right when he said: “The general conclusion must be that Luther was a man to whom the idea of truth for truth’s sake meant nothing at all.”<sup>16</sup>

## Luther’s Arrogance

Some of Luther’s bold and arrogant statements sound rightfully similar to those of the Roman pontiff:

“St. Augustine or St. Ambrosius cannot be compared with me.” “They shall respect our teaching which is the word of God, spoken by the Holy Ghost, through our lips.” **“Not for a thousand years has God bestowed such great gifts on any bishop as He as on me”** (E61, 422). “God has appointed me for the whole German land, and I boldly vouch and declare that **when you obey me you are without a doubt obeying not me but Christ**” (W15, 27). **“Whoever obeys me not, despises not me but Christ.”** “I believe that we are the last trump that sounds before Christ is coming.” “What I teach and write remains true even though the whole world should fall to pieces over it.” (W18, 401). **“Whoever rejects my doctrine cannot be saved.”** “Nobody should rise up against me.”

“No mortal ever spoke of himself as Luther did.” His persecution mania turned with advancing years into a mania of self-glorification, of grandeur. He really and truly believed that he was God’s representative upon earth. He did not refrain from saying and teaching, “I am Christ”; and he exclaimed, almost in the same breath, “I am the prophet of the Germans, for such is the haughty title I must henceforth assume.”<sup>17</sup>

## Luther's Language

Luther also left a disturbing example in the very words he spoke and wrote:

“He is obsessed with filth and obscenity,” writes Maritain. ... “He would be furiously angry, and when he was angry he fairly vomited filth. He wrote things one cannot quote in decent English,” ...he loved to scream, shout and blaspheme in the manner of the most vulgar German politician, such as our generation has seen more than enough. With pride he himself exclaimed: “Rage acts as a stimulant to my whole being. It sharpens my wits, puts a stop to the assaults of the Devil and drives out care. Never do I write or speak better than when I am in a rage. If I wish to compose, write, pray and preach well, I have to be in a rage” (“Table Talk,” 1210) ...

Luther's writings were rarely beautiful, and most of them display “an undignified vulgarity, spiced with sexual allusions.” I fully agree with one of his commentators (H. Hallam) who says of his language that “Its intemperance, its coarseness, its negligence, its inelegance, its scurrility, its wild paradoxes menaced the foundations of religious morality and were not compensated by much strength and acuteness and still less by any impressive eloquence” (“Introduction to the Literature of Europe”).<sup>18</sup>

Luther wrote with particular vileness against the Jews. He described them as being “full of the devil's feces...which they wallow in like swine.”<sup>19</sup>

## Luther's Attitude Toward Women

Finally, Luther's writings display an astonishingly low opinion of women, as evidenced in the following quotes:

Though womenfolk are ashamed to confess it, yet it is proved by Scripture and experience that there is not one

among many thousands to whom God gives the grace of chastity.<sup>20</sup>

The word and work of God is quite clear, viz. That **women were made either to be wives or prostitutes.**<sup>21</sup>

Even though they grow weary and wear themselves out with child-bearing, it does not matter; let them go on bearing children till they die, that is what they are there for.<sup>22</sup>

## Luther a “Noble Example”?

Certainly, one could put the life of any man beneath a microscope and drudge up plenty of sin, and yet there are some men (and women) who have truly left a noble example in the way they conducted their lives. Was Luther one of them? While it is true that Luther studied the Bible and exhibited amazing courage in the face of fierce opposition from the papacy, historical facts reveal that the example of his life was often characterized with sensuality, dishonesty, alcohol abuse, foul language, arrogance, and a demeaning attitude towards women, to such a degree that even his own friends and countrymen were at times disturbed by his behavior. Considering the evidence, was Martin Luther *really* a “noble example” for Christians to follow?

## Luther and Freedom of Conscience

Ellen White extolled Luther as a noble example to “emulate”—a reformer who brought modern Christians the freedom “to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience.”<sup>23</sup> Mrs. White writes in the forerunner to *Great Controversy*:

Under Luther began the Reformation in Germany... The world was awakened from the slumber of ages, as from land to land were sounded the magic words, “Religious Liberty.”

Was Luther *really* a champion proclaiming religious liberty? According to Wiener, the historical facts of Luther’s life and example tell a far different story:

**The spirit of tolerance** which had been increasing with the Renaissance had **left Germany for centuries as a result of Luther’s reformation**” (Paulsen). **“Luther was instrumental in destroying not merely the fact, but even the principle of liberty throughout Germany”** (Figgis). And let me again quote the great Protestant scholar Troeltsch: “Lutheranism provided a most favorable setting for the development of the territorial state. It smoothed the way for territorial absolutism... Its only service to the actual modern state has been to **encourage the spirit of modern absolutism.**”<sup>24</sup>

Next, it is important to examine how Luther treated various groups that followed the dictates of their conscience.

## **Luther’s Attitude Towards Anabaptists**

Who were the Anabaptists?

The Anabaptists were “left-wing Lutherans”; they preached “Socialism in the 16th century.” It was a “very moderate movement.” They aimed at the “establishment of a democratic socialist republic,” and demanded “abolition of all class distinctions, freedom and equality.” It was a purely religious movement—as compared with that of the peasants—and they had no political aim. The *Cambridge Modern History* says (vol. II, p. 223) that some of the Anabaptists “were anticipating the Quakers,” and that they denounced the dependence of the Lutheran Church upon the State, and denied the right of the secular magistrate to interfere in religious matters.<sup>25</sup>

Did Luther champion the extending of religious liberty to the Anabaptists?

Luther encouraged the secular authorities to commit the worst atrocities. “Many Anabaptists were **beheaded with the express approbation of Luther**, who regarded their heroism in the face of death as proof of diabolic possession.”<sup>26</sup>

## Luther’s Attitude Toward Jews

Wiener explains that when Luther “fought the pope” he was more than willing to accept the Jews as his “allies.” However, “for the greater part of his life Luther was an anti-Semite of the worst caliber.”<sup>27</sup>

Like all his enemies, the Jews in Luther’s eyes were devils. “Whenever you encounter a real Jew, you may in good faith make the sign of the cross and openly and fearlessly pronounce the words ‘This is a veritable devil’”. “Therefore,” the Reformer told his followers, “do not doubt and never forget, beloved Christians, that **apart from Satan himself, you possess no more deadly poisonous, and dreadful enemy than a real Jew**. I know that. They poison wells, kidnap and maltreat children.”

“I would maintain, and no person on earth could alter my opinion, that the Jews as they are today are veritably a mixture of all the depraved and malevolent knaves of the whole world over, who have been dispersed in all countries, similarly to the Tartars and gypsies and such folk, to afflict the different nations with their usury, to spy upon others and to betray, to poison wells, to deceive and kidnap children, in short to practice all kinds of dishonesty and injury.”

There was, according to Luther, no good or human quality about the Jews. “What is good in us Christians, they ignore; what is wrong in us Christians the Jews take advantage of.” “The breath of the Jews reeks.” “Their rabbis teach them that theft and robbery is no sin” (W53, 489).<sup>28</sup>

How did Luther teach Christians to deal with Jews?

**“Never ought a Christian to eat or drink with a Jew.”**

“On being asked whether it would be right to box the ears of a Jew, Luther replied ‘Certainly. **I for one would smack him on the jaw. Were I able, I would knock him down and stab him in my anger. It is lawful, according to both the human and the divine law, to kill a robber; then it is even more permissible to slay a blasphemer.**’” Not a very Christian attitude; but worse is still to come. **“If I had to baptize a Jew, I would take him to the bridge of the Elbe, hang a stone round his neck and push him over with the words ‘I baptize thee in the name of Abraham’”**<sup>29</sup>

**“We ought to take revenge on the Jews and kill them”** is his charitable advice. At other times he is in favor of “forcing them to work and treating them with every severity as Moses did in the desert when he slew 3,000 of them.” ...

“It is our own fault that we have not avenged the sacred blood of our Savior and the innocent blood of countless Christians and children, spoiled since the demolition of Jerusalem until now; **it is our own fault that we have not annihilated the Jews** but placidly let them stay where they are in spite of all their murders, their curses, blasphemies, lies, violations, and that we even protect their schools, their dwellings, their persons and property.” **Nowhere in the history of civilized mankind have the masses been so incited to persecution and murder as by this “Christian Reformer.”** (W53, 525 abridged).<sup>30</sup>

In 1543, Luther wrote his infamous diatribe against the Jews entitled, *On the Jews and Their Lies*.<sup>31</sup> Herein is found Luther’s seven-part final solution for dealing with the Jews:

1. **Set fire to their synagogues and schools;** and what will not burn, heap earth over it so that no man may see a stone or relic of them forever.
2. **Pull down and destroy their houses** since they perpetrate the same nefarious things in them as in their



schools. Pack them all under one roof or stable, like the gypsies, that they may know that they are not lords and masters in our land as they boast.

**3. Deprive them of all their prayer-books.**

**4. Forbid their rabbis henceforth to teach.**

**5. Deprive them of the right to move about the country.**

**6. Forbid them the business of usury, and take from them all their belongings.**

**7. Hand the strong young Jews of both sexes flail, axe, mattock, spade, distaff, and spindle; and make them work for their bread in the sweat of their brow, like all the children of Adam. Confiscate their property and drive them out of the country.**<sup>32</sup>

What was the outcome of Luther’s teachings and “noble” example?

In the Reformer’s own times, the results of his teaching were tragic. “All his counsels were, of course, of such a nature that they **provoked the people to an unchristian persecution of their Jewish citizens.**”<sup>33</sup>

But there were, in Luther’s time, some courageous Protestant leaders who complained bitterly. One of them, Bullinger of Zurich, protests against the “lewd and houndish eloquence” of the Reformer. “Everyone must be astonished at the hard and presumptuous spirit of the man (Luther). The opinion of posterity will be that **Luther was not only a man, but a man ruled by criminal passion.**”<sup>34</sup>

## Attitude Towards the Peasant’s Rebellion

The German working-class of the sixteenth century were called “peasants.” They suffered under unbearable “taxes, rents, rates, work, and so forth.”<sup>35</sup> Luther, at first, felt for their situation, and wrote against the princes who were oppressing the peasants. He carried the banner of individual freedom for a short time, but all that changed when the

peasants rose up in rebellion in 1525, in what has become known as the “Peasants’ War.”

His violence knew no limits...Luther published his pamphlet, “Against the Peasant Bands of Robbers and Murderers,” which Funck-Brentano has described as a “horrible document which it is impossible to read, not only without disapproval but without disgust. **The Reformer, who always had the Gospel on his lips, now talked of nothing but killing, torturing, burning and murdering the very people whom his work had driven to rebel.**” ...

**“To kill a peasant is not murder;** it is helping to extinguish the conflagration. Let there be no half measures! Crush them! **Cut their throats!** Transfix them! Leave no stone unturned! **To kill a peasant is to destroy a mad dog!** ... Our princes must in the circumstances regard themselves as the officers of the divine wrath which bids them chastise such scoundrels. **A prince who failed to do so would be sinning against God very badly.** He would be failing in his mission. A prince who in such circumstances avoided bloodshed would become responsible for the murders and all the further crimes which **these low swine** might commit. It is no longer a question of tolerance, patience, pity. It is the hour of wrath and for the sword; **the hour for mercy is past.**”

“It is a trifle for God to massacre a lot of peasants, when He drowned the whole world with a flood and wiped out Sodom with fire. He is an almighty and frightful God.” “If there are innocent men amongst the peasants, God will certainly prepare and keep them, as He did with Lot and Jeremiah.” “I will not forbid such rulers as are able, to chastise and **slay the peasants without previously them offering terms, even though the Gospel does not permit it.**” Once more, the Devil is brought into it. “The peasants serve the Devil. ... **I believe that there are no devils left in hell, but all of them have entered into peasants.**” And Luther

surpasses himself when he exclaims: “Strange times are these when a **prince can enter heaven by the shedding of blood more certainly than others by means of prayer!**” And he ends with the peroration: “Come, dearly-beloved lords and nobles, strike them, transfix them, and cut their throats with might and main. Should you find death in so doing, you could not wish for one more divine, for you would fall in obedience to God and in defending your like against the hordes of Satan.” ...

**The effect of Luther’s pamphlet was terrible.** It was exactly what the princes had hoped for. **“It was due to Luther’s pamphlet against the peasants,** so said the Strasburg preacher Capito, **that the country had passed from the turmoil of insurrection to the horrors of retaliation and revenge.”** The princes translated the Reformer’s inhuman orders into practice with a terrifying speed.

Even Luther’s own followers got frightened. They reproached him, they tried to explain that the irrational, quick-tempered Luther had acted on the spur of the moment, that he did not mean what he said. In cold blood Luther replied: “An insurgent is not worthy of being answered with reason, for he cannot understand it; such mouths must be stopped with fisticuffs till their noses bleed. The peasants would not hear, would not listen to reason, therefore **it was necessary to startle their ears with bullets, and send their heads flying in the air.** ... If they say I am very hard and merciless, **mercy be damned. Let whoever can stab, strangle, and kill them like mad dogs**” (E24, 294). ...

Luther “attributed his pamphlet against the peasants to Divine inspiration.”

No, Luther would not retract a single word of his pamphlet or apologize for it as the offspring of momentary passion... “Scripture speaking figuratively,” wrote Luther in 1526, “calls rulers drovers, taskmasters, and scourgers. Like the drivers of

donkeys, who have to belabor the donkeys incessantly with rods and whips, or they will not obey, so must the ruler do with the people; **they must drive, beat, throttle, hang, burn, behead and torture**, so as to make themselves feared and to keep the people in check” (E15, 276).

The princes obeyed. A “brutal revenge” took place. Typical is the assertion of one of the princes: “I hope we are now going to play with heads as the boys play with marbles.”

The lot of the poor peasants was worse than horrible. “Captains and overlords vied with each other in the ferocity of the punishments inflicted on the inhabitants of the conquered districts. The mildest way for the victims was to have their heads chopped off with an axe. Many, both men and women, had their tongues torn out; others had their fingers chopped off. The executions took place in public squares, the wives and children of the condemned being forced to witness the horrible spectacle at sight.” Some of the princes made all their subjects who had taken part in the revolt kneel in groups, and then mowed them down with artillery. Others crowded them into the cellars under their castles, where they died of suffocation in the most terrible stench. “Historians have estimated **the number of poor wretches put to death in this way at about 100,000**. The victorious landowners used to amuse themselves by playing bowls with their heads” (Funck-Brentano).

...  
Nor did the Reformer feel any sympathy of any kind for the victims of the atrocities committed by his orders. “‘Why treat the peasants so cruelly?’ I am asked,” wrote Luther in May, 1525; “**let them all be killed**. In such circumstances is it not **God Himself who by our hands, hangs, breaks on the wheel, blows to bits and decapitates**.”

The immediate results were obvious. “The peasants sank back into their servile conditions.” “The practical outcome of the great popular movement was

deplorable. **The condition of the common people became even worse than before.**” “A general and rapid decay of intellectual life was the natural result.”

... The common people sank back into a pitiful state—at least those poor wretches who survived. Germany was a battlefield, disunited, more oppressed than ever by the ruling classes. At this moment the Reformer thought it appropriate to exclaim with pride: **“It was I, Martin Luther, who slew all the peasants in the insurrection, for I commanded them to be slaughtered. All their blood is upon my shoulders. But I cast it on our Lord God who commanded me to speak in this way.”** (E59, 284).<sup>36</sup>

Is this man *really* a “noble” example of liberty?

## Luther and the Word of God

Despite his personal failings and his horrifying track record on religious liberty, is Martin Luther still to be revered for his Bible teachings? Ellen White described Martin Luther in *Great Controversy* as a “champion of the truth.”<sup>37</sup> Writing her *visions* out in the first precursor to *Great Controversy* she penned, “I saw that Luther was ardent and zealous, fearless and bold in reproving sin, and **advocating the truth.**”<sup>38</sup>

There is no question Luther taught justification by faith, and he should be applauded for that. However, he also preached a species of salvation that was totally divorced from sanctification and overcoming sin. The manner in which he conducted his own personal life suggests he believed this philosophy. Furthermore, while Luther taught the church to obey the Ten Commandments, he had little use for the moral teachings of the *Torah*:

**We must put the whole law entirely out of our eyes and hearts,**—we, I say, whom the devil thus assails and torments.<sup>39</sup>

Now if anyone confronts you with Moses and his commandments, and wants to compel you to keep them, simply answer, ‘Go to the Jews with your Moses; I am no Jew. Do not entangle me with Moses. If I accept Moses in one respect (Paul tells the Galatians in chapter 5[:3]), then I am obligated to keep the entire law.’ **For not one little period in Moses pertains to us.**<sup>40</sup>

Faith alone is necessary for justification. **All other things are completely optional**, being no longer commanded or forbidden.<sup>41</sup>

Of interest to Seventh-day Adventists, while Luther approved of the Fourth Commandment, he dismissed the keeping of the literal seventh day:

The Sabbath or rest day is a universal law in order that the people may assemble for the worship of God. But that they should assemble on the seventh day **applies only in the case of the Jews, and the observance of this day is not incumbent on other peoples.**<sup>42</sup>

Luther had some very questionable ideas about the Bible. For example, Luther believed that Jesus was a fornicator:

“**Christ**,” says Luther, “**committed adultery** first of all with the woman at the well about whom Saint John tells us. Was not everybody about Him saying: ‘Whatever has he been doing with her?’ Secondly, with Mary Magdalene, and thirdly with the woman taken in adultery whom He dismissed so lightly. Thus even Christ, who was so righteous, must have been guilty of fornication before He died.”<sup>43</sup>

In addition to his blasphemous charge that Christ who “knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21) was fornicating with women in the Bible, here are some of the others peculiar “truths” that he taught:<sup>44</sup>

1. Questioned whether Moses authored parts of the Pentateuch.
2. Rejected that Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon.

3. Declared Job to be mere allegory.
4. Kings, he said, was “more to be believed than Chronicles.”
5. Esther was “without boots or spurs.” Luther wrote, “I am so hostile...to Esther that I could wish they did not exist at all; for they Judaize too greatly and have much pagan impropriety.”
6. Had serious questions about the books of Jeremiah, Jonah, and the Song of Solomon.

Luther had a particular dislike of the book of James:

Let us **banish this Epistle from the university, for it is worthless.** It has no syllable about Christ, not even naming him except at the beginning. I think it was written by a Jew who had heard of the Christians but not joined them.<sup>45</sup>

He also apparently thought little of Revelation:

About this Book of Revelation of John, I leave everyone free to hold his own opinion. I miss more than one thing in this book and it **makes me consider it to be neither apostolic nor prophetic... I can in no way detect that the Holy Spirit produced it...** They are supposed to be blessed who keep what is written in this book and yet no one knows what it is, to say nothing of keeping it... My spirit cannot accommodate itself to this book... Christ is neither taught nor known in it... Many have tried their hands at it. But until this very day they have also let it alone until now, especially because some of the ancient fathers held it was not the work of St. John the Apostle... For our part, **we share this doubt.**<sup>46</sup>

## Summary

There should be no denying that Luther was a man of courage and zeal, and played an important role in the Reformation by standing up against Papal Rome. He should be honored, applauded, and remembered for that. There is also no doubt that many of his writings are beneficial for

Christians. However, when one examines his life and his teachings, the following is evident.

1. He is not an example to emulate in most areas of his personal life.
2. While he championed religious liberty from Rome, he later often suppressed religious liberty.
3. He doubted large portions of Scripture and many of the “truths” he taught are rejected by even Seventh-day Adventists themselves.

## More Errors Regarding Luther

In her writings about Luther, Mrs. White seems to misunderstand one of the most important events of his life. She explains why Luther decided to enter a Catholic cloister: “An earnest desire to be free from sin and to find peace with God led him at last to enter a cloister and devote himself to a monastic life.”<sup>47</sup>

Based on Luther’s own comments, which he wrote 34 years after the event, historians explain what *really* caused Luther to enter the monastery:

One warm day early in July, he was walking back to Erfurt, ready to resume his work the next day. Dark clouds had gathered and a summer storm began. As he passed within half a mile or so of a small village called Stotternheim, a bolt of lightning flashed into the field beside him, knocking him to the ground in terror. In a moment of naked panic, the inner instincts of his heart came suddenly to the surface as he cried out, “St. Anne! I will become a monk!”<sup>48</sup>

Prior to this event Luther had shown no interest in joining a monastery. Thus, it was this singular event and his subsequent commitment to carry out his rash vow that caused Luther to decide to enter the monastery.

In another instance, Ellen White describes a dramatic awakening to the Bible truth of justification by faith wherein



Luther hears the voice of God as he is climbing Pilate’s staircase:

...suddenly a voice like thunder seemed to say to him: “The just shall live by faith.” Romans 1:17. He sprang to his feet and hastened from the place in shame and horror. That text never lost its power upon his soul. From that time he saw more clearly than ever before the fallacy of trusting to human works for salvation, and the necessity of constant faith in the merits of Christ. His eyes had been opened, and were never again to be closed, to the delusions of the papacy.<sup>49</sup>

The story about Luther hearing the scripture, “The just shall live by faith” at the top of the staircase actually originates from Luther’s son Paul, who was eleven years old at the time when his father told him the story.<sup>50</sup> Because of his young age, some historians have doubted the accuracy of Paul Luther’s story. It is believed that Luther’s theology of justification had not yet advanced to that stage in 1510. One of Luther’s sermons mentions the same event, but describes a different thought that flashed into his mind when he reached the top:

“At Rome I wished to redeem my sire from purgatory; I mounted the stairs of Pilate, and recited the Lord’s Prayer at each step. For a belief prevailed that a person doing this would redeem his soul; but **arriving at the top, I thought, Who knows whether it be so.**” The record does **not** say whether the text, “The just shall live by faith” flashed upon Luther while he was going up the stairs.<sup>51</sup>

Radek Dobias concludes:

Ellen White links Luther’s discovery of justification by faith (Romans 1:17)—his inner turning point—with his experience at the top of Pilate’s stairs. We know that Luther journeyed to Rome in November 1510. However, according to Martin Luther, his new understanding of Romans 1:17 happened in 1518-9, in

his own words, when the text became “the open gate to paradise.” Ellen G. White missed the most important turning point in Luther’s life by nearly a decade, placing it in a time when Luther still had a completely Catholic understanding of salvation.<sup>52</sup>

## Conclusion

More examples could be cited, but these are sufficient to demonstrate that in the historical sections of *Great Controversy*, Mrs. White received her “light” from Wylie, Uriah Smith, J.N. Andrews, and other authors, rather than from angels and visions. While most people are generous enough to accept that Mrs. White was fallible and are willing to dismiss minor mistakes in historical details, some of the historical errors in *Great Controversy* regarding the Sabbath, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, and events in the Protestant Reformers’ lives are *far* from insignificant! If these historical events are understood incorrectly, it could literally change one’s entire worldview! Therefore, it is difficult to swallow the idea that her guiding angelic helpers would sit idly by and allow Mrs. White to incorporate these major historical blunders into her writings.

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald Graybill, “Ellen G. White’s Account of Martin Luther’s Experience from Worms to Wartburg,” 5-6 (unpublished) as cited by Donald McAdams, *Ellen White & the Historians*, 181. Graybill also determined that Mrs. White copied primarily from a version of d’Aubigne that Charles Adams put together for young readers.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen White, *The Signs of the Times*, July 26, 1883, para. 18. She also referred to Luther as “noble” in *The Signs of the Times*, Feb. 19, 1894, para. 5.

<sup>3</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 138.

<sup>4</sup> Weimar, Vol. 2, 131. See Grisar, *Luther*, vol. iv, 145.

<sup>5</sup> Martin Luther, *The Babylonish Captivity*, chapter 3.

<sup>6</sup> Peter F. Wiener, *Martin Luther: Hitler’s Spiritual Ancestor* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1945), 28. The author, Dr. Wiener, was a

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university professor and Christian of Germanic origin. He was **not** a Catholic. All quotes from this book are from the electronically formatted document prepared by Patsy Jackson for Tentmaker Publications. The document can be found online at:  
<http://www.tentmaker.org/books/MartinLuther-HitlersSpiritualAncestor.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 23-24.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 25-26.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>13</sup> Lenz, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 1, 373.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 375.

<sup>15</sup> Wiener, 33.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 21-22.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 19-20.

<sup>19</sup> Oberman, Heiko. *Luthers Werke*. Erlangen 1854, 32:282, 298, in Grisar, Hartmann. *Luther*. St. Louis 1915, 4:286 and 5:406, cited in Michael, Robert. *Holy Hatred: Christianity, Antisemitism, and the Holocaust* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 113.

<sup>20</sup> Weimer, 12.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>22</sup> Erl., 20, 84; Weimer, X, p. II, 301, 13, “Sermon on Marriage”, 1522.

<sup>23</sup> White, *Signs of the Times*, July 26, 1883, para. 18.

<sup>24</sup> Wiener, 44.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 49. (Detailed references given in Grisar, *Luther*, vol. v, 413).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>31</sup> *Wikipedia*. (German: Von den Juden und ihren Lügen; in modern spelling Von den Juden und ihren Lügen)

<sup>32</sup> *Wikipedia*, op. cit. Luther, Martin. *On the Jews and Their Lies*, *Luthers Werke*. 47:268–271; Trans. Martin H. Bertram, in *Luther's Works*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

<sup>33</sup> Wiener, 51.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 35-37.

<sup>37</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 129.

<sup>38</sup> White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1 (1858), 122.

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<sup>39</sup> Luther’s letter to Jerome Weller, Nov. 6, 1530.

<sup>40</sup> *Luther’s Works*, vol. 35, 164-165. English translation of Luther’s Works series consists of Martin Luther’s Bible commentaries, sermons, prefaces, postils, disputations, letters, theology, and polemics.

<sup>41</sup> Luther’s Commentary on Galatians 2.

<sup>42</sup> James Mackinnon, *History of the Reformation*, vol. 4, 198. See also Luther’s sermon statement: “For Paul [Col. 2:16]...abolish[ed] the sabbath, to show us that the sabbath was given to the Jews alone, for whom it is a stern commandment.” Martin Luther, “How Christians Should Regard Moses,” *Luther’s Works: Word and Sacrament I* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960) Vol. 35, 161-174; Martin Luther, *Martin Luther’s Basic Theological Writings* (ed. Lull & Russell) (Fortress Press, 2005).

<sup>43</sup> Wiener, 22, citing *Table Talk*, 1472; Weimar vol. 2, 107.

<sup>44</sup> Points taken verbatim from Mormon scholar John A. Tvedtnes’ article, “Will the Real Martin Luther Please Stand Up”, site: [http://www.fairlds.org/Bible/Will\\_the\\_Real\\_Martin\\_Luther\\_Please\\_Stand\\_Up.html](http://www.fairlds.org/Bible/Will_the_Real_Martin_Luther_Please_Stand_Up.html), extracted June 20, 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Op. cit. Tvedtnes note #10: “Preserved Smith, ‘The Methods of Reformation Interpreters of the Bible,’ *Biblical World* 38/4 (October 1911): 242.”

<sup>46</sup> Op. cit. Tvedtnes note #11: “Jaroslav J. Pelikan (ed.) and George V. Schick (transl.), *Luther’s Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress and Concordia, 1960), 35:398-400. See also C. W. Jacobs, Holman’s Edition of *Luther’s Works*, 6:488-489.”

<sup>47</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 122-123.

<sup>48</sup> Graham Tomlin, *Luther and His World*, (2012), 13.

<sup>49</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 125.

<sup>50</sup> George Dryer, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, 121.

<sup>51</sup> *Theological Quarterly*, Vol. 15, (St. Louis, 1911), 168.

<sup>52</sup> Radek Dobias, “History or Her Story?” (2002), <https://nonsda.org/egw/egw73.shtml>.

# CHAPTER 8

## *Zwingli*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 9 Examined

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Huldrych Zwingli played a significant role in the early development of the Protestant Reformation in Switzerland. In *Great Controversy* Mrs. White wrote the following about him:

As the Reformation became established in Zurich, its fruits were more fully seen in the suppression of vice and **the promotion of order and harmony**. “Peace has her habitation in our town,” wrote Zwingli; “no quarrel, no hypocrisy, no envy, no strife. **Whence can such union come but from the Lord**, and our doctrine, which **fills us with the fruits of peace** and piety?”<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. White quotes Zwingli asking, “Whence can such union come but from the Lord?” There are two possible causes of the peace in Zurich:

1. It was a miracle from the Lord, as Ellen White has Zwingli suggesting in the above quote.
2. Peace and harmony existed because Zwingli had stamped out all rival groups like the Anabaptists.

The evidence on the next pages will show it was the latter, and that Zwingli was not filled with as much “peace” as one might suppose.

### **Zwingli a Persecutor**

Early in his reformist career, Zwingli associated with like-minded reformers Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and George Cajacob. However, by 1524, these reformers had grown in Biblical knowledge and started practicing other Biblical

truths. “Grebel and Manz had taken a position against infant baptism.”<sup>2</sup> Then, the three men formed an Anabaptist church in Switzerland and began baptizing members by immersion. This brought out the true fighting spirit of Zwingli:

Like Luther, Zwingli had little use for Protestant reformers who didn’t agree with him on things like the sacraments. ... He reacted harshly against them, even to the point of **encouraging the city council to arrest, torture, and execute them.**<sup>3</sup>

Not long afterward, Grebel and Manz were imprisoned. In December of 1527, Manz and two others were put to death for their faith by drowning. Zwingli, a man who supposedly was filled with “peace,” owns the unenviable distinction of being the first Protestant to persecute the Anabaptists.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to preaching against the heretics and inciting persecution against them in Swiss cities...

Zwingli wrote a vicious book against the Anabaptists called *Elenchus Contra Catbaptistas*, or *A Refutation of the Tricks of the Catabaptists or Drowners*. He called Anabaptists “wild asses” and other insulting terms and said their immersions were from Hell and that the Anabaptists themselves would go to Hell.<sup>5</sup>

Ironically, Zwingli demanded religious liberty from the Catholics but refused to grant it to others.

## Zwingli and Luther

Mrs. White quotes Zwingli as describing how much he and Luther were in agreement.

That it might be shown how much the Spirit of God is in unison with itself, since both of us, without any collusion, teach the doctrine of Christ with **such uniformity.**<sup>6</sup>

It is true that Luther and Zwingli were in agreement about the failures of the Papacy. It is also true that they were in agreement about persecuting Anabaptists off the face of the

earth. However, the two were in sharp disagreement over the fundamental practice of the Lord's Supper. Luther advocated the *truth* that the bread literally became infused with the body of Christ while Zwingli did not. The disagreement became so sharp that Luther "went so far as to call Zwingli a non-Christian, and ten times worse than a papist."<sup>7</sup> Luther labeled Zwingli and his associates "heretics, liars, and murderers of souls."<sup>8</sup> Both men agreed to attempt to settle their dispute at a conference in 1529, but they could not reconcile. Luther branded Zwingli "the very incarnation of lying, deceit, and hypocrisy."<sup>9</sup> Not long afterward Zwingli was killed in battle (1531) and Luther applauded his death as a "righteous judgment of God, and found fault with the victorious Papists for not exterminating his heresy."<sup>10</sup>

If, as Ellen White wrote, the Spirit of God is indeed evidenced in teaching "the doctrine of Christ with such uniformity," then obviously the Spirit of God was lacking in one or both of these men.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 181. Quotation is from J.A. Wyle, book 8, chapter 15.

<sup>2</sup> David Cloud, *History of the Churches from a Baptist Perspective*, vol. 2, (Port Huron, MI: Way of Life Literature, 2005), 137-160.

<sup>3</sup> Roger E. Olson, *God in Dispute* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 141.

<sup>4</sup> *Wikipedia*, "Anabaptists."

<sup>5</sup> Cloud, *ibid*.

<sup>6</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 174. Quoting from D'Aubigne, book 8, chapter 9.

<sup>7</sup> March, 1528, in Luther's *Great Confession on the Lord's Supper*.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Luther, *Short Confession on the Lord's Supper*, (1544, in Walch's edition, vol. XX, 2195).

<sup>9</sup> *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, 452. De Wette, op. cit. IV, 28.

<sup>10</sup> Wider, *etliche Rottengeister*, Letter to Albrecht of Prussia, April, 1532, in De Wette's edition of *L. Briefe*, vol. IV. 352, 353.

# CHAPTER 9

## *The Diet of Speyer [Spires]*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 11 Examined

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Ellen White's report about the Diet of Speyer in *Great Controversy* emphasizes that liberty of conscience and freedom of thought were attained at the Diet:

One of the noblest testimonies ever uttered for the Reformation was the Protest offered by the Christian princes of Germany at the Diet of Speyer in 1529. The courage, faith, and the firmness of those men of God gained for succeeding ages liberty of thought and of conscience. Their Protest gave to the reformed church the name of Protestant; its principles are the very essence of Protestantism.<sup>1</sup>

The Protest of Spires was **a solemn witness against religious intolerance, and an assertion of the right of all men to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences.**<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, Mrs. White was quite wrong about the outcome of the conference. German historian Dieter Heimke explains the problem with Ellen White's version of history:

While they claimed **for themselves** religious freedom, at the Diet of Speyer the Catholics and Protestants decided in unison for the **suppression of "sects" and "heretics."** Everything that was called "Church" **rallied together in a war of annihilation against those religious groups which stood outside, and a witch hunt started against all those who were called Anabaptists or the like.** ... It is inconceivable how in her representation of the Great Controversy between



light and darkness she could change the facts of history and still claim for herself heavenly inspiration.<sup>3</sup>

At the 1529 Diet there was never a notion that “all men” had a right to “worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences.” Three years earlier, the 1526 Diet of Speyer granted tolerance based upon the will of the majority within a given state. Tolerance, therefore, was limited to a very small group of *approved* churches. “In Germany, toleration was first confined to three confessions—the Catholic, the Lutheran, and the German Reformed.”<sup>4</sup> Historian Hans Goertz explains the dichotomy of tolerance at the Diet:

The second Imperial Diet of Speyer in 1529 proved to be a milestone in the development of the modern notions of freedom of conscience. **At the same time, it represented a step in the history of intolerance towards non-conformists and those espousing different faiths** without the benefit of political protection and support. On the one hand, there was the courageous “Protest” of the nineteen Protestant Estates which refused to submit to political constraints on their religious conscience, and on the other, **there was the Mandate, which stipulated the death penalty for Anabaptism under imperial law.**<sup>5</sup>

There was never any assertion at the conference that all had a right to religious freedom. The princes asserted that *they* had a right to religious freedom. But at the same conference religious tolerance received a setback which would prove to be “the death knell of Anabaptism.”<sup>6</sup> Persecution was revived and the Anabaptists were either killed or forced to flee Europe. Thus, Ellen White’s account about the “right of all men to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences” at the 1529 Diet is far from accurate.

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<sup>1</sup> D'Aubigne, book 13, chapter 6 cited by Ellen White in *Great Controversy*, 197.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 203-204.

<sup>3</sup> Dieter Heimke, "The Diet of Speyer, 1529",  
<https://nonsda.org/egw/gc4.shtml>.

<sup>4</sup> *Wikipedia*, "Diet of Speyer (1526)," as of Aug. 25, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Hans Jürgen-Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, trans. Trevor Johnson (New York: Routledge, 1996), 118.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

# CHAPTER 10

## *Tausen and Tyndale*

*Great Controversy* Chapters 13 and 14 Examined

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In *Great Controversy* Ellen White introduces her readers to a Danish reformer named Hans Tausen. As a young Catholic monk, Tausen decided to go to Germany and study at Wittenberg where Martin Luther was teaching. While there, Tausen became familiar with the principles of the Reformation. Mrs. White describes what happened next:

**On returning to Denmark**, he again repaired to his cloister. **No one as yet suspected him of Lutheranism; he did not reveal his secret**, but endeavored, without exciting the prejudices of his companions, to lead them to a purer faith and a holier life.<sup>1</sup>

In this statement Mrs. White explained that no one in Denmark even suspected Tausen had adopted Luther's philosophy, and the matter was kept a secret by Tausen. Historical records tell a completely different story about Tausen's trip to Germany:

The next year Tausen went to Wittenberg, where he studied under Luther. **His superiors recalled him to Denmark in 1525 because of his growing sympathy with the Reformation...**<sup>2</sup>

This is confirmed by the *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia* which expounds, "In 1523 he entered the University of Wittenberg and heard Luther, but **because of his enthusiasm for the Reformation, was recalled.**"<sup>3</sup> The historical evidence reports that Tausen was called back to Denmark *because* his sympathies for Luther's reformation teachings had become known by his superiors. Therefore, it

is false for Mrs. White to write that “no one as yet suspected him of Lutheranism.” He was recalled to Denmark specifically because his superiors suspected him of Lutheranism. Their action of recalling him from Wittenberg is evidence that Tausen’s beliefs were not a “secret” at all. Rather than being a coward who hid his true beliefs from others, Tausen was transparent about his beliefs.

## Tyndale Slip-Ups

In *Great Controversy* chapter 14, Mrs. White made a series of historical gaffes regarding the English reformer William Tyndale. When Tyndale printed his New Testaments at Worms, she mistakenly wrote: “Three thousand copies of the New Testament were soon finished, and **another edition followed in the same year.**”<sup>4</sup> While all historical sources agree that between 3,000 and 6,000 books were printed in Worms in 1526, no historical evidence exists of “another edition” being printed that same year.<sup>5</sup>

In the following paragraph, she recounts the story of the “Bishop of Durham” contacting “a **bookseller**” to purchase the entire stock of Tyndale’s Bibles, intending to destroy them.<sup>6</sup> The individual she refers to, however, was Augustine Packington—not a *bookseller*, but an English *merchant*.<sup>7</sup> She then claims that Tyndale was arrested and, while in prison, was offered freedom in exchange for revealing who financed the printing of his works. According to her account, to free himself from incarceration, Tyndale named the “Bishop of Durham” as his financial backer.<sup>8</sup> This version of events conflicts with the historical record. It was actually George Constantine who, after his arrest, identified the Bishop in an attempt to secure his release—not Tyndale.<sup>9</sup> Attributing this action to Tyndale is a regrettable error, because it unfairly casts a shadow over his character, suggesting he betrayed others to save himself, when in fact no such evidence exists.

Finally, Mrs. White closes her account of Tyndale by writing:

Tyndale was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and **at one time** suffered imprisonment for many months. He finally witnessed for his faith by a martyr's death...<sup>10</sup>

Mrs. White paints a picture of Tyndale as someone who was imprisoned, then obtained his release by cowardly revealing his sources of financing, then was later betrayed, and finally died a martyr's death. The phrase "at one time" suggests that his imprisonment occurred at a different time than his martyrdom.<sup>11</sup> However, Tyndale's betrayal, imprisonment, and martyrdom were all part of a single chain of events at the end of his life. He was betrayed by Henry Phillips in 1535, imprisoned for about 16 months in Vilvoorde Castle, and executed in 1536. There is no record of an earlier imprisonment.

## Conclusion

The problem is not that Mrs. White made trivial historical mistakes while plagiarizing from other authors. The problem is that Ellen White mischaracterized people. She portrayed Hausen as a coward who hid his beliefs. She painted Tyndale as a coward who betrayed other people to secure his own freedom. This fake history is a slander upon their characters. It reveals that the historical section of *Great Controversy* contains fictional elements invented by Ellen White. For someone so opposed to fictional writings throughout her prophetic career, for someone who said her books "contain clear, straight, unalterable truth," it is surprising to find her creating fiction in her own writings.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 241.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “Hans Tausen”, <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Hans-Tausen>, as of August 25, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Samual Macauley Jackson, editor, *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, vol. 11 (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1908), 278.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 246.

<sup>5</sup> Jacobus A. Naudé, “Emergence of the Tyndale–King James Version Tradition in English Bible Translation,” *Theological Studies* 78 no. 1 (Sep. 2022).

<sup>6</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 247.

<sup>7</sup> All historical sources describe Packington as a merchant, not a bookseller. See *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*.

<sup>8</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 247.

<sup>9</sup> John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of the Church: Containing the History and Sufferings of the Martyrs* (London: Scott, Webster, and Geary, 1836), 518.

<sup>10</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 247.

<sup>11</sup> This mistake and others on Tyndale are pointed out by Donald R. McAdams, *Ellen White and the Historian: A Neglected Problem and a Forgotten Answer* (West Village, CA: Oak & Acorn Publishing, 2022), 164–165.

<sup>12</sup> Ellen White, Letter 339, 1904.

# CHAPTER 11

## *French Revolution*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 15 Examined

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Mrs. White's description of the French Revolution as a fulfillment of Bible prophecy is one of the worst examples of her rewriting history to force it to fit into the SDA prophetic jigsaw puzzle. Many of the prophetic interpretations appearing in the 1888 and 1911 versions of *Great Controversy* mirror those of SDA prophecy commentator Uriah Smith, who published an epic book on Bible prophecy in 1877.<sup>1</sup> Regardless of the source, William Peterson, in his analysis of this chapter, determined that the end product was a chapter that "carelessly" misread or exaggerated historical facts, "and occasionally leaving out crucial facts, thereby distorting the significance of the event."<sup>2</sup> In this chapter, Mrs. White followed Smith's example of trying to jam the square pegs of historical events into the round holes of SDA prophetic interpretations, and they did not fit.

### **Suppression of the Scriptures**

Revelation 11:3 describes "two witnesses" who would prophesy "in sackcloth" for 1,260 days. Mrs. White claims the "two witnesses represent the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament."<sup>3</sup> Mrs. White converts these days into years and explains that the Bible was repressed for a period of 1,260 years, from 538 to 1798.

During the greater part of this period, God's witnesses remained in a state of obscurity. The papal power

sought to hide from the people the word of truth, and set before them false witnesses to contradict its testimony.<sup>4</sup>

The truth is that this prophecy cannot possibly refer to Biblical suppression from 538 to 1798 for the simple reason that the Bible was not suppressed for the entirety of this time period as the passage itself requires.

First, it is important to understand that the Catholic Church was not in a position to hide the Bible from all of Christendom. A major split in the Catholicism occurred in 1054, meaning a large proportion of all Christians alive during the period of 1054 to 1798 lived outside of Roman Catholicism's sphere of influence. The Eastern Orthodox churches did not repress the Scriptures to the degree that Catholicism did. By the fifth century, many Eastern churches already had the Scriptures translated into their native languages.<sup>5</sup>

Even before this schism, Oriental churches had separated from mainstream Christianity after the Council of Chalcedon in 451. These included the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, the Syriac Orthodox Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church, and the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church.<sup>6</sup> These churches had significant populations in Egypt, Ethiopia, Syria, Armenia, and other parts of the Middle East. In addition, the Nestorian churches, extending into Persia, India, and Central Asia, had separated from mainstream Christianity after the Council of Ephesus in 431. All of these Christians had the Scriptures in their native languages.<sup>7</sup>

One significant figure who advocated for a translation of the Bible into local languages was Cyril of Methodius (827–869), a Byzantine missionary. Together with his brother Methodius, they translated the Bible into the Slavic languages.<sup>8</sup> Their efforts brought the Scriptures to tens of millions of people in Russia and Eastern Europe who spoke Slavic languages. While this effort was focused on the Slavic languages, it reflects a broader trend in some parts of the



Eastern Orthodox Church to make the Scriptures more accessible to people by translating them into local languages. The fact that the Eastern Orthodox Church did not repress the Scriptures to the degree that Rome did, and even translated them into native languages, along with the fact that the Oriental and Nestorian churches had the Scriptures in their local languages, casts considerable doubt on the idea that the Bible was in a “state of obscurity” for 1,260 years.

Secondly, SDAs have never produced any historical evidence to support their theory that the Bible was suppressed before the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The Bible was available in Latin. Latin was the predominant language in Western Europe before the 11th century, particularly in religious, scholarly, and administrative contexts. Latin served as the language of Roman Catholic religious services, liturgy, and theological writings. The Catholic Church played a central role in medieval European society, contributing significantly to the widespread use of Latin. Latin was also the language of education, literature, business, and government communications. While Latin dominated in formal and written contexts, various vernacular languages were spoken by the general population.<sup>9</sup> Latin coexisted with these vernacular languages rather than replacing them in everyday communication.

The situation began to change gradually after the 11th century with the rise of vernacular languages which began to be used more in literature, law, and administration. The emergence of universities and the increasing importance of vernacular literature contributed to the decline of Latin as the exclusive language of learning and communication. Therefore, it was not until the 11<sup>th</sup> century that Latin began to fall out of use by the common people.

The earliest report of official Catholic suppression of the Scriptures in the native languages comes from a letter. “Gregory VII wrote to the Duke of Bohemia that he could not allow the publication of the Scriptures in the language of the country.”<sup>10</sup> That letter was written in 1080 A.D. Over the

next two centuries various local synods banned the Scriptures, mostly in response to heresies such as the Albigenses. In response to the Reformation, more strenuous efforts were made by the Catholic Church to restrain Bible reading in the native languages of the laity. These restrictions began to be relaxed in the 1800s and Pope Leo XIII even encouraged Bible reading in 1898 by granting indulgences to those who did so for at least “a quarter of an hour” per day.<sup>11</sup> Prior restrictions on the Bible were finally officially overturned “after 1943 when Pope Pius XII issued an encyclical that not only allowed Catholics to study Scripture, it encouraged them to do so.”<sup>12</sup>

While Catholicism repressed the laity’s access to the Scriptures to a greater or lesser extent for nearly 700 years, the beginning and ending dates are nowhere near the dates of 538 to 1798. For example, in approximately 600 A.D. Pope Gregory wrote the following to a layman:

The Emperor of heaven, the Lord of men and of angels, has sent you His epistles for your life’s advantage—and yet you neglect to read them eagerly. Study them, I beg you, and meditate daily on the words of your Creator. Learn the heart of God in the words of God...<sup>13</sup>

This quote, from the head of the Roman Church, is the exact opposite of suppressing the Scriptures, and yet it came approximately 60 years *after* 538. Pope Gregory *encouraged* the study of the Scriptures. The first official Catholic statement suppressing the Scriptures in native languages came 542 years after 538. The Catholic Church’s negative stance towards making the Scriptures available to the laity was not entirely repudiated until 1943. There are no official Catholic decrees in either 538 or 1798 that have anything to do with the suppression of the Scriptures. Ellen White’s dates simply do not match any historical reality.

## Does Egypt Represent Atheism?

In Revelation 11:8, the “two witnesses” lay dead for three and half days in “the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” Ellen White tells us this city represents France during the French Revolution of the 1790s:

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. ... **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. ... 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.**<sup>14</sup>

First, it is important to understand the definition of *atheism*. Atheism “is specifically the position that there are no deities.”<sup>15</sup> Therefore, atheists do not believe in God or any gods. As will be shown below, neither Egypt nor the Pharaoh fits this description in any way.

In order to connect France with Egypt, Mrs. White attempts to portray Egypt as atheistic by pointing to the fact that Pharaoh said “I know not Yahweh” (Ex. 5:2). The fact that Pharaoh did not know the Hebrew God Yahweh is hardly reason to suppose Egypt was an atheist kingdom. To claim Egypt was atheistic based upon this single verse defies both Scriptural and historical evidence. The ancient Egyptians were highly religious, especially during the time of the Exodus, at which time God said He would execute judgment against the “gods of Egypt” (Ex. 12:12). If Egypt

truly represented atheism, then why would an atheistic country have gods?

Later, Jeremiah prophesied of Egypt:

And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the **gods of Egypt**...the houses of the **gods of the Egyptians** shall he burn with fire. (Jer. 43:12-13)

Jeremiah went on to opine against the “gods in the land of Egypt” (44:8) and “Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods” (46:25). Therefore, according to Scripture, it is a sham to define Egypt as “atheism.”

Even Ellen White repeatedly mentioned the religious nature of the Egyptians in her book *Patriarchs and Prophets*, directly contradicting her atheism theory in *Great Controversy*:

- 214: Egyptians in Joseph’s era were involved in “worship of false gods.”
- 245: Pharaohs participated in the “worship of the gods.”
- 259: Children of Israel were “bowing down to their [Egyptians’] false gods.”
- 259-260: The Egyptians “worshiped deities termed by the Israelites false gods.”
- 263: The plagues “silence their [Egyptian] boasting of the blessings received from their senseless deities.”
- 263: “Moses...entered the lordly halls of the king of Egypt. There, surrounded by...rich paintings and sculptured images of heathen gods.”
- 272: “The sun and moon were objects of worship to the Egyptians.”
- 283: When chasing the Israelites, Pharaoh took his priests with him “to secure the favor of the gods.”
- 305: By freeing the Israelites, God had “shown Himself to be above all the gods of Egypt.”
- 317: Golden calf was an “imitation of the gods of Egypt.”
- 334: “God delivered Israel with...judgments upon all the gods of Egypt.”

In the appendix of the same book, the publishers go into great detail describing all of the Egyptian gods.<sup>16</sup> To claim

that Egypt was an apt representation of atheism is thoroughly refuted by the Bible, Ellen White's own writings, and SDA publications which all show the Egyptians were a highly religious people. It is mind-boggling why Mrs. White would incorporate Uriah Smith's fake theory about Egypt representing "atheism" when it contradicts her own writings. To say that Egypt represents atheism is pure fiction.

Finally, it is a mystery how the SDA pioneers settled upon France as the identity of the "great city" where the Lord was crucified. It is obvious that the great city where Jesus was crucified was Jerusalem. Old Jerusalem was called the "great city" in Jeremiah 22:8. The New Jerusalem is called the "great city" in Revelation 21:10. Instead of choosing the obvious interpretation, Ellen White chose to put the prophetic stamp of approval on Uriah Smith's false theory and interpret this "great city" to be France because France fit into the prophetic jigsaw puzzle Smith was constructing.

### Three-and-a-Half-Day Period

Revelation 11:11 speaks of a resurrection of the two witnesses after a three-and-a-half-day period:

After three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

Mrs. White, again following the lead of Smith, interprets these two witnesses as "the Bible." She describes this period of time as follows:

It was in 1793 that the decrees which abolished the Christian religion and set aside the Bible passed the French Assembly. **Three years and a half later** a resolution rescinding these decrees, thus granting toleration to the Scriptures, was adopted by the same body.<sup>17</sup>

First, following Smith's theory, Mrs. White assumes the three-and-a-half-day period should be converted into three-

and-a-half years using the prophetic year-day principle although there appears to be no compelling reason to do so. Secondly, while there is no doubt the French manifested antagonism towards religion during the period of the French Revolution, there is no historical evidence to support a three-and-a-half-year period of Bible suppression. Ellen White points to “decrees” passed by the French Assembly that “set aside the Bible” as the beginning of the period, and decrees “granting toleration” as the termination of the period. If such decrees existed, they should be readily available in the historical records of the French Assembly for this time period. However, they are not found therein. Where is the evidence? Harold Snide investigated this prophecy and discovered that history does not support Ellen White’s version of events:

The problem from a historical standpoint is to find three and one half years during which God’s Word remained dead as a result of this government action, and after which period of three years and a half, the Bible was unusually exalted. ...we shall find no such period of three and a half years in the events of Revolutionary France. We shall find that the event usually suggested as terminating the period, either did not occur at the time indicated, or else was an affair of minor significance. Furthermore, we shall discover that the intense antagonism to God and His Holy Book did not last nearly so long as three and a half years but **ended after a few months**. A simple narration of the principal events of the Revolution, involving religion and the church, will make this all very clear. ...

It was November 26 [1793] when the Council of the Commune outlawed all other religions. Previous acts of the revolutionary government had assured nominal liberty to worship to all; and just nine days after the Council of the Commune outlawed Christianity, the Convention, a superior governmental body, forbade violence contrary to liberty of worship. And on May 9, 1784, the Convention under the influence of

Robespierre, decreed the worship of the Supreme Being. The government support of any worship was abolished September 20, 1794, without much discussion. This automatically brought a considerable degree of religious liberty. It is true that the non-juring priests still suffered some persecution, but this was far more from political than from religious animosity.

On February 21, 1795, Biossy d'Anglas made a speech and a motion for complete separation of Church and State. This was passed, allowing any kind of religious worship throughout France, but with some restrictions as to place, advertising, endowments, etc. The refractory clergy were still considered criminal, but this was a political matter, and could hardly be considered the death of God's Two Witnesses. In the provinces there was much delay and opposition by local officials in permitting the liberty granted by the Convention.

A further attempt was made in late 1794 and early 1795 to revive interest in the tenth-day festivals in the hope of competing with Christianity and its weekly Lord's Day; but this effort was a ludicrous and dismal failure.

A new constitution was demanded to replace that of 1793. Its formation was in the hands of comparatively moderate men. Separation of Church and State and freedom of worship were incorporated in this new constitution. It was adopted August 17, 1795. Thus we see that in less than six months the atheistic enactment of November 26, 1793, was abrogated; and in less than two years there was actually greater religious freedom guaranteed on a fundamental legal basis, than existed prior to the outbreak of atheism. The "Two Witnesses" just simply did not stay "dead" three and a half years.

Moreover, we can discover no adequately significant event coming even approximately three and a half years after the atheistic supremacy, to mark the close of the period. Three and a half years from November

1793, would bring us to the spring of 1797. It has been asserted that the Convention then repudiated its atheistic pronouncement. History shows no such action. In the first place, the Directory was in power, not the Convention, in 1797. Furthermore, the atheistic intolerance had spent its force and had been repudiated by decree and by the new constitution of 1795, so this work did not remain to be done in 1797.

Others take an earnest speech by Camille Jordan, June 17, 1797, as the event closing the three and a half days. On the contrary, this speech, instead of raising the “Two Witnesses,” came at a time when they had been much alive for over a year; it dealt with minor phases of religious liberty such as the privilege of ringing church bells, and it failed in its object.<sup>18,19</sup>

Thus, the idea of the Bible being suppressed in France for three-and-a-half years is unsupported by historical reality.

## 1260 Years of Papal Supremacy

For several centuries, Protestants bantered around various dates for the beginning and ending of the 1,260 days/years of papal supremacy (Rev. 11:3 and 12:6). In 1798, Anglican priest David Simpson was perhaps the first to propose the dates of 538 to 1798.<sup>20</sup> Miller later adopted these dates, and following Miller’s lead, Ellen White incorporated his dates into *Great Controversy*. Ellen White writes:

The 1260 years of papal supremacy began with the establishment of the papacy in A. D. 538, and would therefore terminate in 1798. At that time a French army entered Rome, and made the pope a prisoner, and he died in exile. Though a new pope was soon afterward elected, the papal hierarchy has never since been able to wield the power which it before possessed.<sup>21</sup>

The rise of the papacy to prominence did not happen on a single date, nor was the 538 A.D. victory of the papacy over the Arians (Ostrogoths) the most important event in the



rise of papal power. The rise of papal power occurred through a series of events that transpired over five centuries. Some of the more important events are listed below:

- Pope Leo I robustly asserted papal authority. He famously claimed that the Pope inherited the fullness of Peter's power, not just his office. He asserted papal supremacy in both doctrinal matters (approved by the Council of Chalcedon in 451) and jurisdictional disputes.
- The fall of the Western Roman Empire (476) contributed to the Papacy's rise in the West. With the imperial political structure gone, the Papacy emerged as a primary source of stability, administrative continuity, and moral authority in Rome and increasingly throughout Western Europe.
- Pope Gregory I (590-604) is regarded by many scholars as the first universal pope. He greatly expanded papal administrative control over the vast papal estates, effectively making the Papacy the largest landowner in Italy. He sent missionaries to evangelize pagan lands, extending Rome's spiritual jurisdiction and influence. He asserted papal primacy over other bishops.
- After Pope Stephen II anointed Pepin as King of the Franks (754), Pepin defeated the Lombards and granted the Pope control over territories in central Italy. This "Donation" formed the legal basis for the Papal States, establishing the Pope as a temporal ruler with sovereign territory for the first time. This was a massive step in the Papacy's secular power, of far greater significance than the 538 date.
- Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as Emperor of the Romans in 800. This act was deeply significant because it established the precedent that the Pope had the authority to bestow the imperial crown, implicitly suggesting papal superiority over secular rulers.

- The Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals were a collection of forged ecclesiastical documents that were compiled around the mid-9th century. They greatly exaggerated papal authority and claimed ancient precedents for papal supremacy in matters of church law and jurisdiction over bishops. These forgeries, were widely accepted as genuine for centuries and provided a powerful legal basis for the expansion of papal power during the medieval period.

By the end of the 10th century, the Papacy had firmly established itself as a unique spiritual and temporal power in Western Europe, setting the stage for its peak influence in the Middle Ages. Many significant events marked the papacy's rise to power over a period of more than five centuries, some of which were of much greater significance than the 538 defeat of the Ostrogoths.

Just as the papacy arose to power over a period of more than five centuries, its loss of power was also a gradual process. Papal supremacy was not lost on a particular date, such as 1798. On the contrary, papal power started declining as early as 1054 and has continued unabated:

- The Great Schism between the Eastern and Western churches occurred in 1054. The Eastern Orthodox Church rejected the pope's authority. Church leaders in Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, no longer recognized the pope's claims to universal supremacy or infallibility. The papacy lost jurisdiction and influence over a vast and significant portion of the Christian world.
- In the 1300s, powerful, centralized nation-states in Europe began asserting their authority over national churches, including taxation of clergy and control over church appointments, directly challenging papal supremacy.
- In 1309, the papacy relocated to Avignon, France, for nearly 70 years, largely under the influence of the French monarchy. This period severely damaged the

papacy's prestige and moral authority. It was perceived by many across Europe as being subservient to French political interests, undermining its claim to universal authority.

- The Western Schism (1378-1417) resulted in the existence of two popes for nearly four decades, and at one point three, rival popes, each claiming legitimacy and excommunicating the others. This event was a catastrophic blow to the papacy's credibility and unity. It also strengthened the Conciliar Movement, the idea that a general council of the Church had greater authority than the pope, further challenging papal supremacy.
- The Protestant Reformation began in 1517 and continued through the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Martin Luther and other reformers directly challenged fundamental doctrines of the Catholic Church, including the authority of the pope. They emphasized sola Scriptura (Scripture alone) and sola fide (faith alone), fundamentally undermining the papacy's role as the ultimate interpreter of scripture and dispenser of salvation. The Reformation led to the permanent religious division of Western Europe. Large regions (Germany, Scandinavia, England, parts of Switzerland and Scotland) broke away from papal authority, forming new Protestant churches. This drastically reduced the Pope's spiritual and political sway over significant portions of the continent.
- In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, European monarchs continued to consolidate power, often asserting their authority over religious matters within their own kingdoms. The Treaty of Westphalia (1648) established the principle of "*cuius regio, eius religio*" (whose realm, his religion), meaning that the ruler of a territory could determine its religion. This dramatically weakened papal influence in international affairs and

affirmed the sovereignty of secular states over religious unity.

- French Revolution and Napoleon: The backdrop to 1798 was the French Revolution, which was fiercely anti-clerical and sought to dismantle the power of the Catholic Church and the Papacy. Napoleon Bonaparte, a product of this revolution, was a key figure in these events.
- General Berthier's Invasion of Rome in 1798 effectively abolished the Papal States and the Pope's temporal sovereignty, at least temporarily. The pope was taken prisoner and later died in captivity.

It appears Miller selected the 1798 date because it provided a meaningful termination point for his 1,260-day theory. However, it was only one of a long line of papal setbacks, and it was quite temporary in nature. A new pope was elected in 1800 to replace the captured pope, and the Papal States were returned to the papacy after the fall of Napoleon in 1815. These events effectively reversed the 1798 debacle and the papacy continued on as before. It was not until 1870 that Italy finally annexed the Papal States, permanently ending the temporal rule of the papacy.

Thus, the dates of 538 and 1798, so often endorsed by Ellen White in *Great Controversy*, are not legitimate markers of the rise and fall of Catholic supremacy. They were chosen by Miller because they bolstered his argument that Christ would return in 1843/1844.

## More Errors

William Peterson noted a historical error in a statement Mrs. White made about Protestants fleeing from the French Revolution: "Thousands upon thousands found safety in flight."<sup>22</sup> Peterson notes:

Had she read Wylie more carefully, she would have noticed, immediately preceding the statement which she quoted, this sentence: "Meanwhile another, and yet

another, rose up and fled, till the band of self-confessed and self-expatriated disciples of the Gospel swelled to between 400 and 500” (Wylie, volume two, p. 212). Wylie himself is given to hyperbole in discussing Catholic persecutions; and when one compounds his exaggerations with Mrs. White’s, the distance from historical reality is very great indeed.<sup>23</sup>

The SDA sect has been aware of the incorrectness of this chapter of *Great Controversy* for over a century but their corporate leadership has been loath to alter the words that so many followers falsely believe to have originated from visions and angelic guidance. SDA professor W.W. Prescott became aware of some of these problems in *Great Controversy*, and on April 26, 1910, he wrote a letter to W.C. White in which he said:

Two or three of us have made a very careful search of all the histories of the French Revolution to be found in the Congressional Library, in an effort to find some authority for this statement concerning this decree suppressing the Bible; but thus far **we have been utterly unable to find any reference to any such action.**

SDA leader W. A. Spicer wrote to L. R. Conradi in 1919, admitting that corrections had been made to *Great Controversy* and more were needed:

A comparison of the new and old edition of “Great Controversy” will show many things changed, although **some things should surely have been corrected further.**<sup>24</sup>

Thus, it is evident that even the SDA corporate *elite* were aware that the actual events of the French Revolution do not corroborate with Ellen White’s writings.

## Symbolic Earthquake

Ellen White adopted Smith’s teaching that the “earthquake” of Revelation 11:13 was not literal but symbolized the

French Revolution.<sup>25</sup> However, two chapters later she identified the earthquake of Revelation 6:12 as a literal event. Likewise, she identified the mighty earthquake of Revelation 16:17-18 as a literal earthquake.<sup>26</sup> It seems Mrs. White was comfortable switching between literal and symbolic interpretations of the word “earthquake” in Revelation so long as it supported the narrative she was fabricating.

## Conclusion

In 1972, White Estate assistant secretary Ronald Graybill published an article in *Spectrum* showing that Ellen White copied chapter 15 of *Great Controversy* primarily from Uriah Smith’s *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation*.<sup>27</sup> While Smith’s writings are no doubt entertaining, they lack thorough scholarship and contain many unsustainable and even laughable assertions. Unfortunately, Mrs. White incorporated Smith’s delusionary teachings into her *inspired* book. SDA leaders failed to correct the problem, and now SDAs are stuck with a fake history. The fantastic claims put forward in this chapter of *Great Controversy* are simply out of synch with historical reality.

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<sup>1</sup> Many of Ellen White’s writings in the *Great Controversy* on prophetic subjects such as the Two Witnesses and the French Revolution are merely rehashes of the earlier writings of Uriah Smith which are found in his 1877 book *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation: A Series of Seminars*.

<sup>2</sup> William S. Peterson, “A Textual and Historical Study of Ellen G. White’s Account of the French Revolution,” *Spectrum* 2 no. 4 (1970): 63.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 267.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> The New Testament was written in Greek which was the native language of many people in the East for centuries. By the fifth

century the Scriptures had been translated into several Eastern languages such as Coptic, Armenian, Syrian, and Georgian.

<sup>6</sup> For documentation on these churches, see

<https://commons.ctschicago.edu/c.php?g=1255211&p=9200828>.

<sup>7</sup> The primary language of the Oriental churches was Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic. For many of their adherents in Mesopotamia, Persia, and the surrounding regions, Syriac was the local language or a very closely related one. The *Peshitta*, a Syriac translation of the Bible, was their standard version of the Scriptures. These Christians had extensive missionary activities across Asia, including into Central Asia, India, and China. For their missionary work to be effective, they translated parts of the Scriptures into the local languages of the peoples they sought to evangelize. While complete Bibles in every language might not have always been available, portions like the Gospels and Psalms were often translated. Evidence of these translations exists in various historical records and manuscript fragments in languages such as Sogdian, Uighur, and Chinese. Each of the Oriental churches has its own liturgical language, which in many cases also served as a significant “local” language for a considerable portion of their history and for religious texts, including the Scriptures:

Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria: The Scriptures were translated into Coptic, the native language of Egypt, which is a direct descendant of ancient Egyptian. Several dialects of Coptic were used for this purpose.

Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church: The liturgical language is Ge'ez. The Ge'ez Bible was used by these churches and represents a very early translation into a local African language. While Amharic and Tigrinya are the most widely spoken languages in Ethiopia and Eritrea today, Ge'ez holds a place of high importance for religious texts.

Syriac Orthodox Church: Used Syriac as its liturgical language, and the *Peshitta* is their standard Bible. Syriac was the local language for many in Syria, Mesopotamia, and the surrounding areas.

Armenian Apostolic Church: The Armenian Bible was translated into the spoken language of the Armenian people (Grabar) in the 5th century.

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (India): While the historical and liturgical language is Syriac, Malayalam is the local language in the Kerala region of India where this church is based. Over time, the need for the Scriptures in Malayalam led to translations into this local language, alongside the continued use of Syriac in liturgy.

<sup>8</sup> “Moravia,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*,

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Moravia> . Slavic-speaking nations

included Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Serbia, Croatia, Dalmatia, Bulgaria, Bohemia, and Moravia.

<sup>9</sup> These included Old English in England, Old French in parts of France, Old High German in Germanic regions, and others.

<sup>10</sup> “Use of the Word,” *Catholic Encyclopedia*,

<sup>11</sup> Pope Leo XIII, *Preces et Pia Opera*, 045. (*Enchiridion Indulgentiarum*), Dec., 1898, 694.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Kutys, “Changes in Catholic Attitudes Toward Bible Readings,” <http://www.usccb.org/>, extracted on Aug. 15, 2015. The encyclical was *Divino Afflante Spiritu*.

<sup>13</sup> Philip Schaaf, Henry Wace, *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. 7, “Epistles of St. Gregory the Great,” 156.

<sup>14</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 269.

<sup>15</sup> “Atheism,” *Wikipedia*.

<sup>16</sup> Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1890), 758. The appendix was supplied by the publishers, not Ellen White.

<sup>17</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 287.

<sup>18</sup> A. Aulard, *The French Revolution: A Political History*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1910). Aulard summarizes the incident thus: “Jordan, in a fulsomely sentimental and pseudo-pathetical speech, depicts all France as desolated by the loss of her church bells. He earns the nickname of Bell-Jordan (Jordan Carillon), and his campaign fails.”

<sup>19</sup> Harold Snide, “The Development of My Ideas Concerning the Divine Inspiration of Mrs. E. G. White: A Personal History”, 1950, <https://www.nonsda.org/egw/snide.shtml>.

<sup>20</sup> David Simpson, *A Plea for Religion and the Sacred Writings: Addressed to the Disciples of Thomas Paine, and Wavering Christians of Every Denomination* (Solomon Wiatt, 1809), 184-187.

<sup>21</sup> White, *Great Controversy* (1888), 266.

<sup>22</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 277.

<sup>23</sup> William S. Peterson, “A Textual and Historical Study of Ellen G. White’s Account of the French Revolution,” *Spectrum* 2 no. 4 (1970): 60.

<sup>24</sup> W. A. Spicer letter to L. R. Conradi, November, 1919.

<sup>25</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 286.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 304-305, 636.

<sup>27</sup> See Appendix 3.



# CHAPTER 12

## *Moral Decline of Protestantism*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 16 Examined

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One of the themes developed in *Great Controversy* is the theory that the Protestant churches had become worldly in the early 1800s, necessitating a “coming out” from those churches in a second reformation. This theme is laid out by Ellen White in chapter 16 and expounded upon further in later chapters. Using scolding words, Mrs. White compares that generation of Protestant believers to the “Jews in Christ’s day” and to the “papists in the time of Luther”:

Thus the spirit inspired by the Reformation gradually died out, until there was almost as great need of reform in the Protestant churches as in the Roman Church in the time of Luther. There was the same worldliness and **spiritual stupor**, a similar reverence for the opinions of men, and substitution of human theories for the teachings of God’s word.<sup>1</sup>

Without providing any historical evidence to support her claims other than Protestantism’s rejection of William Miller’s false prediction about the return of Christ in 1844, Mrs. White goes on to paint a dire portrait Protestantism:

...pride and extravagance were fostered under the guise of religion, and **the churches became corrupted**. Satan continued to pervert the doctrines of the Bible, and traditions that were to ruin millions were taking deep root. The church was upholding and defending these traditions, instead of contending for “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Thus were degraded the principles for which the Reformers had done and suffered so much.<sup>2</sup>

Is it true that Protestantism in North America had deteriorated to the point where they were in the same condition as the Jews during the time of the Messiah or the papacy during the Reformation? Was the situation *really* that dire? If that was the case, then one would expect to see substantial historical documentation of this terrible situation from Christian historians, and yet such evidence is noticeably lacking.

The question is whether Mrs. White's harsh picture is based on facts or whether it is an unfair attempt to denigrate Protestant churches in order to justify the Adventists' later "coming out" from them after the Great Disappointment of 1844 to form their own *superior* denomination. The historical facts paint a far different picture of the state of the Protestant churches in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

## The Second Great Awakening

The Second Great Awakening was a religious revival movement in North America that began around the year 1790 and continued until the 1840s. It was characterized by a widespread resurgence of interest in religion, fervent evangelism, and a focus on personal salvation. The movement emphasized the need for personal conversion, encouraging individuals to have a direct and personal relationship with God. The movement led to the growth of existing Christian denominations and the emergence of the Evangelical churches.

This **spiritual resurgence fundamentally altered the character of American religion**. At the start of the Revolution the largest denominations were Congregationalists, Anglicans, and Quakers. But by 1800, Evangelical Methodism and Baptists, were becoming the fastest-growing religions in the nation.<sup>3</sup>

The movement had profound theological and social implications. The movement advanced the Protestant

Reformation by stressing the Biblical concept of “free will” instead of predestination. The movement also fueled a missionary zeal to spread Christianity both domestically and internationally. The Second Great Awakening had social implications, sparking various reform movements such as the abolition of slavery, women’s suffrage, health reform, and temperance. Many reformers were motivated by their religious convictions. Overall, the Second Great Awakening was a transformative period in North American religious history, leaving a lasting impact on the spiritual, social, and cultural fabric of the United States and Canada.

The movement also made a lasting impression on Seventh-day Adventism, which formed in the wake of the awakening. SDAs adopted much of their theology and practices, such as camp-meetings, from Methodism. Ellen White copied voluminously from evangelical authors, temperance leaders, and health reformers, all the while denouncing them as Babylon.

Historians conclude:

The repeated and varied revivals of these several decades **helped make the United States a much more deeply Protestant nation than it had been before.** Finally, the Second Great Awakening also included greater public roles for white women and much higher African-American participation in Christianity than ever before.<sup>4</sup>

## Conclusion

While it is easy to point to individual churches that were corrupt, or individual ministers who had moral failures, these isolated incidents do not represent the spiritual trend of the Protestant movement in the 1800s. Evangelical Christianity sprouted and flourished during this period. Even Ellen Harmon came from an Evangelical Methodist congregation. Long-held theological views like pre-destination were abandoned by many Christians, including Adventists, in

favor of the doctrine of free will. African-Americans became involved in the revival at rates never before witnessed. Overall, the church was not in a “stupor,” as Ellen White contends. On the contrary, it was experiencing one of its greatest periods of growth and transformation that set the stage for the modern Evangelical movement. The period of North American history prior to the fake revival of William Miller in the 1840s was an era of major Protestant church growth and reformation.

Unfortunately, the movement lost some momentum at about the same time as the false and fanatical teachings of William Miller began to mesmerize churches in the United States in the early 1840s. The 1844 Movement introduced great confusion about the date of Christ’s return in North America. Thousands of believers had their faith shaken when Jesus did not return when Miller predicted. Not only that, the Millerites’ separationist attitude and fanatical fervor helped to derail the Second Great Awakening. Protestant ministers were forced to spend time battling Miller’s false teachings rather than continue the revival. How sad it was to witness this great revival end in confusion and schism with the birth of delusional sects such as the Mormons, the Jehovah’s Witness, and Seventh-day Adventism.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 297.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

<sup>3</sup> “22c. Religious Transformation and the Second Great Awakening,” extracted on Aug. 29, 2015, <http://www.ushistory.org/us/22c.asp>.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

# CHAPTER 13

## *Faked Signs of the End*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 17 Examined

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The Bible describes several distinct signs that are to happen before Christ's return:

The **sun shall be darkened**, and the **moon shall not give her light**, and the **stars of heaven shall fall**, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. (Mark 13:24-26)

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a **great earthquake**; and the **sun became black** as sackcloth of hair, and the **moon became as blood**; And the **stars of heaven fell** unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. (Rev. 6:12-13)

In *Great Controversy*, Ellen White claims the signs described in the above verses were fulfilled in events that took place in 1755, 1780, and 1833:

These signs were witnessed before the opening of the nineteenth century. In fulfillment of this prophecy there occurred, in the year **1755, the most terrible earthquake that has ever been recorded.**<sup>1</sup>

May 19, **1780**, stands in history as "**The Dark Day.**" Since the time of Moses **no period of darkness of equal density, extent, and duration, has ever been recorded.**<sup>2</sup>

In **1833**...the last of the signs appeared which were promised by the Saviour as tokens of His second advent. ... This prophecy received a striking and

impressive fulfillment in the great meteoric shower of November 13, 1833. That was **the most extensive and wonderful display of falling stars which has ever been recorded...**<sup>3</sup>

Were these three events *really* a fulfillment of Bible prophecy as Ellen White contends? Or were they merely naturally occurring phenomena of no particular prophetic significance?

## The Lisbon Earthquake of 1755

Mrs. White claimed the Lisbon earthquake was “the most terrible earthquake that has ever been recorded.” There is no doubt the Lisbon earthquake ranks amongst the top-twenty worst earthquakes in history. The earthquake was centered about 120 miles off the coast of Portugal in the Atlantic Ocean. Casualty estimates range between 10,000 and 100,000. The city of Lisbon suffered severe damage. A subsequent Tsunami also caused damage along the coast of Portugal. One notable aspect of this earthquake was the wide area over which it was felt. The earthquake was felt across Europe and North Africa, from Finland to Greenland, and even as far west as the Caribbean.<sup>4</sup>

While there is no doubt that the Lisbon earthquake was horrific, it is certainly questionable if it was “the most terrible earthquake” in history, and it is even more doubtful it was any type of fulfillment of Bible prophecy. A review of the most destructive earthquakes in history shows that the Lisbon event was neither the strongest nor the most destructive. Following is a list of the most destructive earthquakes in history in terms of human fatalities:<sup>5</sup>

| Rank | Date          | Location           | Deaths  | Magnitude |
|------|---------------|--------------------|---------|-----------|
| 1    | Jan. 23, 1556 | China, Shansi      | 830,000 | ~8        |
| 2    | Dec. 26, 2004 | Indonesia, Sumatra | 300,000 | 9.3       |

|           |                     |                         |               |            |
|-----------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------|------------|
| 3         | July 27, 1976       | China, Tangshan         | 255,000       | 8.0        |
| 4         | Aug. 9, 1138        | Syria, Aleppo           | 230,000       | ?          |
| 5         | May 22, 1927        | China, near Xining      | 200,000       | 8.3        |
| 6         | Dec. 22, 856        | Iran, Damghan           | 200,000       | ?          |
| 7         | Dec. 16, 1920       | China, Gansu            | 200,000       | 8.6        |
| 8         | Feb. 28, 1780       | Iran, Tabriz            | 200,000       | ?          |
| 9         | Mar. 23, 893        | Iran, Ardabil           | 150,000       | ?          |
| 10        | Sep. 1, 1923        | Japan, Kwanto           | 143,000       | 8.3        |
| 11        | Oct. 6, 1948        | Turkmenistan            | 110,000       | 7.3        |
| 12        | Dec. 28, 1908       | Italy, Messina          | 100,000       | 7.5        |
| 13        | Sep., 1290          | China, Chihli           | 100,000       | ?          |
| 14        | Oct. 8, 2005        | Pakistan, Kashmir       | 80,400        | 7.6        |
| 15        | Nov., 1667          | Caucasia, Shemakha      | 80,000        | ?          |
| 16        | Nov. 18, 1727       | Iran, Tabriz            | 77,000        | ?          |
| <b>17</b> | <b>Nov. 1, 1755</b> | <b>Portugal, Lisbon</b> | <b>70,000</b> | <b>8.7</b> |
| 18        | Dec. 25, 1932       | China, Gansu            | 70,000        | 7.6        |

In examining this historical evidence, it is obvious that the Lisbon earthquake was **not** “the most terrible earthquake that has ever been recorded.” By far, the most terrible earthquake was in China in 1556, which **killed nearly twelve times as many people** as the Lisbon earthquake. If one were to pick any earthquake on the above list as a “sign of the end,” the most likely candidate would be the 2004 earthquake and tsunami in Sumatra, Indonesia, which killed between 230,000 and 300,000 people. It caused deaths in 15 nations spread out from Indonesia to India to Kenya to South Africa (5,000 miles from the epicenter). “Scientists say the tremor was so strong that it wobbled Earth’s rotation on its axis by almost an inch.”<sup>6</sup> The earthquake, which lasted longer than any major earthquake in recorded history, and

the subsequent tsunami, left nearly 2 million people homeless. This earthquake was far more apocalyptic in nature than the earlier Lisbon earthquake. Not only did the Sumatra earthquake kill four times as many people as the Lisbon earthquake, but also it occurred 249 years nearer to the return of Christ!

Not only was the Lisbon earthquake less deadly than other earthquakes, it was also less powerful. The Lisbon earthquake has been estimated to be magnitude 8.7. Following is a list of earthquakes of equal or greater magnitude that have occurred since the 1900s:<sup>7</sup>

| Rank | Location  | Date       | Magnitude |
|------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| 1    | Chile     | 05/22/1960 | 9.5 Mw    |
| 2    | Alaska    | 03/27/1964 | 9.3 Mw    |
| 3    | Indonesia | 12/26/2004 | 9.1 Mw    |
| 4    | Japan     | 03/11/2011 | 9.0 Mw    |
| 5    | Russia    | 11/04/1952 | 9.0 Mw    |
| 6    | Ecuador   | 01/31/1906 | 8.8 Mw    |
| 7    | Chile     | 02/27/2010 | 8.8 Mw    |
| 8    | Alaska    | 02/04/1965 | 8.7 Mw    |

The 1960 earthquake in Chile was **more than seven times more powerful** than the Lisbon earthquake. This is further evidence that the Lisbon earthquake was neither the most powerful nor the most destructive in history.

Neither is there any evidence that the Lisbon earthquake was the most widespread. The Lisbon earthquake was felt in the western Caribbean islands, a distance of nearly 3,600 miles from the epicenter. However, other earthquakes have



been felt over larger areas. For example, in 2013, the 8.2 Mw earthquake in the Sea of Okhotsk in the Pacific Ocean shook apartment buildings 4,000 miles away in Moscow, causing thousands to flee from the buildings.<sup>8</sup>

There is simply no evidence that the Lisbon earthquake was either the deadliest, most powerful, or most widespread earthquake. Aside from that, it occurred in 1755, which is nearly three centuries in the past. How could an earthquake that occurred nearly three centuries ago be a fulfillment of Bible prophecies regarding the *imminent* return of Christ?

## The Dark Day of 1780

In 1842, Josiah Litch was one of the first Millerites to claim a dark day on May 19, 1780, was a supernatural sign of the end.<sup>9</sup>

That was a day of supernatural darkness. It was not an eclipse of the sun, for the moon was nearly at the full. It was not owing to a thickness in the atmosphere, for the stars were seen.<sup>10</sup>

It is uncertain where Litch got the idea that the stars were visible, because published eyewitness accounts do not mention such.

In 1853, James White, in his book *Signs of the Times*, printed a series of eyewitness statements about the dark day. At least four of them included mention of cloud cover:

- “...at length, the sky became overcast with clouds...” (p. 8)
- “...the heavens were covered with a dense cloud for three or four hours.... During this time, the clouds were tinged with a yellowish or faint red, for hours...” (p. 9)
- “After nine the clouds grew very thick...” 9
- “About midnight [after the dark day], the clouds were dispersed...” (p. 11)

On page 12 of the book, one eyewitness reported that “there was a strong smell of soot.” If anyone reading these quotes had ever witnessed a forest fire, they would suspect the darkness had a very natural origin.

In the 1888 *Great Controversy*, in words strikingly similar to Litch’s account, Mrs. White introduced the dark day of 1780 as follows:

That the darkness was not due to an eclipse is evident from the fact that the moon was then nearly full. **It was not caused by clouds**, or the thickness of the atmosphere, for in some localities where the darkness extended, the sky was so clear that the stars could be seen.<sup>11</sup>

Like Litch, Mrs. White portrays this as a *supernatural* event, quoting some of the same statements found in James White’s 1853 book. Curiously, she left out all of the eyewitness statements that mentioned clouds and a smell of soot. These selective omissions left the impression that there was no natural cause for this darkness, thus distorting the truth and leading people astray.

In addition, Mrs. White made the following claim about the dark day: “No period of darkness of equal density, extent, and duration, has ever been recorded.” Is this true?

Unlike earthquakes, dark days have not been measured for intensity, extent, and duration throughout history. It is difficult to ascertain the accuracy of Mrs. White’s claim that there has not been a darker day since the supernatural darkness God brought upon the Egyptians during the time of Moses. However, it is now known that the 1780 event was caused by smoke from forest fires and that similar dark days have occurred throughout human history.

Researchers from the University of Missouri identified fire scars in the rings of trees in the “Algonquin Highlands of southern Ontario,” and dated those to the spring of 1780.<sup>12</sup> There is corroborating evidence reported from New England in 1780, where some witnesses “noted that the Dark Day was

accompanied by ‘thick, dark and sooty’ rain and the smell of burnt leaves.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, the dark day was caused by smoke from huge forest fires raging in Ontario, Canada, combined with a heavy storm front passing through the area. The darkness was limited primarily to the New England region of the United States.<sup>14</sup> It is difficult to understand how Ellen White could view this localized event as an apocalyptic warning that fulfilled the prophecy of Revelation 6. The Scripture appears to describe an event that takes place on a far more global scale.

Although not as common as earthquakes, dark days occur with some regularity throughout the world. There is no reason to believe the Dark Day of New England in 1780 was particularly worse or any more apocalyptic than any other dark day. Immediately after the event, the people of New England superstitiously regarded the darkness as an apocalyptic sign of the end of the world. Even when Harvard professor Samuel Williams reported it was caused by forest fires, the populace was slow to believe. It would take other dark days in that same region over the next century to convince the superstitious that nothing apocalyptic had occurred. One of the worst was in 1881, when the sun was occluded in New England by as much as 90 percent.<sup>15</sup>

While Mrs. White claimed, **“no period of darkness of equal density, extent, and duration, has ever been recorded,”** the evidence is lacking to support that contention. Numerous dark days due to forest fires and volcanoes have been reported throughout history. For example, the Tambora volcanic eruption of 1815 blocked out the sunlight for nearly a year.

Another example of a dark day occurred on August 26, 1883, on the island of Krakatoa, Indonesia. A massive volcano erupted and the following was reported:

By mid-afternoon, the town of Anjer was enveloped in an eerie darkness. Clouds of smoke had spewed into the air, covering the sun. People could hardly see their hands in front of their faces. ... The dust cloud caused

darkness as far as 250 miles away, and close to the volcano, it stayed dark for three days.<sup>16</sup>

In 1950, the Great Fire in Alberta sent smoke across the United States. Some smoke even travelled to England, turning skies yellow. In parts of the northeastern U.S., the sun was obscured during daylight hours, and streetlights turned on automatically. This event was much larger in extent than the 1780 event.

In September 2020, intense wildfires in Oregon and California led to extremely darkened skies across the cities of San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle. Skies were near-dark at noon, and in some places, cars used headlights at midday. Since this event occurred 240 years closer to the return of Christ, it is a far better candidate than the dark day that occurred two and a half centuries ago.<sup>17</sup> To regard an event occurring in 1780 as a “sign of the end” is becoming increasingly preposterous as time continues.

## **The Meteor Shower of 1833**

Mrs. White describes the meteor shower of November 13, 1833, as “the most extensive and wonderful display of falling stars which has ever been recorded.” The 1833 meteor shower was indeed an impressive event. In 1878 the historian R. M. Devens wrote:

During the three hours of its continuance the day of judgment was believed to be only waiting for sunrise, and, long after the shower had ceased, the morbid and superstitious still were impressed with the idea that the final day was at least only a week ahead. Impromptu meetings for prayer were held in many places, and many other scenes of religious devotion, or terror, or abandonment of worldly affairs, transpired, under the influence of fear occasioned by so sudden and awful a display.<sup>18</sup>

There is no denying that the 1833 shower was intense, and it had a sobering effect on some people. The question to

be considered is whether or not the 1833 shower was the most extensive ever recorded, as claimed by Mrs. White.

In 1863, Yale professor Hubert Anson Newton identified the 1833 shower as being part of a recurring pattern of meteor showers that visited the earth about every 33 to 34 years. Examining historical reports, Newton discovered that the Leonid showers began as early as 585 A.D. He traced accounts of the Leonid showers through various cultures for almost a thousand years. Impressive displays took place in the years 1533, 1366, 1202, 1037, 967, 934, and 902.<sup>19</sup>

34 years prior to 1833, on November 12, 1799, Prussian scientist Alexander von Humboldt, observing from his camp in Cumanã, Venezuela, described the Leonid shower thus: “no part of the sky so large as twice the Moon’s diameter not filled each instant by meteors.”<sup>20</sup>

An observer in Florida that same night noted that the meteors were “at any one instant as numerous as the stars,” while at Iserstadt, Germany, “bright streaks and flashes” were seen even though the day had already broken.<sup>21</sup>

Humboldt inquired among the South American natives and discovered that in 1766 a similar “rain of stars” had also been seen.<sup>22</sup>

In 1966, the Leonid shower returned with a display that rivaled the displays of 1799 and 1833. On the night of November 17th, 1966, observers in Arizona reported rates as high as 2,400 per minute, or 144,000 per hour! These reported rates surpass the highest reported rates observed in 1833 (100,000/hour).<sup>23</sup>

If the recurring Leonid meteor showers are indeed a fulfillment of Bible prophecy, then one would have to conclude that it was the 1966 shower—not the 1833 shower—that fulfilled prophecy. Not only was the 1966 shower of equal or greater intensity, but it was also 133 years closer to the return of Christ.

## Unanswered Questions

If the events of 1755, 1780, and 1833 were indeed fulfillments of prophecy, several questions are raised:

**1. Why didn't the signs produce the effect described in the Bible?** Revelation 6:15-16 describes the people who witness the signs as being panic-stricken. These people, including kings and leaders of nations, are described as running to the mountains, hiding in dens, and asking for the mountains to fall on them. There is no doubt that a few superstitious souls were frightened because they interpreted these events as a sign of the apocalyptic end of the world. However, they created no widespread panic with national leaders headed for the mountains. There is no historical evidence that the signs of 1755, 1780, and 1833 produced the reaction described in Revelation 6.

**2. Why were the signs localized when the Bible seems to indicate a global scale?** The signs described in the Bible appear to be global events intended as a warning to be witnessed by the inhabitants of the entire world. On the contrary, the three signs pointed out by Ellen White were on a much smaller, localized scale. While the Lisbon earthquake was felt over Europe and most of North Africa, the damage was limited primarily to Portugal and Morocco. The dark day was confined primarily to the New England region of the United States. The Leonid meteor shower was perhaps the most widespread event, yet even it was seen only in the Western Hemisphere.

**3. Why didn't those who witnessed the signs see the return of Christ?** Mark 13:24-26 seems to indicate that those who see the signs of Christ's return will also witness His return: "Then shall *they* see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." (Mark 13:26) "They" refers to the people in the prior two verses who witnessed the apocalyptic signs. The signs would be

meaningful to those who also witnessed the return of Christ, not to subsequent generations.

None of those who witnessed any of the signs mentioned by Ellen White are alive today. The 1755 earthquake occurred nearly three centuries ago. How could it be a sign of Christ's *imminent* return? Furthermore, Revelation 6:12-14 seems to indicate the signs will follow each other in fairly rapid succession. It suggests that the same people who witness the earthquake, also witness the darkness and the stars falling. Given the life expectancies of the era, it is questionable whether anyone old enough to have witnessed and remembered the Lisbon earthquake in Portugal in 1755 was still alive 78 years later in 1833 to witness the Leonid meteor shower in North America. Furthermore, everyone who witnessed these "signs" died long ago. What good are "signs of the end" if those signs are not witnessed by the people living in the last generation, or even by the great-great-grand-parents of those in the last generation?

## Conclusion

These unanswered questions lead to the undeniable conclusion that Mrs. White was deluded about these events being a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. The events of 1755, 1780, and 1833, could not possibly be the signs of the end described in Revelation 6:12-14. Furthermore, they certainly were not as singular as she describes them to be. In every case, they are simply naturally occurring events. Although somewhat rare, these events are not unique and have been repeated many times throughout history in different places, sometimes on a grander scale than the events of 1755, 1780, and 1833.

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<sup>1</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 304.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 308.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> “1755 Lisbon Earthquake,” Wikipedia,

<sup>5</sup> “Deadliest Earthquakes on Record,” InfoPlease  
<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0884804.html>; Wikipedia, “List of Earthquakes”, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_earthquakes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_earthquakes),  
 extracted on Aug. 9, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Editors of Publications International, Ltd., “Twelve of the Most Destructive Earthquakes,” <http://science.howstuffworks.com/>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Wikipedia, extracted on Aug. 21, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Will Englund, “Massive Russian earthquake felt 4,000 miles from Epicenter,” The Washington Post, May 24, 2013.

<sup>9</sup> Josiah Litch, *Signs of the Times*, May 18 and Sep. 7, 1842.

<sup>10</sup> Josiah Litch, *Prophetic Expositions*, vol. I (Boston: Joshua V. Himes), 151.

<sup>11</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy* (1888), 306.

<sup>12</sup> Evan Andrews, “Remembering New England’s Dark Day,” History in the Headlines, May 19, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> “It was dark in Maine and along the southern coast of New England with the greatest intensity occurring in northeast Massachusetts, southern New Hampshire and southwest Maine. ...George Washington noted the dark day in his diary while he was in New Jersey.” —University of Missouri-Columbia. (2008, June 9). “Mystery Of Infamous 'New England Dark Day' Solved By Tree Rings,” Science Daily, extracted on Sep. 13, 2015 from [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/06/080606145620.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/06/080606145620.htm).

<sup>15</sup> Andrews.

<sup>16</sup> Deborah Hopkinson, *Storyworks* 11, iss. 4 (Jan 2004): 8.

<sup>17</sup> • Ash cloud from the Mt. Pinatubo volcano in the Philippines (1991)  
 • Smoke from massive forest fires in Indonesia (1985-86, 1997-98)  
 • Smoke from massive fires in Mexico (1997-98)

<sup>18</sup> Joe Rao, “The Leonids, King of the Meteor Showers,” *Sky and Telescope Magazine*, 1998.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. Counting falling meteor rates is not a precise science.



# CHAPTER 14

## *The Fake Reformer*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 18 Examined

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In *Great Controversy*, Ellen White spends several chapters delving into the exploits of some of the great Protestant reformers, such as Huss, Luther, Tyndale, and Wesley. Then, in chapter 18 (“An American Reformer”), she introduces her readers to a fellow named William Miller. The big question is, what *reforms* did William Miller bring to the people of God that would qualify him to be classed with such worthy Protestant leaders?

Miller, although a sincere and dedicated Christian, badly misinterpreted Bible prophecy and started a fanatical movement setting dates for the return of Christ. He stubbornly refused to listen to other ministers who tried to correct his errors with Biblical evidence. His ill-advised movement ended in disaster and the ruin of many lives. Miller later admitted it was all a huge mistake. Knowing this, does this man *really* deserve to be classed with the likes of Huss, Luther, Tyndale, and Wesley?

### **Who Was William Miller?**

William Miller was born in 1782. He began attending school at age nine and “like many another farm lad of the day, attended a few terms of the district grammar school when not wanted on the farm.”<sup>1</sup> He received no further education after the age of 18. He married in 1803, and began a career in farming. As a young man, he rejected his Baptist upbringing and became a Deist. Miller served in the War of 1812 as a captain in the United States Army and afterward renewed his



Baptist faith. About this time, Miller began studying his King James Version Bible intensely. In 1818, his studies led him to the conclusion that Christ was going to return in 1843. During the years in which he was developing his theories about the date of Christ's return, Miller was deeply involved with occult masonry. He joined the Masonic Lodge in Poultney, Vermont, in 1803, and "advanced to the highest degree which the lodges then in the country, or in that region, could confer."<sup>2</sup> He eventually resigned from Freemasonry in September of 1831.<sup>3</sup>

Miller based his belief about the imminent return of Christ on his peculiar calculations and interpretations of various Bible passages. He first presented his findings in a document published in 1822. In September of 1833, Miller was "granted a license to preach by the Baptist Church of Hampton and Whitehall, New York."<sup>4</sup> Soon afterward he began lecturing in various churches, sharing with them his theories on Christ's imminent return.

At first, Miller resisted setting an exact date for the return, but he narrowed it down to a specific year:

My principles in brief, are, that Jesus Christ will come again to this earth, cleanse, purify, and take possession of the same, with all the saints, sometime between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844.<sup>5</sup>

## Miller's Proofs

In the forerunner to *Great Controversy*, Ellen White describes how God sent angels to help Miller figure out the Lord was returning in 1843/1844:

I saw that God sent his angel to move upon the heart of a farmer who had not believed the Bible, and led him to search the prophecies. **Angels of God repeatedly visited that chosen one, and guided his mind, and opened his understanding to prophecies** which had ever been dark to God's people. The commencement of the **chain of truth** was given him,

and he was led on to search for link after link, until he looked with wonder and admiration upon the word truth.

While Mrs. White attributes Miller's "chain of truth" to divine guidance, Miller, after the Disappointment of 1844, was not quite so confident the angels of God were behind his findings. Unlike Ellen White who claimed angels were helping her write her books, Miller humbly wrote, "I never pretended to be divinely inspired."<sup>6</sup>

So, if Miller did not get his dates by direct inspiration, then how did he come up with them? Unlike the great Protestant reformers, who were familiar with the original languages of the Bible and who studied the rules of proper Biblical exegesis at well-respected institutions of higher learning, the grammar-school-educated Miller took various disparate passages in the King James Version of the Bible and linked them together in the most unconventional ways to come up with *proofs* that Jesus would return in 1843-44.

Despite his lack of training or knowledge of Biblical languages, Mrs. White assured her readers that he "possessed strong mental powers." However, some might dispute that after reading his "fifteen *proofs*" of Christ's return. She further assured her readers that he acquired "the wisdom of heaven by connecting himself with the Source of wisdom."<sup>7</sup> However, while he was devising his theories, he was a practicing occult mason of the highest degree. As such, one might wonder what "source of wisdom" he was actually connected to.

Miller concocted a total of fifteen *proofs* that showed Jesus would return in 1843. To illustrate the absurdity of his *proofs*, one of them will be examined below. Miller claimed that the number 666 would end in 1843! As an example of his supposed "strong mental powers" and ability to connect to the "wisdom of heaven," here is his first proof:

ONE: I prove it by the time given by Moses, in the 26th chapter of Leviticus, being seven times that the

people of God are to be in bondage to the kingdoms of this world; or in Babylon, literal and mystical; which seven times cannot be understood less then seven times 360 revolutions of the earth in its orbit, making 2520 years. I believe this began according to Jeremiah 15:4, “And I will cause them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem.” and Isa. 7:8, “For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Resin: and within three score and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people”,--when Manasseh was carried captive to Babylon, and Israel was no more a nation,--see chronology, 2 Chron. 33:9, “So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel,”--the 677th year B.C. Then take 677 out of 2520, leaves A.D. 1843, when the punishment of the people of God will end.<sup>8</sup>

Huh? This is an illustration of the reckless “proof-texting” used by Miller to prove his theory. The foundation of this *proof* is Leviticus 26:18:

If also after these things, you do not obey Me, then I will punish you **seven times** more for your sins.

**This verse says absolutely nothing about the second coming of Christ!** The word “times,” which appears in the King James Version, is not even in the original Hebrew. The Hebrew indicates that the emphasis of this passage is on the *degree* of punishment, not the *length of time*. God is saying he will punish sinners more severely by a factor of seven. With proofs like this, it is no surprise that most serious Bible students dismissed Miller’s “proofs” as childish nonsense. The other fourteen proofs Miller concocted are equally dubious.<sup>9</sup>

Miller managed to garner a small following, primarily among those who were less educated and also those who

tended to follow after the latest religious excitement. His disciples called him by the affectionate terms “Prophet Miller” and “Father Miller,” indicating their childlike trust in him.<sup>10</sup> After the initial time period passed without event on March 21, 1844, Prophet Miller had the courage to admit his mistake to his disappointed followers. After this first disappointment, a new date of October 22, 1844, was proposed by his cohort Samuel Snow. Having already been burned once by his foolhardy date-setting exploits, Prophet Miller was at first reluctant to endorse the new date. However, Snow eventually won Miller over to the new date, and Miller signed an endorsement of the date in early October of 1844. On October 12, 1844, Prophet Miller published this letter to the editor of the *Midnight Cry*:

I thank God for this light. My soul is so full I cannot write. My doubts and fears and darkness are all gone. I see that we are yet right. . . and my soul is full of joy; my heart is full of gratitude to God. Oh, how I wish I could shout; but I will shout when the King of Kings comes.

Methinks I hear you say: “Bro. Miller is now a fanatic!” Very well - call me what you please. I care not - Christ will come on the seventh month and bless us all.<sup>11</sup>

Apparently undaunted at being accurately labeled a fanatic, Prophet Miller staked his religious career on the new date for Christ’s return. The Millerite preachers again trumpeted the Second Coming of Christ and garnered as many as 50,000 followers, some of whom would eventually leave their churches to join the fledgling Adventist movement. When Christ again failed to return there was a second, even more bitter disappointment.

## The Aftermath

The devastation and ruin wreaked by this delusional movement is nearly unparalleled in modern religious history.

**Financial Ruin** – Many believers, deluded into thinking they were helping the cause of God, gave liberally to spread the false Millerite message. Not expecting to need worldly assets, some sold homes, businesses, and lands. Others sold or gave away their jewelry, furniture, and farm animals. Some farmers declined to plant crops reasoning it would be a waste of effort since the Lord was returning before the harvest. After the Disappointment, many deluded Millerites and their families were left with little or nothing—reduced to utter poverty, their life savings worse than wasted on a futile effort to convince the world of a false date.

**Psychological Ruin** – Aside from the despair of financial ruin, many suffered dearly for their false belief. This ranged from disillusionment to long-term depression and even insanity. Many suffered humiliation, being the subject of ridicule and mockery from their neighbors for being dull-headed enough to believe Miller's ridiculous proofs. Others suffered deeper problems. Ronald Numbers examined the records of psychiatric wards after the Disappointment and found at least 170 cases of Millerites admitted to asylums.<sup>12</sup>

**Fanaticism** – Some believers got sucked into the fanatical movements that always prey on the victims of severe emotional letdowns. Some of these fanatical offshoots, such as James' and Ellen White's radicalized "shut-door Adventists" continued for a while to set new dates for Christ's return. Eventually, those fanatics would either regain their senses and return to their prior normal life, or else enter newly organized sects, such as the Jehovah's Witness and Seventh-day Adventism.

**Health Damaged** – Perhaps unprepared to spend the entire night outside, according to newspaper reports, some elderly

people and children collapsed from exposure during the cold, wet night of October 22, 1844.<sup>13</sup>

**Deaths** – Newspapers in the Northeastern United States reported some suicides and attempted suicides after the Disappointment. Some poverty-stricken individuals died of starvation. There were also reports of parents murdering children and husbands murdering wives.<sup>14</sup> Many paid a heavy price for their folly of believing a delusion.

Over the next several years Miller and most of the believers and principal leaders of the movement admitted they were mistaken and returned to their previous churches. Millerite leader George Storrs summed it up well when he wrote in early 1845:

As the event did not occur, we were mistaken in supposing that we were actuated by the Holy Spirit in making the cry we did in respect to the manner and the time. I repeat it, **it was not of God.** ... Every day confirms me more and more that it is a true word, and the fanaticism that is breaking out almost continually in some form among those who still persist that the entire movement, about the tenth day, was all of God serves to add to my conviction **that we were deluded by a mere human influence**, which we mistook for the Spirit of God.<sup>15</sup>

Who was that “mere human influence” that deluded the people of God? William Miller—the same man who developed his theories of Christ’s return while deeply involved with occult Masonry. A broken man, Miller withdrew from public ministry but continued to look for the imminent return of Christ until he died in 1849.<sup>16</sup>

Now that the true history of William Miller is known, does this sound like the story of a great American reformer? Or does it sound like the story of a deluded fanatic who led God’s people astray with an occult-inspired false teaching?

## Miller Endorsed by Ellen White

Ellen White wrote fondly of “Father Miller,” believing him to be a modern-day John the Baptist. She describes him with glowing terms in an early version of *Great Controversy*:

As **John the Baptist** heralded the first advent of Jesus, and prepared the way for his coming, so also, **Wm. Miller** and those who joined him, proclaimed the second advent of the Son of God. ...

God led the mind of Wm. Miller into the prophecies, and gave him **great light** upon the book of Revelation.<sup>17</sup>

Today, few SDAs would be able to readily identify any “great light” on Revelation originating solely from Miller. Much of his understanding was, in fact, derived from existing Protestant premillennial commentaries of his era. Miller’s singular focus was on proving that Christ would return around 1843. Thus, Miller interpreted Revelation’s texts in ways that supported his preconceived conclusions. Following the Great Disappointment, many Millerites came to view his teachings not as “light” but as a profound delusion that misled thousands. Even the fledgling Adventist movement eventually discarded fourteen of his fifteen proofs of Christ’s imminent return and fundamentally reinterpreted the fifteenth. (For further discussion on Miller’s “great light,” visit Appendix 8).

In later versions of *Great Controversy*, Mrs. White placed Miller alongside the great Protestant reformers, such as Luther and Wycliffe. She even went so far as to compare Miller’s *calling* to preach his false proofs with God’s call of the prophet Elisha:

As **Elisha** was called following his oxen in the field, to receive the mantle of consecration to the prophetic office, so was **William Miller** called to leave his plow and open to the people the **mysteries** of the kingdom of God.<sup>18</sup>



Just exactly what *mysteries of God* did William Miller open to the people? Mrs. White explains:

In 1818, he reached the solemn conviction that in about twenty-five years Christ would appear for the redemption of His people.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, as a high-degree practicing Freemason, Miller felt a “calling” to preach a *mystery* that turned out to be a falsehood—even by his own admission, and by the admission of every other leader of his own movement! It is outrageous, if not blasphemous, to compare Freemason Miller’s **false** and delusional message with the **true** messages of John the Baptist and Elisha.

### **Compare: Miller vs. Protestant Reformers**

Knowing that Miller set false dates for Christ’s return, knowing he developed these teachings while at the highest degree of Freemasonry, knowing that false dates were the primary emphasis of his message, knowing that his message, albeit sincere, deluded thousands of people, does he *really* deserve to stand among the giants of the Christian faith? Was he *really* a great reformer?

All of the great Protestant reformers were leaders in their churches, had extensive training at top universities, displayed outstanding scholarly achievement, and each had far-reaching influence. Ellen White mentions these facts in *Great Controversy*:

### **Wycliffe**

Wycliffe **received a liberal education**, and with him the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom. He was **noted at college** for his fervent piety as well as for his remarkable talents and **sound scholarship**. In his thirst for knowledge he sought to become acquainted with **every branch of learning**. **He was educated in the scholastic philosophy, in the canons of the church, and in the civil law**, especially that of

his own country. . . . The power of his genius and the extent and thoroughness of his knowledge commanded the respect of both friends and foes. His adherents saw with satisfaction that their champion **stood foremost among the leading minds of the nation...**<sup>20</sup>

## Huss and Jerome

Huss studied at the provincial school, and then repaired to the **university at Prague**, receiving admission as a charity **scholar**. . . . At the university, Huss soon **distinguished** himself by his untiring application and rapid progress, while his blameless life and gentle, winning deportment gained him **universal esteem**. . . . After completing his college course, he entered the priesthood, and rapidly attaining to eminence, he soon became **attached to the court of the king**. **He was also made professor and afterward rector of the university where he had received his education. In a few years the humble charity scholar had become the pride of his country, and his name was renowned throughout Europe.**<sup>21</sup>

Brilliancy of genius, eloquence and **learning**--gifts that win popular favor--were **possessed in a pre-eminent degree** by Jerome....<sup>22</sup>

## Luther

At the age of eighteen, he entered the **University** of Erfurt... A retentive memory, a lively imagination, strong reasoning powers, and untiring application soon placed him in **the foremost rank among his associates**.<sup>23</sup>

Luther was ordained a priest and was called from the cloister to a **professorship in the University of Wittenberg**. Here he applied himself to the study of the Scriptures in the original tongues.

After his return from Rome, Luther received at the University of Wittenberg the degree of **doctor of divinity**.<sup>24</sup>

**Lefevre**

Lefevre, a man of extensive learning, a professor in the University of Paris.<sup>25</sup>

**Leaders of the English Reformation**

Barnes and Frith, the faithful friends of Tyndale, arose to defend the truth. The Ridleys and Cranmer followed. These leaders in the English Reformation were **men of learning**...<sup>26</sup>

The reformers often appeared before kings and high government officials:

Other teachers who ranked high for their **ability and learning** joined in proclaiming the gospel, and it won adherents among all classes, from the homes of artisans and peasants **to the palace of the king**.<sup>27</sup>

While the true Protestant reformers appeared before kings, “Millerism” was derided by U.S. President John Quincy Adams who found himself “greatly marveling that men should have been so absurd” to have put their faith in it.<sup>28</sup>

Now compare and contrast the great Protestant Reformers to Miller:

| Protestant Reformers  | William Miller   |
|---|--|
| Held positions of high responsibility in their respective churches. | Principal occupation was farmer. Although ordained, he never held a leadership role in the Baptist Church. |
| Were highly educated—they received extensive                        | “Did not enjoy the advantages of a collegiate  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| training in Christian history and in the principles of Biblical interpretation. | education.” <sup>29</sup> Had no formal training in the principles of Biblical interpretation. |
| Were fluent in the original Biblical languages.                                 | Had no understanding of the Biblical languages.  |
| Were noted for their scholarly work at their universities.                      | No scholarly work—but he did reach the highest degree of occult Freemasonry.                   |
| Were called upon to speak before kings and rulers.                              | His movement was ridiculed as “absurd” by the U.S. president.                                  |
| Teachings centered on the gospel of Jesus Christ.                               | Teachings were virtually devoid of the gospel.   |
| Refused to recant their teachings, and some were martyred.                      | Recanted and admitted his teachings were erroneous.  |
| Their doctrine led millions of people to a better, happier life.                | His delusions led thousands of people into failure, bitter disappointment, and ruin.           |

## Conclusion

After reviewing the results of the life work of William Miller, it is difficult to understand how one could possibly place him into the same league as the great Protestant reformers like Luther, Huss, and Jerome. Furthermore, it is a blazon mischaracterization to suggest his work was on par with true Biblical prophets such as Elisha and John the Baptist. While Miller may have been sincere in his efforts, his *proofs* of Christ’s imminent return were not “great light.” They were delusional and, in some cases, downright absurd.

Christian leaders attempted to reason with him but to no avail. He stubbornly refused to listen to more educated and sensible brethren. The movement he inspired is now regarded as little more than a regrettable blemish on Christian history. William Miller was not the great American reformer Mrs. White made him out to be. He was a misguided and deluded individual who led many down a false path. Thankfully, he later publicly admitted his mistake and owned up to the fact that the whole movement was a grand delusion. However, the damage was done, and some believers made shipwreck of their faith, never to recover.

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<sup>1</sup> Gary E. Wait, "End of the World," *Dartmouth College Library Bulletin*, Nov. 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Sylvester Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller* (1853), 21-22.

<sup>3</sup> William Miller letter dated September 10, 1831, quoted in David L. Rowe, *God's Strange Work: William Miller and the End of the World* (Eerdmans: 2008), 94.

<sup>4</sup> Wait, *Dartmouth College Library Bulletin*.

<sup>5</sup> Everett N. Dick, *William Miller and the Advent Crisis*, 96-97.

<sup>6</sup> Bliss, *Memoirs*, 351.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 335.

<sup>8</sup> William Miller, *Miller's Lectures*, 251.

<sup>9</sup> This is just a sample. A much more thorough discussion of the subject which can be found in Dale Ratzlaff's book, *Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists*.

<sup>10</sup> Follower Ellen G. White referred to William Miller as "Father Miller": In 1884 she wrote, "Those who are engaged in proclaiming the third angel's message are searching the Scriptures upon the same plan that **Father Miller** adopted. In the little book entitled 'Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology,' **Father Miller** gives the following simple but intelligent and important rules for Bible study..." (*Review and Herald*, Nov. 25, 1884). See *Days of Delusion* by Clara Endicott Sears for the term "Prophet Miller."

<sup>11</sup> William Miller, letter to Joshua Himes (*Midnight Cry*, Oct. 12, 1844, as quoted in Clara Endicott Sears, *Days of Delusion*, chap. 9 (1924).

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- <sup>12</sup> Ronald L. Numbers, and Janet Numbers, "Millerism and Madness: A Study of 'Religious Insanity' in Nineteenth-Century America," *The Disappointed* (Knoxville, 1993), 97-101.
- <sup>13</sup> *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, Nov. 7, 1844.
- <sup>14</sup> Teresa and Arthur Beem, *It's Okay Not to be a Seventh-day Adventist*, 44.
- <sup>15</sup> George Storrs, *The Morning Watch*, Feb. 20, 1845.
- <sup>16</sup> Biographical dates and major events regarding William Miller are from the Wikipedia article "William Miller (preacher)."
- <sup>17</sup> Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1 (1858), 129, 131.
- <sup>18</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 331.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.
- <sup>28</sup> John Quincy Adams, "The Progress and Disorganization", *The American Whig Review*, vol. 2, iss. 1 (July 1845).
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 317.

# CHAPTER 15

## *Eight Mistakes*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 18 Examined

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How did William Miller calculate October 22, 1844, as the date for the return of Christ? Mrs. White explains in *Great Controversy*:

The prophecy which seemed most clearly to reveal the *time* of the second advent was that of Daniel 8:14: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Following his rule of making Scripture its own interpreter, Miller learned that a day in symbolic prophecy represents a year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6); he saw that the period of 2300 prophetic days, or literal years, would extend far beyond the close of the Jewish dispensation, hence it could not refer to the sanctuary of that dispensation.<sup>1</sup>

Miller, being neither a scholar nor one who understood the original Biblical languages, made eight faulty assumptions that led to his miscalculation regarding the 2,300 days. First, Miller assumed the word “days” in Daniel 8:14 was equivalent to the English word days. In reality, the Hebrew word translated as “days” is *`ereb-boqer*, which literally means “evening-morning.” This is the only place in the KJV Bible that *`ereb-boqer*, is translated as “days.” In fact, in the book of Daniel, the English word “days” appears 21 other times, but in every case, the word in the original language is *yowm*.<sup>2</sup> Why is this important? Because Daniel 8:14 is the answer to a question. And what is that question? It is found in the preceding verse of Daniel 8:13:

**How long [shall be] the vision [concerning] the daily [sacrifice], and the transgression of desolation,**

to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot?

This question is asking how long would be the vision concerning the “daily sacrifice.” The Jewish priests meticulously performed a daily sacrifice at the temple in Jerusalem—once in the evening and again in the morning. What was the *vision* of the daily sacrifice? In verse 11, Daniel is shown that the “daily sacrifice was taken away.” It is important to understand that the focus of Daniel 8:11-14 is a time period that commences with the taking away of the daily sacrifice and ends when that daily sacrifice is restored. So, in Daniel 8:14, the answer is given in terms of “evening-mornings,” not “days.” This is because the daily sacrificial ritual took place twice daily.<sup>3</sup> Any Hebrew in Daniel’s time would have understood that the angel was talking about 2,300 daily sacrifices, not 2,300 days. If William Miller had been using a modern translation, such as the RSV, which says “evenings and mornings,” he may never have arrived at the erroneous conclusions that he did. Nevertheless, Miller’s first mistake was in assuming the 2,300 evening-mornings were days.

## #2 – Prophetic Year-Day Principle

Miller’s first mistake led directly to his second mistake, which was assuming the “days” of Daniel 8:14 could be converted into years using the so-called prophetic year-day principle. As noted above, the prophecy was not even talking about “days” but about “evenings-mornings,” in reference to the twice-daily sacrifices. This alone makes it doubtful the year-day principle should be applied to this passage. However, there are further reasons not to apply the year-day principle.

First, it is important to understand the correct usage of the year-day principle by examining the texts that describe that principle. In most cases, the year-day principle is explicitly stated in the text. For example, in Leviticus 25:8, Numbers



14:33-34 and Ezekiel 4:4-6, it is explicitly stated in each passage that “days” are equal to “years.” At other times, the year-day principle is not explicitly stated but is implied. One such example is the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27.<sup>4</sup> This text could legitimately be understood as referring to “weeks of years.” In this case, in examining the context of the passage, there is a long succession of events, such as rebuilding Jerusalem, which simply could not possibly take place in seventy literal weeks. Therefore, it is appropriate to conclude the author was referring to seventy years of weeks (490 years). Finally, in Genesis 29:27, although not a prophetic passage, the year-day principle is implied when Laban asks Jacob to honor his marriage to Leah for a “week” by working for seven “years.” The use of the year-day principle in these five passages is typically explicitly stated, or if not, it is at least clearly implied.

The application of the year-day principle in the above-mentioned verses is not a “blank check” to apply this principle to each and every prophetic time period in the Bible. For example, Jesus prophesied He would be in the tomb for three *days*. (Matt. 12:40) Since this is a prophecy, does that mean He was in the tomb for three *years*? Of course not! So how does one know when to apply the year-day principle and when to use literal time? The answer is simple. If the text explicitly states or clearly implies that days are equivalent to years, then the principle can safely be applied in that particular case. There is no justification to apply it in any other situation. Therefore, Miller’s second mistake was to apply the year-day principle to Daniel 8:14.

### **#3 – Earth = Sanctuary**

Miller’s third mistake was to assume Daniel 8:14 was connected to the return of Christ. There is no mention or allusion to Christ’s return found anywhere in Daniel 8. The only *actors* in the prophecy are the ram (Medo-Persia) and the goat (Greece). Therefore, this prophecy is constrained to

the time periods of those empires. No reference to the Second Advent is found anywhere in the chapter.

Daniel 8:14 is describing the cleansing of the “sanctuary.” Miller made a reckless assumption by presuming that *sanctuary* was equivalent to *earth* and *cleansed* was equivalent to Christ’s return. However, there is absolutely no Biblical basis for making either assumption. Nowhere in the Bible is the earth called *sanctuary*. Nowhere in Scripture is the return of Jesus described as a *sanctuary cleansing*. Even Seventh-day Adventists, while holding onto Miller’s other assumptions, later rejected this one. They concluded that the *sanctuary* of Daniel 8:14 was the heavenly sanctuary and the *cleansing* was the atonement.

#### **#4 – 457 B.C. Cannot Fit the Daniel 8 Period**

According to Ellen White, the only thing lacking in Miller’s calculations was a starting point to determine when Jesus would return:

If, then, the correct starting point could be found for the 2300 days, he concluded that the time of the second advent could be readily ascertained.<sup>5</sup>

Miller reasoned he could calculate the date of the Second Advent if he could determine the starting date of the 2,300 days. Mrs. White tells us how Miller began searching for the starting point of the 2,300-day prophecy:

In the eighth chapter of Daniel he could find no clue to the starting point of the 2300 days...<sup>6</sup>

The truth is that there are plenty of clues in Daniel 8 pointing to the starting point of the 2300 evening-mornings, but Miller either did not see them or ignored them. Herein is Miller’s fourth mistake—a mistake SDAs also adopted. There is a chronology of events in Daniel 8, which provides strong clues as to the starting date. In Daniel 8:8, Daniel describes seeing a “goat” power. In verse 21 the angel Gabriel explains this “goat” power is the ancient empire of

“Greece” (NKJV). On the head of the goat is a “great horn.” All reputable Bible scholars agree this could be none other than the greatest leader of Greece, Alexander the Great, who reigned from 336 to 323 B.C. The next image Daniel sees in verse eight is the horn being “broken.” Even SDA scholars agree this occurred in 323 B.C., when Alexander died. Next, Daniel sees “four notable” horns growing up in four different directions. This refers to the division of Alexander’s empire into four parts ruled by his four generals:

Alexander's empire was divided at first into four major portions: Cassander ruled in Macedon, Lysimachus in Thrace, Seleucus in Mesopotamia and Persia, and Ptolemy I Soter in the Levant and Egypt.<sup>7</sup>

This division was completed by 301 B.C.<sup>8</sup> Then, in verse 9, Daniels sees, “And out of one of *them* [the four horns—the four territories under the rule of the four generals<sup>9</sup>] came forth a little horn.” So, the little horn could not have possibly arisen before 301 B.C. This is important because it is the little horn that desecrates the sanctuary, which must then be cleansed after 2,300 evenings-mornings.

The final clue is found near the end of Daniel 8 where the angel Gabriel provides an even more precise indication of when the little horn arose:

And the rough goat [is] the king of Grecia: and the great horn that [is] between his eyes [is] the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power. And **in the latter time of their kingdom**, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king...shall stand up. (Daniel 8:21-23)

Gabriel explains that the little horn, herein referred to as a “king,” would arise in the “latter time” of the four-fold kingdom of Greece. The latter time of the Grecian empire was the period between 200 B.C. and 100 B.C. Therefore, the little horn could not possibly have arisen before 200 B.C. Unfortunately, Miller did not have the advantage of a

collegiate education and was quite possibly unaware of these facts of history. Miller and his associates ignored the contextual evidence of Daniel 8 and jumped to Daniel 9 to calculate a date of 457 B.C. as the start of the 2,300-day prophecy, which the SDA sect later adopted.<sup>10</sup> However, this date is hundreds of years *before* the little horn power of Daniel 8 arose, which was between 200 B.C. and 100 B.C. If 457 B.C. was indeed the start date of the prophecy, then by what mechanism was the sanctuary desolated for hundreds of years before the arrival of the little horn?

## #5 – Daniel 8 Connected to Daniel 9

How did Miller arrive at a starting date of 457 BC? Miller turned to the next chapter of Daniel and found a beginning date for a *different* prophecy. Then he found a clever way to connect the two different prophecies together. Mrs. White explains:

...the angel **Gabriel**, though commanded to make Daniel understand the vision, **gave him only a partial explanation**. As the terrible persecution to befall the church was unfolded to the prophet's vision, physical strength gave way. He could endure no more, and the angel left him for a time. Daniel "fainted, and was sick certain days." "And I was astonished at the vision," he says, "but none understood it."

Yet God had bidden His messenger: "Make this man to understand the vision." That commission must be fulfilled. In obedience to it, the angel, some time afterward, returned to Daniel, saying: "I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding;" "therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision." Daniel 8:27, 16; 9:22, 23, 25-27. There was one important point in the vision of chapter 8 which had been left unexplained, namely, that relating to time—the period of the 2300 days; therefore the angel, in resuming his explanation, dwells chiefly upon the subject of time...

The angel had been sent to Daniel for the express purpose of explaining to him the point which he had failed to understand in the vision of the eighth chapter, the statement relative to time—"unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." After bidding Daniel "understand the matter, and consider the vision," the very first words of the angel are: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy Holy City." The word here translated "determined" literally signifies "cut off." Seventy weeks, representing 490 years, are declared by the angel to be cut off, as specially pertaining to the Jews. But from what were they cut off? As the 2300 days was the only period of time mentioned in chapter 8, it must be the period from which the seventy weeks were cut off; the seventy weeks must therefore be a part of the 2300 days, and the two periods must begin together. The seventy weeks were declared by the angel to date from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. If the date of this commandment could be found, then the starting point for the great period of the 2300 days would be ascertained.<sup>11</sup>

Mrs. White explains that the prophecy of Daniel 9 is connected to Daniel 8 because Gabriel failed in his first attempt to make Daniel understand the vision of Daniel 8, and so he returned after an eleven-year absence to set Daniel straight on the 2,300 days.

To make the claim that Daniel failed to understand the vision of Daniel 8—thus requiring a *second* visit from Gabriel eleven years later—one must first assume that Gabriel failed to make Daniel understand in his *first* visit, despite the lack of Biblical evidence for such a failure. In Daniel 8:16 a voice commands,

Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.

The voice issuing this command must be one with authority over Gabriel, presumably God. Thus, if Gabriel failed to

make Daniel understand the vision, then he would be disobeying God's command. Furthermore, it would make Gabriel guilty of practicing deception, because in verse 19 Gabriel tells Daniel, "Behold, I will make thee know what shall be..." If Gabriel told Daniel he was going to make him understand the vision and then failed to do so, he would be guilty of deception. Did Gabriel fail? Did he lie to Daniel? If one is a Bible-believing Christian, then one must believe that Gabriel obeyed the command to make Daniel understand the vision, and one must believe Gabriel's word that he would make Daniel understand.

Mrs. White claims Daniel became ill, thus preventing Gabriel from fulfilling his mission. Then, Gabriel waited eleven years before returning to complete the explanation. However, there is no evidence the illness occurred *before* he received the understanding. Nor is there any evidence Daniel's faintness thwarted Gabriel from accomplishing his purpose. Even if illness had created a problem, it would make no sense for Gabriel to wait eleven years before returning to finish the explanation. Surely Gabriel would have returned later in the day or early the next day to finish the explanation while it was still fresh in Daniel's mind.

Ultimately, there is no evidence Gabriel failed in any way to complete his mission. Therefore, there is no reason for Gabriel to return after a long period of eleven years to explain a vision that he had already succeeded in explaining! Therefore, Miller's fifth mistake is in assuming Gabriel was returning in Daniel 9 to help Daniel understand the vision of Daniel 8. Finally, why would Gabriel return to reopen and help Daniel understand a prophecy when he had already told Daniel to "shut thou up the vision"? (Dan. 8:26)

## **#6 – Chapter 9's Explanation Is for Chapter 8**

Did Gabriel *really* return eleven years later in Daniel 9 to explain the 2,300 days? Or did he come to explain a *different*

vision? In Daniel 9:2, Daniel is studying the prophecy of Jeremiah:

I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

In chapter 9, Daniel's focus was on Jeremiah's prophecy regarding the Jews' 70-year captivity. Daniel knew the time for the end of the 70-year captivity was near. In verses 9:3 to 9:19 he was praying about the end of captivity, asking God for forgiveness for his people's sins.

While he was praying this prayer, Gabriel arrived and instructed Daniel to "consider the vision" (Dan. 9:23). What vision? Jeremiah's 70-year captivity vision? Or the vision of the ram and goat recorded in Daniel 8? That question can easily be answered by looking at the context. It is absurd to believe that Gabriel came to talk to Daniel about the 2,300 evenings-mornings—a vision he received eleven years earlier, a vision that Gabriel had already successfully explained to him, a vision that Gabriel had told him to shut up, and a vision that Daniel was not even praying about. The only rational explanation is that Gabriel arrived to explain to him Jeremiah's vision—**a vision that he just so happened to be praying about at the exact moment that Gabriel arrived!** There can be absolutely no doubt that Gabriel arrived to explain Jeremiah's vision.<sup>12</sup>

Gabriel then proceeded to explain that after the "seventy years" of captivity were ended, a decree would be issued to rebuild Jerusalem. He then alluded to the 70-year prophecy by explaining to Daniel that the 70-years would be magnified seven-fold so that seventy "sevens," or 490 years, would be granted to the Hebrew nation.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, Miller's sixth mistake was to overlook the context of Daniel 9 and assume that Gabriel was referencing a vision that happened eleven years earlier, a vision that he had already explained, a vision that he had already told Daniel to seal up!

## #7 – 70-Weeks *Cut Off* of 2300-Day Prophecy

Miller's seventh mistake was in assuming the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9 was "cut off" from the beginning of the 2,300 evenings-mornings prophecy. It is claimed that the use of the word "determined" in the text which reads, "Seventy weeks are *determined* upon thy people and upon thy holy city" (Dan. 9:24), means that the 70 weeks (490 years) are cut off from a much longer period of time, namely the 2300 years.

The words "determine" and "determined" are defined in *Young's Analytical Concordance* as follows:

To mark out beforehand, to say, to be determined, to give counsel, to take counsel, to loose thereupon, to judge/decide, to arrange, to determine/move sharply/ be cut off, to place/set/put, to complete/finish/ determine.

While "cut off" is one possible meaning, it is poor exegesis to consider only *one* meaning of a word to establish a doctrinal foundation when it is quite evident, as in this case, that the Hebrew word for "determined" has a variety of meanings. The most evident meaning is that God had decreed or determined a certain period of time, beyond which the Jewish nation would cease to be recognized as His holy people. If the 490 years are to be cut off from some other time period, then why the 2,300 evening-mornings? Why not cut it off from other prophecies in Daniel such as the 1260-day prophecy, the 1290-day prophecy, or the 1335-day prophecy? How does one know the 70-week prophecy is not cut out of the middle or the end of the 2300-year prophecy? Why the beginning?

The reason William Miller and his associates cut the 70-week prophecy off of the beginning of the 2,300 evenings-mornings prophecy was because they needed a convenient starting point for their 2300-year time period. There is no exact start date given in the Bible, so they tied it to the 70-week prophecy to get a starting date for the 2,300 years. Of



course, it makes no sense whatsoever to begin the 2,300 evening-morning prophecy in 457 B.C. because the sanctuary was not desolated by the little horn until hundreds of years later.

## #8 – The Command to Rebuild Jerusalem

Mrs. White explains how William Miller purportedly settled upon the starting date of 457 B.C.:<sup>14</sup>

**In the seventh chapter of Ezra the decree is found.**

Verses 12-26. In its completest form it was issued by Artaxerxes, king of Persia, 457 B.C. But in Ezra 6:14 the house of the Lord at Jerusalem is said to have been built "according to the commandment ["decree," margin] of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia." These three kings, in originating, reaffirming, and completing the decree, brought it to the perfection required by the prophecy to mark the beginning of the 2300 years. Taking 457 B.C., **the time when the decree was completed**, as the date of the commandment, every specification of the prophecy concerning the seventy weeks was seen to have been fulfilled.

Miller's eighth mistake was in assuming Artaxerxes' decree was a fulfillment of Daniel 9:25, which reads, "Know therefore and understand, [that] from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem..." There is nothing in Ezra 7:12-26 about a command to "rebuild and restore Jerusalem." There is no command to rebuild the temple either, for that task had already been completed 58 years earlier during the sixth year of the reign of Darius the Great, in 516 A.D. (Ezra 6:15). Furthermore, the 70 weeks were to start from the "going forth" or the "issuing" (NASB) of the command to rebuild Jerusalem, not as Ellen White says, "the time when the decree was completed." It is a serious twisting of the Bible to say that "going forth" or "issuance" (NIV) of a decree is the same as it being "completed." The two have very different meanings. Issuing

refers to the first release of a decree. In fact, according to *Strong's* the Hebrew word here used (שָׁמַח) refers to the rising of the sun. It is never used in the Bible to refer to the completion of a work. Mrs. White's word "completed" refers to the work that the decree encompassed being finally brought to a completed state. Therefore, she contradicts the Bible on this point.

What then was Artaxerxes' decree of Ezra 7 about?

It is an independent decree given to Ezra the priest for the purpose of aiding the reestablishment of the Levitical and priestly duties of the temple.<sup>15</sup>

The actual decree to rebuild Jerusalem was issued by Cyrus, as shown by Isaiah:

That saith of Cyrus, [He is] my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. (Isa. 44:28)

Josephus confirms this, by quoting an epistle that Cyrus sent to the governors of Syria:

I have given leave to as many of the Jews that dwell in my country as please to return to their own country, and to **rebuild their city, and to build the temple of God at Jerusalem...**<sup>16</sup>

Since Cyrus died in 529 BC, the decree that went forth to rebuild Jerusalem must have been issued on or before that year. Therefore, it is impossible for the decree fulfilling Daniel 9:24 to have been issued as late as 457 B.C.

Miller's interpretation of Daniel 8 is based on eight assumptions. If even one of his assumptions was wrong, the whole theory collapses. The evidence presented above proves that all eight of his assumptions are faulty. So, what is the correct understanding of Daniel 8?

## An Amazing Prophetic Fulfillment

Daniel 8 is an amazing prophetic fulfillment of events that took place in the second century before Christ. Unfortunately, SDAs deny that fulfillment because they have tied themselves to Miller's interpretation—a theory that cannot possibly fit the symbols and time periods of Daniel 8. Even atheists acknowledge this passage was describing events in the second century B.C. Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which showed the antiquity of the Book of Daniel, atheists insisted Daniel was written *after* the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. Why? Because Daniel 8 and 10 so precisely predict the life and activities of Antiochus! Atheists had long insisted it could not have possibly been written beforehand because it was such a clear and accurate description of the activities of Antiochus Epiphanes. Thus, if even atheists can see the fulfillment of Daniel 8 in Antiochus Epiphanes, then why cannot Seventh-day Adventists? Because their whole prophetic “house of cards” is built on Miller's foundation. If one were to remove the Miller card, the whole façade—the whole religion—would collapse!

Interestingly enough, during the exact time period specified by Daniel's prophecy, historical records tell us there was an interruption of the daily temple sacrifices for exactly 1,150 days. Since there are two sacrifices per day, that equates to 2,300 evening-morning sacrifices that were missed.

Antiochus Epiphanes hated the Jewish religion and sought to stamp it out of existence. The daily sanctuary sacrifices were stopped by him:

On the 15th day of the 9th month of the 145th year [of the kingdom of the Greeks] king Antiochus set up the abominable idol of **desolation** upon the altar of God (1 Maccabees 1:54).

This provocative assault that desolated the altar of sacrifice triggered a Jewish uprising and rebellion, which eventually

culminated in the defeat of Antiochus and the restoration of services at the temple. After exactly 1,150 days,<sup>17</sup> the temple was “cleansed” and the daily sacrifices commenced again:

And they arose before the morning of the 25th day of the 9th month of the 148th year, and they offered sacrifices according to the law upon the new altar... (1 Maccabees 4:52-53)

In addition, Antiochus fulfills many of the other aspects of Daniel 8 with uncanny accuracy.<sup>18</sup>

## Conclusion

Miller made eight critical errors in his interpretation of Bible prophecy, and seven of these were later affirmed by Ellen White. With her endorsement, these flawed ideas were woven into the foundation of SDA theology. As historical and biblical evidence continues to mount, disproving Miller’s conclusions, the SDA Church faces a growing theological dilemma. On one hand, acknowledging Miller’s mistakes would inevitably cast doubt on Ellen White’s prophetic credibility, since her visions strongly supported his teachings—teachings that form a core narrative of *Great Controversy*, a work claimed to have been written under divine inspiration. Yet continuing to defend Miller’s interpretations has become increasingly untenable, even among many SDA scholars. Nevertheless, the SDA corporation remains deeply invested in upholding Ellen White as the “Spirit of Prophecy.” Without her, the denomination’s claim to be the unique remnant church of Revelation loses its prophetic basis. To preserve this fake identity, the church appears willing to suppress or sidestep inconvenient truths—prioritizing corporate survival over theological honesty.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 324.

<sup>2</sup> The author of Genesis uses the same Hebrew words to describe the beginning and ending of the days during the creation week. However, the author of Daniel always uses the Hebrew or Aramaic word *yowm* for days (Dan. 1:12,14,15,18; 2:28,44; 4:34; 5:11; 6:7,12; 7:9,13,22; 8:26,27; 10:2,13,14; 11:20; 12:11,12,13.)

<sup>3</sup> Lev. 24:3; Num 28:8.

<sup>4</sup> In Daniel 9:24-27 there is no explicit statement about converting days to years. However, the Hebrew word translated weeks (שבוע) is explained by *Strong's* as "literally, sevened, i.e. a week (**specifically, of years**):—seven, week." (James Strong. Strong #H7620.) Gesenius' *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon* also states the word can be understood as a week of either days or years.

<sup>5</sup> *Great Controversy*, 325.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> "Alexander the Great," *Wikipedia*, extracted on Dec. 14, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>10</sup> SDAs now teach that the little horn of Daniel 8 is Rome, although Rome did not occupy Palestine until 63 B.C. This puts SDAs into the impossible predicament of trying to explain how the desecration of the sanctuary by the little horn began in 457 B.C., nearly 400 years *before* Rome even arrived in Jerusalem! See Appendix 1 for further discussion on Rome as the little horn of Daniel 8.

<sup>11</sup> *Great Controversy*, 325-326.

<sup>12</sup> Jeremiah 29:10: "For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place." See also Jeremiah 25:11-12.

<sup>13</sup> "...I, will chastise you seven times for your sins." (Leviticus 26:28) Although they were being released from their 70-year captivity, the Jews had apparently not fully repented, and were punished under the sevenfold curse. Thus, seven times of 70 years, or 490 years in total, were decreed upon the Jews.

<sup>14</sup> Russell Earl Kelly, in his book *Exposing Seventh-day Adventism*, calls into question whether William Miller actually discovered the 457 B.C. date because the date does not appear in any of his "15 proofs." According to Kelly, "by discussing Ezra 7 in the chapter on William Miller [GC326], SDAs deceive the reader into thinking that it was discovered by Miller."

<sup>15</sup> David Hill, *What Really Happened in 1844?*  
<https://nonsda.org/egw/1844dh.shtml>.

<sup>16</sup> *Op. Cit.* David Hill, Josephus, *Antiquities* book 11, chapter 1.

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<sup>17</sup> Steve Hamilton, in the article “Daniel 8:8-14”

(<http://www.southsidecoc.org/2300%20Days.htm>), describes the calculations thus: “Calculations using the Greek calendar according to Herodotus:

1. The Greek calendar year was 360 days long.
2. Every other year an intercalary month of 30 days was added.
3. Assuming two intercalary years, 360 days x 3 years and adding two 30-day months plus 10 days for the difference between the 15th and the 25th we get 1150 days exactly.

<sup>18</sup> To study this topic further, please visit <https://www.nonsda.org/study6.shtml>.

# CHAPTER 16

## *The Great Mistake*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 20 Examined

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Mrs. White starts off chapter 20 of *Great Controversy* extolling the Millerite movement as a “great religious awakening” although it became widely and more accurately known by the title of “Great Disappointment.” She goes on to say: “No such message has ever been given in past ages.”<sup>1</sup>

The truth is that fanatics have been concocting fake dates for Christ’s return from the earliest days of Christianity. As early as the second century Montanist prophets were predicting the return of Jesus in their lifetime. Following is evidence of the other date-setters like Miller:<sup>2</sup>

- Hippolytus of Rome, Sextus Julius Africanus, and Irenaeus all predicted the return in 500 A.D. (One of them calculated that date based on the length of Noah’s ark.)
- The Millennial year 1000 A.D. was a huge year for “end of world” predictions, as one might suspect. Some sold their businesses and did not plant their farms. There are reports of some traveling to Jerusalem to meet the Lord.
- Many arose over the next centuries with false dates: Joachim of Fiore predicted 1260, Jean de Roquetaillade predicted 1370, Sandro Botticelli said 1504, Anabaptist Thomas Müntzer claimed 1525, mathematician Michael Stifel calculated 1533, William Aspinwall proclaimed 1694, and Harry Archer picked 1700.
- Prophet Emanuel Swedenborg selected 1757.

- Prophetess Ann Lee and the Shakers predicted the end would come in 1792.
- George Rapp, founder of the Harmony Society, picked the year of 1829.
- Even Methodist John Wesley got into the action, claiming Christ would return in 1836. Ellen Harmon was a member of the Methodist Church at that time, but she was probably too young to recall it.

More could be listed, but let it suffice to say that countless *prophets* and other deluded individuals have arisen with similar time-setting messages over the past two millennia. Each used their own *visions* or proof texts to substantiate their claims, just as Miller did. And each one was wrong—just like Miller. While Miller may be the only high-level Freemason to set a date for Christ’s return, for Ellen White to say that “no such message has ever been given” is simply preposterous.

## A Great Religious Awakening?

Much of chapter 20 is taken nearly verbatim from SDA historian J.N. Loughborough’s book, *The Second Great Advent Movement*. In this chapter, Mrs. White spends considerable effort trying to paint a picture of the Millerite movement as being a grand and glorious worldwide movement. According to Mrs. White and J.N. Loughborough, the “Advent message” was preached in England, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Germany, France, Holland, and Switzerland. While this sounds grand and glorious, it is important to understand the facts.

First, other than in England, those preaching the message were very few in number, and it is extremely doubtful the message made any penetration in those other European countries. Secondly, Europe contains fifty countries and Loughborough admits the Millerite error was only preached in eight. Therefore, 84 percent of Europe’s nations did not



even have an opportunity to hear the message, and in those few places where it was actually preached in mainland Europe, it was not well-received by the precious few who heard it. Therefore, it is inconceivable how this message could be portrayed as fulfillment of an angel speaking to “every nation, kindred, tongue, and people,” when in fact it only reached a small fraction of Europe (Rev. 14:6).

Mrs. White, still copying from Loughborough, also claimed Millerism was proclaimed in Russia because one Siberian (Tartar) priest believed in it and one “Russian farmer was converted” to the doctrine.<sup>3</sup> Two converts can hardly be equated with reaching this giant nation!

## **Joseph Wolff**

Still following Loughborough’s writings, Mrs. White goes into great detail about a missionary named Joseph Wolff. Mrs. White notes that Wolff traveled extensively throughout the Middle East and Africa from 1821 to 1845, giving the impression he was spreading the Millerite message all over that part of the world during those 24 years. However, there is no evidence Wolff was preaching Millerism during his first journey, from 1821 to 1826. In fact, on his 1821 voyage, the author of his biography notes, “he had not yet those definite ideas of the second advent of our Lord.”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, having not yet adopted the doctrine of the imminent return of Christ, it is highly unlikely he was preaching or teaching it to others!

Returning to England in 1826, Wolff embarked on another Middle Eastern expedition in 1828. However, the purpose of this trip was to search for the lost “ten tribes” of Israel, not to spread Millerism. Shortly after his arrival he was captured and forced into slave labor. After spending time as a slave, he somehow managed to get free and quite amazingly managed to walk 600 miles without any clothing until he was finally able to reach a safe haven. There is no

evidence he was preaching Millerism at any time during this entire trip.<sup>5</sup>

Loughborough claims that Joseph Wolff proclaimed the “advent” in several Middle Eastern nations from 1831 “down to the year 1845.”<sup>6</sup> Again, this is more fiction than fact. Wolff’s own memoirs indicate he arrived in the Middle East in 1831 and left in 1834. He did not return to the Middle East until 1843, but not to preach.<sup>7</sup> In 1843, he traveled to Uzbekistan to search for a friend. He ended up being imprisoned there and was not released until 1845. In his detailed memoirs of his three years of missionary journeys (1831-1834), Wolff frequently mentions preaching the gospel, but only recalls a handful of instances where he preached on the subject of the Second Advent.<sup>8</sup>

While Dr. Wolff was a bold missionary who survived trials that no doubt would have killed most men, his memoirs provide little support for the idea that he was spreading Millerism throughout the Middle East and Africa. For a while, Wolff believed in the imminent return of Christ, and it is reasonable to believe he preached it on occasion in conjunction with the gospel. However, it is quite a stretch to suppose he was actively spreading Millerism for 24 years. His journals—which describe his missionary activities in great detail—do not support that theory.

## Christians Lambasted by White

One of the more diabolical aspects of *Great Controversy* is that Mrs. White used the book to ridicule and denounce Christians who were correct in refusing to accept Miller’s false time-setting message:

Many who **professed** to love the Saviour, declared that they had no opposition to the doctrine of the second advent; they merely objected to the definite time.<sup>9</sup>

Here she is not talking about the world, but about Christians who did not oppose the Second Advent, but merely opposed the setting of a definite time. Amazingly, in the next

sentences she labels them as “unfaithful servants” who “feared to meet their Lord.”<sup>10</sup> She then slams them further by comparing them to the Jews who rejected Christ at the First Advent. In her mind, rejecting Miller’s false time-setting message was tantamount to rejecting Christ Himself.

Ironically, *after* 1844, she adopted the very same position as the Christians whom she had so vehemently condemned: She rejected time-setting! In one of her testimonies, she wrote:

Time after time will be set by different ones, and will pass by; and the **influence of this time setting will tend to destroy the faith of God’s people.**<sup>11</sup>

Here is one of the logical conundrums of Seventh-day Adventism. Mrs. White and other Adventists say that preaching definite time was God’s will in 1844. However, after 1844 they admitted that it “tends to destroy the faith of God’s people.” In fact, that is exactly what happened in 1844. Some participants in Miller’s 1844 frenzy later gave up the faith entirely. The question is, why would God use a method that “tends to destroy the faith of God’s people?” That sounds more like a method the devil would use! SDAs excuse their own time-setting debacle as the “Lord’s plan” and lambast those who refuse to accept the 1844 date. Then, they turn around and claim that setting a definite time is evil! One cannot have it both ways. Either this method is always wrong or it is always right!

Mrs. White then blasts ministers of God who tried to warn others of the deception of Miller by quoting the words of Jesus:

“No man knoweth the day nor the hour” continued to be echoed by the bold scoffer and even by the professed minister of Christ. As the people were roused, and began to inquire the way of salvation, religious teachers stepped in between them and **the truth**, seeking to quiet their fears by **falsely interpreting the word of God.**

**Unfaithful watchmen united in the work of the great  
deceiver...**<sup>12</sup>

It is important to understand who Mrs. White was talking about. She is talking about Protestant ministers, who, unlike her, were called by God to be leaders of their flock. Some of these men had spent decades, even lifetimes studying the Word of God. Some knew the original Biblical languages and obtained advanced degrees in theology. Many had spent decades in the ministry, facing down many a deluded fanatic spouting false doctrines and setting dates. It was the duty of these men to protect their flocks from false teachings. Mrs. White denounced these true servants of God for stepping in between the people and the false time-setting message of Millerism. However, this is exactly what any good shepherd would, and should, do. Their efforts deserve applause, not condemnation!

Second, she mislabeled Miller's false message as "the truth." However, it was *not* the truth by any stretch of the imagination! If it was "the truth," then Jesus would have returned on October 22, 1844! Therefore, it was *not* the truth in any way, shape, or form. It was an absolute falsehood, and even Miller and the other leaders of the Millerite movement later admitted it was false. So, let it forever be fixed in the mind that the Millerite message was not "truth." It was patently false!

Third, she claimed these Protestant ministers falsely interpreted the word of God. How so? By quoting Matthew 24:36 against Miller. And yet, in this case, that was exactly the correct course of action for these ministers to take. When a fanatic walks into a sheepfold like a wolf proclaiming definite time, the first and most obvious way to point out his error is to quote the words of Jesus on the subject. Thus, the ministers did exactly as they should have done. Their course of action was correct in this regard. The Protestant ministers were not the ones falsely interpreting the Bible; rather, it was Miller and 17-year-old Ellen Harmon.

Finally, she blasphemes the servants of the Lord by calling them “unfaithful.” She claims they have united with the deceiver. However, the evidence indicates she was the one who united with the deceiver. The deceiver, in this case, was Miller, who set a false date for the return of Christ. The Protestant ministers were not deceiving anyone. They were telling people the truth. Miller was the deceiver, and it was the young Ellen Harmon who followed Miller and was thus “united in the work of the great deceiver.”

Later in the chapter Mrs. White writes that “angels turned away in sadness” when churches rejected Miller’s false message. Why would that upset the angels? The angels were no doubt singing “Hallelujah” when they saw those churches taking a stand upon the Biblical words of Jesus and rejecting Miller’s false and fanatical message of “definite time.” Remember, Mrs. White later said that preaching “definite time” would destroy the faith of people. Angels of God certainly would not want that! Therefore, the only *angels* that “turned away in sadness” when churches rejected Miller were the angels of Satan.

## **It Was All God’s Fault**

Finally, Mrs. White has the audacity to lay the blame for the Great Disappointment on God:

God designed to prove His people. His hand covered a mistake in the reckoning of the prophetic periods. Adventists did not discover the error, nor was it discovered by the most learned of their opponents.

Supposedly God was testing or “proving” Christians by this experience. According to Mrs. White’s twisted logic, if the Christians accepted a *false* teaching of definite time, then they *passed* the test. If, however, they stood firm upon the teachings of Jesus and rejected Miller’s false teachings, then they *failed* the test. Could anything be more ludicrous?

Mrs. White says that God Himself “covered” the mistake with “His hand.” At least she finally admits there was a

“mistake,” but why would God cover it? The truth is that God *uncovered* the “mistake in the reckoning of prophetic periods” through his Protestant ministers who repeatedly pointed out the flaws in Miller’s reasoning and proofs. However, the stubborn Miller and his associates refused to acknowledge it. Therefore, God did not “cover” the mistake. The Millerites were blind to their mistake because, like the first-century Jews, they had exalted their own false interpretations of the Bible over what it actually said. It was their own foolishness and stubbornness that prevented them from seeing the Biblical truth.

Many Biblical scholars went into great depth to expose the fallacies of Miller’s reckonings. For example, Samuel Jarvis wrote an entire 183-page book revealing that the “computations of Mr. Miller are extravagant and defective.”<sup>13</sup> Jarvis goes into great detail explaining the true meaning of the 2,300 days in the context of the Greek empire and Antiochus Epiphanes. This proves that the so-called “learned opponents” had indeed discovered the “error” of Miller’s teachings and it was not hidden by God.

Likewise, Otis A. Skinner published a 210-page book in 1840 entitled, *The Theory of William Miller Concerning the End of the World in 1843 Utterly Exploded*. The purpose of the book, as stated in the Preface, is to “defend the sacred Scriptures” against Miller’s “manifest perversions, so fatally calculated to...lead men into infidelity.” Just as Jarvis did, Skinner provided sound and compelling Biblical evidence proving that the 2,300 evenings-mornings were not years. Therefore, it is incorrect for Mrs. White to claim their “opponents” did not see Miller’s error. They clearly saw his error and enunciated it, but farmer Miller stubbornly refused to accept it.

## Conclusion

Even though the 1911 version of *Great Controversy* is significantly toned down from the vitriol found in earlier

versions of the book, this chapter is still patently offensive. Not only does it blaspheme the ministers who were simply trying to protect their flocks from Miller's time-setting fanaticism, but the chapter also blasphemes God. Mrs. White attempts to lay the blame upon God for hiding Miller's mistake, but the reality is that the mistake was highlighted in great detail by godly Protestant ministers of that era. Sadly, just as Pharaoh hardened his heart against all the evidence God presented through His servant Moses, Miller hardened his heart and would not receive instruction from his wiser and better-educated brethren. The fact that Miller hardened his heart is not God's fault, and to lay the blame on Him is nothing short of blasphemy.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 356.

<sup>2</sup> "Predictions and claims for the Second Coming of Christ," *Wikipedia*, extracted on Aug. 25, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> J.N. Loughborough, *The Second Great Advent Movement*, (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1905) 84-85.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Wolff, *Travels and Adventures of the Rev. Joseph Wolff, D.D., LL.D.*, vol. 1 (London: Saunders, Otley & Co., 1860). It would not be unreasonable for a missionary to preach about the return of Christ. Wolff mentions the Second Advent on page 151. In 1832, he preached the "second coming" to Muslims and Jews (513).

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Jacobs, Victor Rousseau Emanuel, *Jewish Encyclopedia*, "Wolff, Joseph."

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph & Emanuel, *Jewish Encyclopedia*.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Wolff, *Missionary Labours Among the Jews, Mohameddans, and Other Sects*, (London, self-published: 1835), 467.

<sup>9</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 370.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, 72.

<sup>12</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 371.

<sup>13</sup> Samuel Farmar Jarvis, *Two Discourses on Prophecy in which Mr. Miller's Scheme Concerning our Lord's Second Advent, is Considered and Refuted*, (New York: James A. Sparks, 1843), 34.

# CHAPTER 17

## *Spiritual Death of Protestantism*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 21 Examined

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In chapter 21 of *Great Controversy*, Mrs. White continues to hurl accusation after accusation against Protestant churches. She continues the tirade started in chapter 20 by deriding Protestant pastors for not accepting “the truth” of Millerism:

Their ministers, who, as watchmen “unto the house of Israel,” should have been the first to discern the tokens of Jesus’ coming, had failed to learn **the truth** either from the testimony of the prophets or from the signs of the times. As worldly hopes and ambitions filled the heart, love for God and faith in His word had grown cold; and when the advent doctrine was presented, it only aroused their prejudice and unbelief.<sup>1</sup>

The Protestant ministers’ inability to discern “the truth” was supposedly caused by “worldly hopes and ambitions” filling their hearts which caused their “love for God and faith in His word” to grow “cold.” Mrs. White never presents any documented proof that these particular pastors rejected Millerism because of worldliness. However, lack of evidence does not stop her from slamming a whole generation of Protestant pastors for refusing to believe the Millerite falsehood. While there is no proof that Protestant pastors rejected Miller because of their worldliness, there is plenty of well-documented evidence that they rejected Miller because his teachings were wrong and contrary to the words of Jesus. However, Mrs. White fails to mention the *real* reason they rejected Miller because it did not fit into the warped picture she was attempting to paint to demonize Protestantism.



This entire chapter is necessary to justify why Adventists left Protestantism, but the reasons given are nothing short of delusional and unsupportable by historical facts. Mrs. White spends an entire chapter reciting critical statements from various authors to create a fantasy world where the Protestant churches have all become worldly and wicked because they rejected William Miller.

They spurned the gracious messenger [William Miller] that would have corrected the evils which separated them from God, and with greater eagerness they turned to seek the friendship of the world. Here was the cause of that fearful condition of worldliness, backsliding, and **spiritual death which existed in the churches in 1844.**<sup>2</sup>

Here Mrs. White assures her readers that the Protestant churches in America died spiritually in 1844. Some of her earlier writings are even more explicit. Although Protestant churches continued to hold revivals and baptize new members after the Adventists departed from them in 1844, Mrs. White assures her readers it is all a fraud. Mrs. White wrote in 1849:

The reformations that were shown me, were not reformations from error to truth; but from bad to worse; for those who professed a change of heart, had only wrapt about them a religious garb, which covered up the iniquity of a wicked heart. Some appeared to have been really converted, so as to deceive God's people; but if their hearts could be seen, they would appear as black as ever.<sup>3</sup>

## Salvation's Door Shuts

Immediately after 1844, James White and Ellen Harmon joined up with one of the most fanatical groups of Adventists which later became known by the name shut-door Adventists. This group interpreted Jesus' parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew 25 in a unique way. They taught that the

true believers went into the *feast* on October 22, 1844, and that Jesus shut the door of salvation behind them. They believed that while “sinners” could bang on the shut door, they could no longer be saved because the door of salvation had been shut. They believed they were living in a period of time called the “tarrying time” during which the true believers were being tested to see if they would “fall off the path” while awaiting the imminent return of Christ. James White described this belief in a periodical in 1850:

When we came up to that point of time, all our sympathy, burden and prayers for sinners ceased, **and the unanimous feeling and testimony was, that our work for the world was finished for ever.**<sup>4</sup>

While this represented the stance of many Adventists immediately after 1844, including Miller, most had the intelligence to quickly abandon this false view. However, the shut-door Adventists, led by James White and the prophet Ellen, stubbornly stuck to this position for years. Even five years after the Great Disappointment Ellen White and her *angel* continued to teach a shut door of salvation for “sinners”:

**My accompanying angel bade me look for the travail of soul for sinners as used to be. I looked, but could not see it; for the time for their salvation is past.**<sup>5</sup>

It was not until 1850, six years after the Great Disappointment, that these shut-door Adventists made their first convert. General Conference president George Butler recalls his surprise when Herman Churchill joined them as their first “conversion from the world.”<sup>6</sup> Shockingly, for a period of six years, Ellen White and the shut-door Adventists made not a single convert from the world. However, all this time they were being led by a so-called prophet receiving visions from God! During these six years this sect—that now claims to be the replacement for the “fallen” Protestant Churches—was ignoring Christ’s most important command

to take the gospel message “into all the world” (Mark 16:15). How could they possibly be the *true remnant* when they failed to obey Christ’s commission and did not convert a single soul for six years?

Ironically, it was the so-called “spiritually dead” Protestant churches that were the ones faithfully following Christ’s command to take the gospel message into all the world in the mid-nineteenth century. Protestants sent out many missionaries all over the globe. Meanwhile, Ellen White’s radical Adventist group was locked in a shut-door mentality for years. The sect did not send out its first official missionary until 1874, a full thirty years after the Great Disappointment.<sup>7</sup> This alone should be sufficient evidence to demonstrate this sect is a fanatical and misguided group that neither replaced Protestantism nor obeyed Jesus.

While spending much of the first part of *Great Controversy* extolling the Protestant Reformation, Mrs. White spends much of the last half of the book assassinating the character of the Protestant faith. Mrs. White classifies the Protestant denominations as the “harlot” daughters of Babylon the Great (Rev.17:5):

And in what religious bodies are the greater part of the followers of Christ now to be found? Without doubt, in the various churches professing the **Protestant faith**. At the time of their rise these churches took a noble stand for God and the truth, and His blessing was with them. Even the unbelieving world was constrained to acknowledge the beneficent results that followed an acceptance of the principles of the gospel. ... **But they fell** by the same desire which was the curse and ruin of Israel—the desire of imitating the practices and courting the friendship of the ungodly.<sup>8</sup>

Here Mrs. White clearly states the Protestant faith “fell” after 1844. Ironically, Mrs. White copied many of her *inspired* writings from *fallen* Protestant authors after 1844!

Apparently, William Miller did not agree with Ellen White’s labeling of Protestant churches as “Babylon”:

...some of my brethren began to call the churches Babylon, and to urge that it was the duty of Adventists to come out of them. With this I was much grieved, as not only **the effect was very bad**, but I regarded it as a **perversion of the word of God, a wresting of Scripture.**<sup>9</sup>

If anyone knew about wresting the Scripture it was William Miller! For once, he was correct. What Ellen White and others did in calling upon people to leave the Protestant churches was a “perversion of the word of God.”

The term “mother of harlots” does not mean that Catholicism spawned a bunch of wicked religions. Catholicism did not give birth to Protestantism. If so, then Protestantism was a false movement. In the first half of the *Great Controversy*, Ellen White extols Protestants, and rightly so. It was the Spirit of God that gave birth to the Protestant movement, not Catholicism. To give birth means to give life. The Catholic Church did not give life or sustenance to the Protestant Church. On the contrary, the Catholic Church attempted to destroy the Protestants at every opportunity. There is no indication of any type of mother-daughter relationship between Catholicism and Protestantism.

Hosea referred to Israel as a “harlot” and a “mother” (Hos. 2:4,5). Similar language is found in Ezekiel 16:44-48. To be a “mother” and a “harlot” is a double shame. It is bad enough to be single and a harlot, but to have a husband and children and still be a harlot is most reprehensible indeed! Not only is this harlotry perverse, but it goes beyond mere harlotry, showing utter contempt for the sacred institution of marriage. The fact that the “harlot” of Revelation 17 is also a “mother” is a statement about the utterly repulsive nature of this woman. Therefore, this passage cannot possibly be applied to Protestantism.

Good salespeople always point out the flaws in their competitors’ products. The SDA sect developed a sales pitch warning that all non-SDA groups are fallen and believers

must leave Babylon (Catholicism) and the daughters of Babylon (Protestantism) and join the one true church, the SDA sect. If they can convince members of other churches that their church is a failure, then they can sell them on the idea of leaving *Babylon*. SDAs have wrested the symbols of Bible prophecy in order to construct a fake scenario that conveniently identifies them as the *good* church and everyone else as *bad* churches. Such a wresting of Bible prophecy to suit their own desires is a true “perversion of Scripture.” Thus, they are guilty of the very thing they accuse other churches of doing.

## Pagan Practices a Sign of a Fallen Church

Mrs. White expounds upon how the Catholic Church adopted “pagan” practices, and then asks the rhetorical question, “Has not the same process been repeated in nearly every church calling itself Protestant?” She goes on to say, “A worldly flood, flowing into the church, carries ‘with it its customs, practices, and idols.’”<sup>10</sup> Interestingly enough, Mrs. White established a practice in the late 1870s of placing a Christmas tree in every SDA church, upon which people could place their offerings. This practice continues even to this day in many SDA churches. She wrote:

**God would be well pleased** if on Christmas, **each church would have a Christmas tree** on which shall be hung offerings, great and small, for these houses of worship.<sup>11</sup>

Whether or not God was “well pleased” by this money-making device is debatable, but there is little doubt the sect’s corporate sect were “well pleased” as the Christmas dollars flowed into their treasury. Mrs. White continued to support the practice in the 1880s:

Let the several churches present to God **Christmas trees in every church**; and then let them hang thereon the fruits of beneficence and gratitude,—offerings coming from willing hearts and hands, fruits that God

will accept as an expression of our faith and our great love to him for the gift of his Son, Jesus Christ. Let the **evergreen** be laden with fruit, rich, and pure, and holy, acceptable to God. Shall we not have such a **Christmas as Heaven can approve?**<sup>12</sup>

Ironically, while Mrs. White denounced Protestant Churches for adopting pagan practices in *Great Controversy*, she was instrumental in encouraging SDA churches to adopt pagan practices. It is well-documented that the Christmas tree is a pagan invention with no connection whatsoever to Christianity. Hundreds of years before Christ's birth, pagans set up trees in their homes to honor their pagan deities:

The Christmas tree, now so common among us, was equally common in pagan Rome and Egypt. In Egypt that tree was the palm tree; in Rome it was the fir; the palm tree denoting the Pagan Messiah as Baal-Tamar, the fir referring to him as Baal-Berith. The mother of Adonis, the Sun-God and great mediatorial divinity, was mystically said to have been changed into a tree, and when in that state to have brought forth her divine son.<sup>13</sup>

The practice of setting up evergreen trees on December 25 has absolutely no connection to anything at all relating to Christ's birth. On the contrary, it was one of the many pagan traditions adopted by the Catholic Church after the death of the apostles. Christian Rausch clarifies that the Christmas tree originated from the pagan practice of bringing evergreen branches or trees into homes around December 25 "when evil spirits were feared most." Candles were placed on the branches to ward off the evil spirits. He explains:

...the name "Christmas tree" seems ironic. The worship of decorated May branches and May trees is still considered pagan nature worship—and, from the Christian perspective, idolatry. In the Bible, no connection is drawn between Jesus Christ and the fir tree or any other needle-bearing tree.<sup>14</sup>

How did this decidedly pagan practice get assimilated into Christianity? It all started after Pope Gregory II, in 719, commissioned Saint Boniface to evangelize the pagans of Germany. In Germany, “trees were widely used in the pagan celebration of Yule, during winter solstice.”<sup>15</sup> Boniface adopted the fir tree as a symbol of Christ, and from there the practice of putting trees inside homes spread to other nations.

If incorporating pagan practices into a church is indeed a signal of the spiritual death of a church, as Mrs. White writes, then the SDA sect’s adoption of the Christmas tree into their church services must likewise signify the spiritual death of that sect.

### Wasting Money—A Sign of a Fallen Church

Not only are pagan practices a sign of a fallen church but so is the inappropriate use of money. Mrs. White quotes Protestant author John Wesley to make her point:

Said John Wesley, in speaking of the right use of money: “Do not waste any part of so precious a talent, merely in gratifying the desire of the eye, by superfluous or **expensive apparel**, or by **needless ornaments**. Waste no part of it in curiously adorning your houses; in superfluous or **expensive furniture**; in **costly pictures**, painting, gilding... Lay out nothing to gratify the pride of life, to gain the admiration or praise of men....” ...But **in many churches of our time such teaching is disregarded**.<sup>16</sup>

Paradoxically, Mrs. White violated nearly every aspect of this quote. Ellen White was sometimes criticized by sect members for wearing fancy hats and costly silk dresses in opposition to her own testimonies. In one letter she admits to being given material for a jacket consisting of three-and-a-half yards “of silk, costing three dollars a yard.”<sup>17</sup> Three dollars in 1891 was worth \$101.43 in 2023. Thus, the material costs \$355 in today’s dollars. In the same letter, she wrote of being given a ten-dollar pin, worth \$338 in today’s

dollars.<sup>18</sup> Thus, Ellen White wore “expensive apparel” and “needless ornaments.”

Mrs. White also owned expensive furniture. In an 1897 letter, she mentioned she was selling the *used* furniture in *one* front room of her house for \$125. In 2023 dollars, that is \$4,633.60.<sup>19</sup> That is a significant sum for used furniture!

Photography, being a recent invention, was quite expensive in the late nineteenth century. While criticizing others for wasting their money on “costly pictures,” the Whites quietly spent enormous amounts of money on photographs. A letter Ellen White wrote in 1876 indicates \$500 was spent on one negative. In 2023 dollars, that is 14,377.15!<sup>20</sup> If wasting one’s money was indeed a sign of spiritual death, then Ellen White would certainly stand out as a fulfillment of everything John Wesley warned about.

## Conclusion

While condemning other churches for incorporating pagan practices into their worship and wasting money on expensive apparel, Mrs. White and the SDA sect were doing the same. Meanwhile, they condemned Protestants who rejected Miller and shut the door of salvation on them. However, it was these same American Protestant denominations that were preaching to the freed slaves in the South, spreading the gospel to the Native Americans in the West, and sending missionaries into all the world, while the SDAs spent thirty years focused on trying to convince other Americans to adopt SDA doctrines.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 380.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen White, *Present Truth*, Aug. 1, 1849.

<sup>4</sup> James White, “The Sanctuary, the 2300 Days and the Shut Door,” *Present Truth*, May, 1850.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



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- <sup>6</sup> George Butler, *Review and Herald*, April 7, 1885.
- <sup>7</sup> J.N. Andrews was the SDA sect's first official missionary according to the SDA Church. He was sent to Europe in 1874 to try and convert other Christians to accept SDA doctrines like the Sabbath.
- <sup>8</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 382.
- <sup>9</sup> William Miller quoted by Isaac C. Wellcome, *History of the Second Advent Message*, vol. 5 (Portland: B. Thurston & Co.1874), 410.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 385.
- <sup>11</sup> Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, Dec. 11, 1879.
- <sup>12</sup> White, *Review and Herald*, Dec. 9, 1884.
- <sup>13</sup> Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1916), 97.
- <sup>14</sup> Christian Rausch and Claudia Muller-Ebeling, "From the Shamanic World Tree to the Christmas Tree," *Pagan Christmas* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, undated).
- <sup>15</sup> Eric N. Davis, *House of Faith, House of Cards*, (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2010), 344.
- <sup>16</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 385.
- <sup>17</sup> Letter 32a, 1891. (To J. E. and Emma White, December 7, 1891).
- <sup>18</sup> <https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation>.
- <sup>19</sup> Ellen White, Letter 196, (Aug. 6, 1897).
- <sup>20</sup> Ellen White, Letter 1a, 1876, (to James White, March 24, 1876).

# CHAPTER 18

## *Fanaticism*

*Great Controversy* Chapters 22 Examined

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Ellen White spends several pages in chapter 22 of *Great Controversy* discussing the fanaticism of the Millerite movement. She describes how fanaticism appeared around the time of the Great Disappointment:

About this time, fanaticism began to appear. Some who had professed to be zealous believers in the message **rejected the word of God as the one infallible guide** and, **claiming to be led by the Spirit**, gave themselves up to the control of their own feelings, impressions, and imaginations. There were some who manifested a blind and bigoted zeal, **denouncing all who would not sanction their course**. Their fanatical ideas and exercises met with no sympathy from the great body of Adventists; yet they served to bring reproach upon the cause of truth.<sup>1</sup>

Interestingly enough, Mrs. White is unwittingly describing herself and James White in this passage about “fanatics.” She and James were involved in the exact practices that she was condemning.

### **Fanatics Reject the Bible as the *Only* Guide**

Ellen White says the fanatics “rejected the word of God as the one infallible guide.” She and James did exactly that.

After the disappointment, James and Ellen emerged as leaders of the radical shut-door Adventist group. Ellen was the self-proclaimed prophet of that small group. The shut-door Adventists abandoned the Bible as the *only* infallible guide and accepted the *visions* of Ellen White as a secondary

infallible guide. As early as the mid-1840s, Ellen Harmon's *visions* were being promoted by James and other shut-door Adventists as divine communications. As if on cue, Ellen had several visions supporting the same "shut door of salvation" doctrine that the group's leaders were promulgating in the late 1840s.<sup>2</sup>

By the early 1850s, it became obvious the door of salvation was not shut. If the shut-door Adventists did not open the door to new converts, they would soon be extinct. The leaders decided to abandon the shut-door and many of Ellen's visionary statements advocating that doctrine were removed by James from later publications of Mrs. White's earlier works. However, enough copies of the original publications existed to haunt her throughout her prophetic career.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the shut-door Adventists quietly abandoned the "shut door" doctrine their prophet Ellen had seen in *vision*.

Mrs. White's advocacy of the false shut-door doctrine hurt her influence badly among Adventists who were aware of her earlier visions. After several lean years where very little is heard of Mrs. White's *visions*, the Whites moved west to Michigan and managed to put those amateurish mistakes behind them. Curiously, Ellen's *visions* always seemed to coincide with the views of the leading brethren she associated with at the time. This no doubt aided her in gaining acceptance within the larger, Sabbath-keeping Advent community as a true prophet. By 1856, James was making the case in the Adventist paper that the remnant church would manifest spiritual gifts, such as the "Spirit of Prophecy."<sup>4</sup> Two years later, Mrs. White published her first version of *Great Controversy* entitled *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 1. By the 1860s, faith in Ellen White was becoming a "test of fellowship" in some Adventist churches.<sup>5</sup> This fanatical belief in the visions of Ellen White created confusion in the Adventist flock among those who believed the "Word of God was the one infallible guide."

Matters came to a head in 1860, in Otsego, Michigan, when Adventist Pastor Gilbert Cranmer expressed doubt that the *visions* of Ellen White were inspired. He was the first (of many) SDA pastors dismissed “for the reason that he did not hold the visions of Ellen G. White to be inspired,” and the “visions were made a test of fellowship from that time.”<sup>6</sup>

Mrs. White’s writings soon became known within the SDA sect as the “Spirit of Prophecy,” and she even published a four-volume set under this name in the 1870s. Mrs. White herself made numerous statements throughout her career equating her writings with the inspired writings of the Bible as can be seen below:

- “The Holy Ghost is the Author of the Scriptures and of the Spirit of Prophecy.”<sup>7</sup>
- “These books contain clear, straight, unalterable truth and they should certainly be appreciated. The instruction they contain is not of human production.”<sup>8</sup>
- “In my books, the truth is stated, barricaded by a ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ The Holy Spirit traced these truths upon my heart and mind as indelibly as the law was traced by the finger of God, upon the tables of stone...”<sup>9</sup>

These statements show that Ellen White regarded her writings as “unalterable truth” and as Holy Spirit-inspired as the law written by God’s finger.

The leaders of the SDA sect soon became cheerleaders for Ellen White. General Conference President G.A. Irwin stated that “the Spirit of Prophecy is the only **infallible** interpreter of Bible principles.”<sup>10</sup> In 1887, the General Conference passed a resolution stating: “That we re-affirm our binding confidence in the Testimonies of Sister White to the Church, as the teaching of the Spirit of God.”<sup>11</sup> In modern times, the prominent SDA theologian Morris Venden wrote, “God has given to our church an inspired commentary to settle the disagreements among the uninspired commentaries.”<sup>12</sup>

Mrs. White rightly wrote in *Great Controversy* that a sign of fanaticism was rejecting “the Word of God as the *one* infallible guide.” If this is true, then Ellen White and SDA corporate leaders qualify as fanatics because they promoted her writings as an “infallible” guide for over a century.

## Fanatics Denounce Their Opponents

Ellen White wrote of fanatics as those “who manifested a blind and bigoted zeal, denouncing all who would not sanction their course.” Interestingly, this is exactly what Mrs. White did for nearly her entire prophetic career. When someone questioned her *visions*, she would turn on them with a vengeance. One example is provided by Lucinda Burdick, a minister’s wife, who was very close to the Whites in the 1840s. She was an eyewitness to some of Ellen Harmon’s earliest shut-door *visions*:

I became acquainted with James White and Ellen Harmon (now Mrs. White) early in 1845. At the time of my first acquaintance with them **they were in a wild fanaticism**,—used to sit on the floor instead of chairs, and creep around the floor like little children. Such freaks were considered a mark of humility. They were not married, but traveling together. Ellen was having what was called visions: said God had shown her in vision that Jesus Christ arose on the tenth day of the seventh month, 1844, and **shut the door of mercy; had left forever the mediatorial throne; the whole world was doomed and lost, and there never could be another sinner saved.**<sup>13</sup>

After a while, it became apparent to many that Mrs. White’s *visions* were anything but divine. Mrs. Burdick explains how Mrs. White reacted in New England when many of the Adventist people began to question why her predictions had failed:

People in all the churches soon began to get their eyes open, and came out decidedly against her visions; and,

just as soon as they did so, she used to see them “with spots on their garments,” as she expressed it. I was personally acquainted with several ministers, whom she saw landed in the kingdom with “Oh! such brilliant crowns, FULL of stars.” **As soon as they took a stand against the visions, she saw them “doomed, damned, and lost for ever, without hope.”**<sup>14</sup>

As for those Adventists who had the character and courage to admit the 1844 Movement was delusional, Mrs. White told them their names were “blotted out of the book of life, they being foolish virgins.”<sup>15</sup>

Another victim of Ellen’s vicious assaults was Israel Dammon—an early associate of Ms. Harmon between 1845 and 1846. Dammon was an eyewitness to Ellen’s early visions in which she reportedly saw the door of salvation shut. Doubting this to be Biblically accurate, Dammon soon came to the conviction that he must take his stand upon the “Word of the Lord” alone. Before this decision, Mrs. White had seen Dammon “in the kingdom in an immortal state, and crowned.” After he decided to abandon the *visions* of Ellen White and stand upon the Word of God alone, she saw Dammon “finally lost.”<sup>16</sup>

In Iowa, the president of the Iowa SDA conference, B.F. Snook, and the secretary, W.H. Brinkerhoff, began to openly question the divine inspiration of Ellen White. On November 30, 1865, the men withdrew their membership from the SDA Church. The reason they gave for their departure was their inability to accept the visions of Ellen G. White. Later, they published a book revealing many errors in Mrs. White’s *visions*. Before they departed from the sect, Mrs. White had only praise for Snook and his family.<sup>17</sup> After their departure, Mrs. White assassinated Snook’s character, claiming, “His heart was not right with God.”<sup>18</sup>

A final example is H.E. Carver. In 1843, he heard the preaching of Millerite leader Joshua Himes and joined the 1844 movement. For a while Carver, associated with the SDAs but he decided to take his stand upon the Word of God

alone in the spring of 1866. He founded the Christian Publishing Association, and in 1877 published several highly embarrassing revelations about Mrs. White. She responded by claiming Carver wrote out “falsehoods and misrepresentations of the truth.”<sup>19</sup>

Many more examples could be given. However, these are sufficient to show that belief in Ellen White as a prophet was considered essential for being a member of God’s remnant church. Those who rejected her as a prophet were “doomed,” “damned,” and “lost.” Thus, Ellen White unwittingly classifies herself as fanatical according to her own definition. Perhaps she said it best in *Great Controversy*, “Satan was seeking by this means to oppose and destroy the work of God. ...and in order to bring reproach upon the cause of God, he sought to deceive some who professed the faith and to drive them to extremes...”<sup>20</sup>

## Known by Colleagues as a Fanatic

Mrs. White wrote in *Great Controversy*:

Of all the great religious movements since the days of the apostles, none have been more free from human imperfection and the wiles of Satan than was that of the autumn of 1844.<sup>21</sup>

Mrs. White masks the 1844 delusion by portraying it in the most glowing words; however, those who were eyewitnesses of those events have a far different recollection. Elder Issac C. Wellcome was a part of the Millerite movement in the 1840s. He wrote that in the “autumn of 1844” a “tempest of fanaticism” was raging.<sup>22</sup> Wellcome was baptized by James White and spent considerable time with James and Ellen after the Great Disappointment. He recalls:

In the midst of the excitement and strange notions of that time he [James White] was captivated by fanaticism, receiving the views of Eld. Turner and the visions of Ellen G. Harmon, a native of Portland, and a **wonderful fanatic**...<sup>23</sup>

Wellcome soon became convinced Elder White was fanatical and parted company with him. Wellcome later described James White's book *Life Incidents*—from which Ellen White copied liberally into *Great Controversy*—"a wonderful account of 'fanaticism,' by one who was as deeply in it as any in Maine, and who with his consort [Ellen White], became *leaders in one of its chief phases*."<sup>24</sup> Wellcome is not alone in his sober evaluation of the Whites. His testimony concurs with that of Lucinda Burdick who regarded the Whites as a "fanatical couple."<sup>25</sup> Otis Nichols, writing to William Miller, noted that there were even arrest warrants out for Ellen Harmon.<sup>26</sup> If the testimony of these eyewitnesses is accurate, one must consider the possibility that Ellen White was a key architect and proponent of the fanaticism that swept through the Adventists after the Great Disappointment.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 395.

<sup>2</sup> Dirk Anderson, *White Out* (2010), chapter "Shut Door."

<sup>3</sup> James White's most infamous editing episode was his publication of the pamphlet entitled *Experiences and Views* in 1851. In that pamphlet, James republished his wife's earlier visions, but deleted out 19% of the text—primarily those parts promoting the shut door of salvation. The deletion of the material created such uproar among the brethren that the fledgling church was almost split.

<sup>4</sup> James White, "The Gifts—Their Object," *Review and Herald*, Sept. 28, 1856.

<sup>5</sup> B. F. Snook & W. M. H. Brinkerhoff, *The Visions of Ellen G. White Not of God*, (Cedar Rapids, USA, 1866), chapter 3: "On the records of the Seventh-day Advent Church at Lisbon you will find the following 'Resolved, that we make the written visions of Sr. White a test of fellowship.'"

<sup>6</sup> Joseph J. Perkins, Louise H. Perkins, Open Letter about Gilbert Cranmer, from the *Autobiography of Gilbert Cranmer*, as told to M.A. Branch.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 3, 30.

<sup>8</sup> Ellen White, Letter H-339, Dec. 26, 1904.



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- <sup>9</sup> Ellen White, Letter 90, 1906.
- <sup>10</sup> G.A. Irwin, tract *The Mark of the Beast*, 1.
- <sup>11</sup> *SDA Year Book* for 1914, 253.
- <sup>12</sup> Morris Venden, *The Pillars* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1982), 30.
- <sup>13</sup> Miles Grant, *An Examination of Mrs. White's Visions* (Boston: Advent Christian Society, 1877).
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*. As corroboration of Grant's statement, after an unsuccessful visit to Paris, Maine, Mrs. White wrote: "I saw that they had not heeded the visions that God had given them, and unless they did heed them they would pass through awful trials and judgments." (Letter 3, 1851, written Aug. 11, 1851, to Harriet Hastings. Letter was released by the White Estate in 2014.)
- <sup>15</sup> Isaac C. Wellcome, *History of the Second Advent Message*, vol. 5, 397.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> Ellen White, *An Appeal to the Youth*, 63, 64.
- <sup>18</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 625.
- <sup>19</sup> Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, 346.
- <sup>20</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 395.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 401.
- <sup>22</sup> Wellcome, 401-402.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 402.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 407.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*.
- <sup>26</sup> Otis Nichols letter to William Miller, 20 April 1846.

# CHAPTER 19

## *1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Angels' Messages*

*Great Controversy* Chapters 22 and 38 Examined

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Ellen White wrote in *Great Controversy* that the Millerite Movement of 1843-1844 was a fulfillment of the first and second angels' messages of Revelation 14:

**Miller and his associates fulfilled prophecy** and gave a message which Inspiration had foretold should be given to the world... **The first and second angels' messages** were given at the right time and accomplished the work which God designed to accomplish by them.<sup>1</sup>

Is this true? Did the first and second angels of Revelation 14 sound during William Miller's 1844 delusion? And if so, did they accomplish the work described in the Bible?

To begin, the Biblical scope of the three angels' messages will be compared to the extent of the Millerite movement. The Bible says the angelic messages of Revelation 14 are to be proclaimed, "**to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people**" (Rev. 14:6). That is the Biblical scope—every person on earth. Was the Millerite message of the imminent return of Christ delivered to *every* nation, *every* kindred, *every* tongue, and *every* people? If not, then how could it possibly be a fulfillment of Revelation 14?

In *Great Controversy* Ellen White paints a picture of the Millerite movement as a grand and glorious *worldwide* movement:

The advent movement of 1840-44 was a glorious manifestation of the power of God; the first angel's message was **carried to every missionary station in**

**the world**, and in some countries there was the **greatest religious interest which has been witnessed in any land since the Reformation** of the sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

Mrs. White is following the writing of J.N. Loughborough who derided those who considered the Millerite Movement to be primarily a small movement in America as “unacquainted with the facts.”<sup>3</sup> Loughborough reported:

This message either by the living teacher or through the agency of the printed page went to every missionary station in the world and to every seaport on the earth.<sup>4</sup>

Without presenting any substantial evidence to prove his claims of worldwide coverage, he goes on to boast that the Millerite debacle generated interest in a manner similar to the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Is that an accurate assessment? Was the interest generated by the 1844 movement the greatest interest since the Protestant Reformation?

Not according to Joshua V. Himes. Next to William Miller, Joshua Himes was the foremost leader of the 1844 movement. No eyewitness was in a better position to assess the extent of the 1844 movement than the one who was at the helm of the movement: Himes. His testimony is certainly more reliable than that of Ellen White, who was a sickly 17-year-old at the time. Note carefully what Himes wrote after the October 22, 1844, Great Disappointment:

...the cry of the seventh month was a *local* and *partial* one. It was confined to this country...<sup>6</sup>

Himes went on in the same article to say that the “cry” produced no effect in Europe whatsoever. Himes knew what he was talking about. He had directed the movement. He had traveled all over the Northeastern United States promoting the movement. He was in contact with England. If anyone was in a position to accurately assess the progress of the movement, it was Himes.<sup>7</sup>

## How Far Did Millerism Really Reach?

The historical facts show that the Millerite Movement was largely confined to the **Northeastern United States**. There is scant evidence that it even made much penetration into the southern or western United States, let alone the entire world! There was a small interest in the message in southeastern Canada, and at best 2,000 to 3,000 followers in England. There were a handful of believers in a few scattered places in Europe, but the message only received widespread attention in the Northeastern United States where it garnered perhaps as many as 50,000 adherents.

Loughborough claimed that Adventist periodicals were sent to “every seaport on earth” in 1842, although there is little evidence to support that claim. Even if it were true, it is unknown who, if anyone, actually received, read, or believed the English-language periodical.

Although the message was carried out to a **few** missionary stations, it is preposterous to claim this was a *worldwide* message that went to *every* nation, tongue, and people! Consider these facts: In 1845, approximately 1.1 billion people were living on Earth.<sup>8</sup> If one was generous enough to say that for each of the 50,000 Millerites, 100 others *heard* the message but did not join the movement, then that would mean that perhaps five million people heard the message of Christ’s imminent return. **That is less than one-half of one percent of the earth’s population!**

There is little or no evidence this message ever reached the following people:

- The millions of Native Americans living within the borders of the United States itself.
- The immeasurable millions of Africans. This was before David Livingstone opening up the African continent to Christianity.
- Countless millions living in the Catholic nations of Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

- Innumerable millions living in China, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Southeast Asia.
- Millions upon millions in India, Pakistan, Persia, Mesopotamia, and elsewhere in central Asia.
- Millions in the Ottoman Empire and other Arab nations of the Middle East.
- Millions in Russia, Eastern Europe, and the Catholic nations of Europe.
- The quarter million people living in Australia and New Zealand.

Even in the year this book was last published (2025), the Bible has not yet even been translated into all of the thousands of languages and dialects on this planet. **How then could a message that reached, at best, less than one-half of one percent of the world's population be a fulfillment of a prophecy that is said to go "to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people"?** This evidence proves the 1844 Movement could not possibly have fulfilled the first and second angels' messages!

## **Most Millerites Abandoned the Idea**

Most Millerites abandoned the assumption that their movement was the first and second angels' messages. Even Ellen White admits this in *Early Writings*:

After the great disappointment in 1844, Satan and his angels were busily engaged in laying snares to unsettle the faith of the body. He affected the minds of persons who had had an experience in the messages, and who had an appearance of humility. Some **pointed to the future for the fulfillment of the first and second messages...** These were gaining an influence over the minds of the inexperienced and unsettling their faith. **Some were searching the Bible** to build up a faith of their own, independent of the body. Satan exulted in all this; for he knew that those who broke loose from the anchor he could affect by different errors and drive about with divers winds of doctrine. **Many who had**

**led in the first and second messages now denied them, and there was division and confusion throughout the body.<sup>9</sup>**

Mrs. White criticizes those who pointed to the “future” fulfillment of the first and second angels’ messages, charging that “Satan and his angels” were responsible for them abandoning their former beliefs. Why would it require the personal efforts of Satan and his angels to convince them the 1844 Movement was not a worldwide movement when the evidence was so abundantly clear that a child could figure it out? Who could possibly believe this movement reached every nation, kindred, tongue, and people? Only those who were either uneducated or were so determined to believe they were the “chosen remnant” that they chose to turn a blind eye to the facts in order to believe a delusion.

## **The Everlasting Gospel?**

The first angel in Revelation 14:6 is described as having the “everlasting gospel.” Was the “everlasting gospel” even preached by the Millerites? Not according to one SDA scholar who studied the writings of the Millerites in depth:

Finally, and possibly most significantly, one can consider what is omitted in Miller’s [15] rules. **They make no mention of Christ, of salvation or of the gospel. This matches the near total lack of devotional writing in Millerite periodicals.<sup>10</sup>**

The Millerites were apparently so engrossed preaching the “bad news” of the judgment and destruction of sinners, that they did not spend much effort on the “good news” of salvation.

## **The Hour of God's Judgment?**

The Millerites proclaimed that the hour of God’s judgment, as described in Rev. 14:7, had commenced: “Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come.”

What did they understand this judgment to be? They understood it to be the judgment of God upon the wicked. This is the only valid interpretation possible from the context of Revelation 14. The judgment of God upon the wicked is the focal point of the whole chapter:

The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. ... And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. (Rev. 14:10,11,19,20)

The “judgment” announced by the first angel in Rev. 14:7 refers to the wrath of God being poured out upon the wicked. The wrath of the judgment is then potently described in the subsequent verses of the chapter. This is what **all** the Millerites taught and believed.

After 1844, however, the Adventists faced a dilemma. The wrath of God did not commence as expected in 1844. How then could they continue to claim the first angel’s message had been fulfilled when the judgment upon the wicked did not occur? To explain away this obvious failure, they concocted a theory that the judgment referred to an *Investigative Judgment* taking place in Heaven, not upon Earth. This investigative judgment—rather than being the execution of divine wrath upon the wicked which the Bible vividly portrays—is instead described by SDA apologists as a courtroom procedure where God ponders the fate of every soul and makes a decision upon each case. This courtroom

investigation is not found anywhere in Revelation 14, nor anywhere else in the Bible. Although this interpretation seriously violates the context of the passage, the shut-door Adventists, led by James and Prophetess White, adopted this teaching because it solved two problems for them. First, it allowed them to have a “judgment” commence in 1844. Secondly, having a “judgment” that started in 1844 permitted them to continue teaching that the first two angels’ messages had already sounded. Thus, this interpretation was forced upon Revelation 14 by Ellen White and other SDA leaders to support their false interpretation that the first and second angels’ messages have already sounded.

No Bible student can sit down with their Bible, read Revelation 14, and come to the conclusion that they are reading about an *investigative judgment*. If there is any doubt, read the following quotes and ask this question: Do these verses describe a courtroom-style investigative judgment of the cases of the righteous or do they describe a judgment of wrath upon sinners?

- vs. 10 – “drink of the wine of wrath”
- vs. 10 – “cup of His indignation”
- vs. 10 – “shall be tormented with fire and brimstone”
- vs. 11 – “smoke of their torment shall ascend”
- vs. 19 – “into the great winepress of God’s wrath”
- vs. 20 – “winepress was trampled”
- vs. 20 – “blood came out of the winepress”

How could these verses possibly describe an *investigative judgment*? The fact that Revelation 14 is describing a judgment upon the wicked is yet another proof that the first and second angels’ messages were *not* fulfilled in 1844.

## **SDAs Change Meaning of the First Message**

To make their end-time theology jive with actual events, Ellen White and the SDA sect kept changing the meaning of



the first angel's message. First, they changed when it started, and when it ended. In the 1858 edition of *Spiritual Gifts*, the forerunner to *Great Controversy*, Mrs. White enunciates clearly that the first angel's message was sounded in William Miller's announcement of the "coming of Jesus" in 1843/1844:

**I saw that God was in the proclamation of the time in 1843. It was his design** to arouse the people, and bring them to a testing point where they should decide. Ministers were convicted and convinced of the correctness of the positions taken on the prophetic periods, and they left their pride, their salaries, and their churches, to go forth from place to place and proclaim the message. But as the **message from heaven** could find a place in the hearts of but a very few of the professed ministers of Christ, the work was laid upon many who were not preachers. Some left their fields to **sound the message**, while others were called from their shops and their merchandise. And even some professional men were compelled to leave their professions to engage in the unpopular work of **giving the first angel's message**. Ministers laid aside their sectarian views and feelings, and united in **proclaiming the coming of Jesus**. The people were moved everywhere **the message** reached them.<sup>11</sup>

Here is what Sister White proclaimed:

1. William Miller's message was a proclamation of the imminent return of Jesus, first said to be sometime between the spring of 1843 and the spring of 1844, then later changed to October 22, 1844.
2. Ellen White called this "the truth,"<sup>12</sup> even though it was *not* "the truth." In fact, it was an absolute falsehood, because Jesus' return was not imminent in 1843 or 1844, and Jesus did not return to earth during that generation.
3. Ellen White called this a "message from heaven," even though it was not. It was actually a falsehood

that deceived people about the time of the return of Christ. Thus, this message came not from heaven because Titus 1:2 says, “God...cannot lie.” Why would heaven send a lying message to the earth when Scripture says God cannot lie?

4. Ellen White explained that William Miller’s message about the return of Christ to the earth in 1843/1844 was the *fulfillment* of the first angel’s message of Revelation 14.

Mrs. White goes on with her fake version of events...

Thousands were led to embrace **the truth preached by William Miller**, and servants of God were raised up in the spirit and power of Elijah **to proclaim the message.**<sup>9</sup>

First of all, what “truth” did William Miller preach? The entire thrust of his teaching was a deception about the return of Christ in 1843/1844. After the Great Disappointment, Miller acknowledged the utter falsehood of his message, saying: “I have no confidence...that it was a fulfillment of prophecy in any sense.”<sup>13</sup> Over 180 years have now passed and it is painfully obvious that Jesus not only did not return in 1843/1844, but His return was not “imminent” by any stretch of the imagination. Miller’s message was laced with the poison of falsehood.

Secondly, it is quite a stretch to compare Miller and his cohorts with Elijah—a *real* man of God. In the same paragraph, Mrs. White also compares the Millerites to John the Baptist. Yes, the Millerites were indeed calling people to repent of their sins. The difference is that John the Baptist was preparing the way for a *real* event: The advent of the Lord in *his* generation. John’s warnings about the imminent advent of the Messiah were accurate and truthful. Miller, on the other hand, was, by his own admission, a false prophet. He did not prepare the way for the Lord because the Lord did not come in 1844! He was not even preparing his generation for the return, because the Lord did not return

within that century. Therefore, he was no more a type of Elijah or John the Baptist than any other preacher who called people to repentance.

Mrs. White continues...

Those who had neglected to receive the heavenly message were left in darkness, and **God's anger was kindled** against them, **because they would not receive the light which He had sent from heaven.**<sup>14</sup>

This has to rank as one of the most offensive statements Mrs. White and her *angels* wrote in *Great Controversy*. She would have her readers believe that not only was Miller's falsehood "light...from heaven" but that God was angry at those who refused to fall for the delusion of Miller's false message. This is patently absurd. In fact, the ones who rejected Miller were the ones who stood firm upon the "light from heaven" found in the Word of God which says, **"But of that day and hour knoweth no [man], no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only"** (Matt. 24:36). There is no doubt the Lord was pleased with those who stood upon the "light" of His word rather than falling, as Ellen Harmon did, to the darkness and delusion of a misguided man who later admitted he was wrong.

In 1844, most Christians had enough intellectual capacity to realize that the gospel message had not yet penetrated even half of the world. Jesus said, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached **in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.**" (Matt. 24:14) It should be no surprise to anyone that in the first quote mentioned above, Ellen White said that "few" ministers agreed to proclaim the Millerite message. Most educated ministers understood the gospel commission had not yet even been half-fulfilled upon this earth. There is no doubt that very few ministers were willing to deny that truthful reality in order to proclaim Miller's dates.

Ellen White paints a picture of a "god" who is hot with fury at Christians who believed Jesus' words, who did not

fall for this “light from heaven” which was not light at all, but a total delusion and fakery. If the truth were to be told, the one burning in anger because Christians were not accepting Miller’s delusion was Satan! If this is the only thing you ever learn about Ellen White, you can stop right now and know with absolute certainty that she was not a prophet of God and did not speak for God. **It is utter blasphemy to claim that God sent a delusional message to Christians in the 1840s—a message that directly contradicted Christ’s words—and then He got burning angry about it when Christians refused to believe it!**

## Ellen White Contradicts Herself

An older and perhaps wiser Ellen White must have realized the utter absurdity of the *vision* she *saw* in her earlier years. Thus, by the time she published the 1888 version of *Great Controversy*, she completely changed the meaning of the first angel’s message:

...the first angel’s message, “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come,” pointed to Christ’s ministration in the most holy place, to the investigative judgment, and not to the coming of Christ for the redemption of His people and the destruction of the wicked.<sup>15</sup>

Amazing! In the 1858 version of *Spiritual Gifts*, quoted above, she says emphatically that the first angel’s message was “proclaiming the coming of Jesus.” Thirty years later she says it was **not** “the coming of Christ.” Instead, she claims the first angel’s message is the “Investigative Judgment.” How could that possibly be true? Did William Miller ever preach an investigative judgment as part of his message? No, Joseph Bates did not even concoct it until 1847. William Miller never accepted the teaching. Because James White initially strongly resisted this doctrine, the shut-door Adventists did not officially start teaching it until 1857.<sup>16</sup> How could the first angel’s message of an

investigative judgment have been sounded in 1843/1844, and rejected by people (with whom, by the way, God was now angry and had rejected), if that message was not even devised until 1847? This is a masterpiece of confusion!

But the confusion does not end there. Ellen White's quotes on the second angel's message are equally baffling...

## The Second Angel's Message

In her book *Early Writings* Ellen White tells her readers the purpose of the second angel's message was to call Christians to come out of the Protestant churches that had rejected the first angel's message of Christ's return in 1843/1844:

As the churches refused to receive the first angel's message, they rejected the light from heaven and fell from the favor of God. They trusted to their own strength, and by opposing the first message placed themselves where they could not see the light of the second angel's message. But the beloved of God, who were oppressed, accepted the message, "Babylon is fallen," and left the churches.<sup>17</sup>

**Near the close of the second angel's message**, I saw a great light from heaven shining upon the people of God. The rays of this light seemed bright as the sun. And I heard the voices of angels crying, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him!"<sup>18</sup>

Notice something important here. Mrs. White writes that the second angel's message was near its close when the "loud cry" was sounded by the Millerites during the summer and fall of 1844. Now, notice how she says that God rejected the churches in 1844:

When the churches spurned the counsel of God by rejecting the advent message, **the Lord rejected them**. The first angel was followed by a second, proclaiming, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Revelation 14:8. This

**message was understood by Adventists to be an announcement of the moral fall of the churches in consequence of their rejection of the first message. The proclamation, "Babylon is fallen," was given in the summer of 1844, and as the result about fifty thousand withdrew from these churches.<sup>19</sup>**

Think this through. In 1844, the Christian churches were told that Jesus was returning that year. By and large, they rejected that message. And as it turns out, they were correct in doing so, because that message was thoroughly and absolutely false. But according to Ellen White, they were then "rejected" by God because they refused to believe a delusion! Therefore, as the following quote from Ellen White will show, all non-SDA churches:

1. Cherish error and spurn truth
2. Do not love God
3. Do not have faith in His word
4. Do not have the Holy Spirit

Since the rejection of the first message, a sad change has taken place in the churches. As [1] truth is spurned, error is received and cherished. [2] Love for God and [3] faith in His Word have grown cold. The churches have grieved the Spirit of the Lord and [4] it has been in a great measure withdrawn.<sup>20</sup>

What a harsh judgment on non-SDA churches! If Ellen White was writing the truth, then all non-SDAs had better run from their current churches, and join the SDA sect, because apparently SDAs are the only ones who love truth, love God, have faith in His Word, and have the Holy Spirit! According to Mrs. White, the rest of the Christian churches are cold, rejected, and barren!

Now notice carefully in the first quote above, that Mrs. White says the second angel's message was a call to leave the churches **because** "of the moral fall of the churches in consequence of their rejection of the first message." The

substance of the second angel's message is, "You should leave your church because your church does not accept the imminent return of Christ in 1844." As time went on and Christ did not return, that statement must have appeared more and more absurd. Quite possibly Ellen White realized that later, because once again, just as she did with the first angel's message, she changed her mind about the meaning of the second angel's message:

[Revelation 18:1, 2 quoted] This is the same message that was given by the second angel. Babylon is fallen, "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 falsehood that Satan first told to Eve in Eden—the natural immortality of the soul.**<sup>21</sup>

Astounding! Now the second angel's message is all about going to church on Sunday and believing in the immortality of the soul. These issues were not even prominent in 1844! How could this possibly be the substance of the second angel's message?

Conveniently for SDAs, Mrs. White concocted an explanation for these changing messages. The first and second angels' messages were to be "repeated," and the message itself changes between the first repetition of such and the next repetition:

The second angel's message was to go to Babylon [the churches] proclaiming her downfall, and calling the people to come out of her. **This same message is to be proclaimed the second time.**<sup>22</sup>

The first message is to be repeated proclaiming the second advent of Christ to our world. The second angel's message is to be repeated.<sup>23</sup>

Is it possible to figure out this maze of confusion? When the first angel's message is repeated, the message is the

imminent “second advent of Christ,” which just so happens to be the same message William Miller and his comrades proclaimed in 1843/1844. However, some years later, Mrs. White wrote in *Great Controversy* that the first angel’s message was actually all about the “Investigative Judgment” even though the people originally proclaiming the first angel’s message did not know or understand that at the time. However, when the first angel’s message is repeated, it is not about the Investigative Judgment, but rather the Second Advent of Christ. Can it get any more confusing?

When the second angel’s message is repeated, it is about the Sabbath and soul sleep, whereas the first time, it was about the rejection of the first angel’s message, which message was actually the imminent return of Christ, but in reality, should have been understood as the “Investigative Judgment.” Now, is that crystal clear? This is a mish-mash of utter nonsense!

## The Fall of Babylon

In 1850, Ellen White’s husband James brutally bashed non-Adventists by claiming that the departure of God’s people from *Babylon* was already completed and that the Protestant churches had become the “synagogue of Satan”:

Babylon, the nominal church is fallen. God’s people have come out of her. She is now the “synagogue of Satan” (Rev. 3:9). “The habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird” (Rev. 18:2).<sup>24</sup>

In the first version of *Great Controversy*, in 1858, Mrs. White echoes James’s sentiments by writing that she “saw” the Christian denominations were fallen:

I saw the state of the different churches since the second angel proclaimed their fall. They have been growing more and more corrupt... I saw great iniquity and vileness in the churches... Their profession, their prayers and their exhortations, are an abomination in the



sight of God. Said the angel, God will not smell in their assemblies. ... An innumerable host of evil angels are spreading themselves over the whole land. The churches and religious bodies are crowded with them.<sup>25</sup>

In this *vision*, Ellen White saw that the second angel's message was fulfilled in 1844 and that non-Adventist churches had fallen.<sup>26</sup> This presented a problem as time progressed because SDAs continued to call people out of these churches long after 1844. After all, new members had joined those churches after 1844, and SDA evangelists were actively recruiting them to join the SDA sect. In fact, for decades there were people "coming out of Babylon" to join the SDA sect. Therefore, by 1911, Mrs. White modified her earlier position that the "second angel proclaimed their fall." She now wrote something quite different:

Not until this condition shall be reached, and the union of the church with the world shall be fully accomplished throughout Christendom, will the fall of Babylon be complete. The change is a progressive one, and **the perfect fulfillment of Revelation 14:8 is yet future.**<sup>27</sup>

Mrs. White wrote in 1911 that the fulfillment of the second angel was "yet future." However, in 1858 she had blasted Christians who pointed to a "future" fulfillment of the second message claiming to do so was a "snare" of Satan!<sup>28</sup> Had she accepted the snare of Satan?

Unfortunately for Mrs. White, historical events did not match her *visions*. If she admitted that the second angel had not sounded in 1844, then it would draw attention to her as a fake prophet. Thus, she chose to modify the meaning of the second angel's prophecy to be a *perpetual* coming out of Babylon. This contrasts sharply with the event described in the Bible which is said to take place in "one hour" (Rev. 18:10,17). Her sect was forced into this awkward interpretation not because it was correct, but because it was the only way for the false prophetess to save face.

## Conclusion

When something is placed under a microscope and continually dwelt upon, it starts to look big. Take away the microscope, and one begins to see the larger picture. One sees that what they once thought was so huge, grand, and glorious, is in reality, a tiny speck of near-nothingness. The Millerite movement was not a great, grand, or glorious movement. It was an isolated outbreak of fanaticism that 99% of the world never even heard about. The 1844 movement was not a fulfillment of the first and second angels' messages as Ellen White claimed. Nor was it similar in impact to the Protestant Reformation. It was a dismal failure of a time-setting fanatic that quickly evaporated into the obscurity of religious history. Since that failure, Ellen White and SDAs have struggled to come up with interpretations of Bible prophecy that place themselves in the right and everyone else in the wrong. The results have been disastrous. They have been forced to contradict and redefine their earlier beliefs, and the result is a baffling hodgepodge of utter nonsense.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 405. See also *Early Writings*, 245.

<sup>2</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 611.

<sup>3</sup> J.N. Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement: Its Rise and Progress* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1905), 98.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 99-101.

<sup>6</sup> Joshua V. Himes, *The Morning Watch*, Feb. 20, 1845, emphasis supplied.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> "World Population Growth History", <http://www.vaughns-1-pagers.com/history/world-population-growth.htm>, extracted on Aug. 11, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Ellen White, *Early Writings*, 256.

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- <sup>10</sup> Kai Arasola, *The End of Historicism: Millerite Hermeneutic of Time Prophecies in the Old Testament* (self-published, 1990), 59.
- <sup>11</sup> Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1 (1858), 133.
- <sup>12</sup> White, *Early Writings*, 232.
- <sup>13</sup> William Miller as cited in Isaac Wellcome, *History of the Advent Message*, 410, 412.
- <sup>14</sup> White, *Early Writings*, 236.
- <sup>15</sup> White, *The Great Controversy* (1911), 424. See also *Life Sketches Manuscript*, 112.
- <sup>16</sup> See E.S. Ballenger, *The Gathering Call*, Nov.-Dec. 1937, 26-36.
- <sup>17</sup> White, *Early Writings*, 237.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.
- <sup>19</sup> Ellen White, *The Story of Redemption* (1947), 364-65.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 366.
- <sup>21</sup> Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, Dec. 6, 1892.
- <sup>22</sup> Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, Sep. 12, 1893.
- <sup>23</sup> Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 16 (1990), 40.
- <sup>24</sup> James White, *Present Truth*, April, 1850.
- <sup>25</sup> White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, 189.
- <sup>26</sup> As evidence she considered the churches "fallen" in 1844, see Ellen White, *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 53: "That message was first proclaimed ...the summer of 1844. As a result, many left the **fallen churches**."
- <sup>27</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 389.
- <sup>28</sup> White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, 166.

# CHAPTER 20

## *The Fake Return of Christ*

*Great Controversy* Chapters 21, 22, & 26 Examined

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The label “1844 Movement” is used to refer to the religious excitement that was aroused in the 1840s by William Miller and his associates who preached the return of Christ on October 22, 1844. Was this movement *really* “of God”? In *Great Controversy*, Ellen White describes the movement in glowing terms, calling it the most perfect religious movement in human history:

Of all the great religious movements since the days of the apostles, **none have been more free from human imperfection** and the wiles of Satan than was that of the autumn of 1844. Even now, after the lapse of many years, all who shared in that movement and who have stood firm upon the platform of truth still feel the holy influence of that blessed work and **bear witness that it was of God.**<sup>1</sup>

To understand how Ellen White arrived at this astonishing conclusion, one must go back to the fall of 1844. Farmer-turned-preacher William Miller’s first prediction about the return of Christ as being sometime between the spring of 1843 and the spring of 1844, ended in disappointment. However, the leading Millerite brethren quickly rebounded from this devastating blow and decided upon a new date. They assembled their proofs—their calculations, their charts, and their Bible verses. They checked and rechecked their figures. They had it all worked out. They believed they had discovered the “Bible truth.” They *knew* when Jesus was going to come and they could hardly contain their excitement! They began circulating the

good news amongst the churches again and the movement sputtered back to life, regaining some of the momentum it had lost after the previous disappointment.

Before the first catastrophic failure of Miller's predictions, he and his cohorts had been given limited access to preach their theories in some Christian churches. However, by early 1844, many of the churches had wised up and were no longer willing to put up with the false time-setting doctrines of Miller or his associates. By this time a number of able Protestant Bible scholars had written tracts and even entire books unmasking the abundant fallacies of Miller's fifteen *proofs*.<sup>2</sup> It was not long before the majority of churches were convinced that while farmer Miller may have had good intentions, his scholarship missed the mark widely. The major Protestant churches in America presented four compelling reasons why Miller was wrong. Read these four reasons carefully and think them through. After you read them, it will be crystal clear why the vast majority of Christians rejected Miller's teaching.

## **Four Reasons Miller Was Wrong**

1) Time-setting has always been viewed as an instrument of Satan, and Christian leaders could not, with a clear conscience, endorse any movement involved in setting a definite date for Christ's return, regardless of how much they prized that return. Miller was not unique. As discussed in chapter 16, many a deluded soul had arisen in the past proclaiming to have discovered a so-called "Bible secret" which unlocked the date of Christ's return. Church history has been blemished with numerous examples of such folly. Protestant pastors and Bible scholars were painfully aware of fanatics and extremists setting dates for Christ's return, and some had no doubt dealt personally with such delusional church members. Church leaders recognized that time-setting leads to a false revival, and results in a bitter disappointment which inevitably wreaks havoc on the faith

of those involved in the delusion. It makes a mockery of Bible prophecy. Those deceived by the fanatics end up paying a heavy price—setting themselves up to be the laughingstock of the world.

While it is evident church leaders understood the dangers of time-setting, the 17-year-old prophetess Ellen Harmon was seemingly unaware of such dangers at the time. However, later in life, a much more mature Ellen White acknowledged the danger of setting dates and times:

**Those who so presumptuously preach definite time,** in so doing gratify the adversary of souls; for they **are advancing infidelity rather than Christianity.** They produce Scripture and by false interpretation show a chain of argument which apparently proves their position. But **their failures show that they are false prophets,** that they do not rightly interpret the language of inspiration.<sup>3</sup>

Unbelievable as it may seem, in *Great Controversy*, Mrs. White blames God for Miller's preaching of definite time: **"the preaching of a definite time...was ordered of God."**<sup>4</sup> Then ironically, on the same pages, she warns about the litany of dangers of preaching a definite time:

Some were led into **the error** of repeatedly fixing upon a **definite time** for the coming of Christ. ...disappointment would **expose them to the derision** of unbelievers, and they would be in **danger of yielding to discouragement** and would be **tempted to doubt** the truths essential for their salvation. ... The more frequently a definite time is set for the second advent, and the more widely it is taught, the better **it suits the purposes of Satan.** After the time has passed, he **excites ridicule and contempt of it on its advocates...**<sup>5</sup>

This contradiction is simply unfathomable! In the same paragraph where she says setting a date for the Second Coming "suits the purposes of Satan," she says "the

preaching of definite time” was “ordered of God.”<sup>6</sup> This is an appalling contradiction! Since when does God order the preaching of definite time to suit Satan’s purposes?

2) Astute Bible students recognized that Miller’s message was a direct contradiction of the very words of Jesus who admonished:

Watch therefore, for **ye know neither the day nor the hour** wherein the Son of man cometh (Matt. 25:13).

But **of that day and that hour knoweth no man**, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father (Mark 13:31).<sup>7</sup>

Jesus indicated that neither He nor the angels knew the date. Thus, it would be ridiculous for a human to think he could know the date! Jesus admonished His followers to, “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come” (Matt. 24:42). Watching would not be necessary if one could predict the date of Christ’s return. Presumably, if one knew the hour of Christ’s return, he could live like a rebel and a reprobate up until the day of the return, and then repent for his sins. This is one reason it would be counterproductive for Christ to allow humans to pinpoint the date of His return. In His infinite wisdom, Father has kept this information secret.

Even when His own disciples asked about His return, Jesus replied, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1:7). Jesus clearly articulated that seeking to know the time of His return was not for His followers to know. He was telling them not to delve into that subject. Instead, He told them to get to work spreading the gospel (Acts 1:8). Thus, the disciples of Christ are not to fret over the date of his return. Rather, they are to spread the good news of His kingdom. It is incomprehensible how the Millerites could read such plain statements of truth from the lips of Jesus and then dismiss them entirely. It should come as no surprise that the Millerites were derided as mental inebriates.

3) Astute Bible students were aware that many Biblical prophecies had not yet been fulfilled by 1844. Many of the prophecies in the latter half of the Book of Revelation remained unfulfilled. The Battle of Armageddon, the Mark of the Beast, and many other prophecies were as of yet unfulfilled.

Many of Jesus' prophecies also remained unfulfilled. During Jesus' discourse of future events to the disciples on the Mount of Olives, after describing the soon-coming destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus gave a time limit on how long the city would be desolate, saying:

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** (Luke 21:24).

Historians recount that after a brief period of rebellion by the Jews, Jerusalem was annihilated by Roman armies in 70 A.D. Over the next 1,900 years it was occupied by various gentile nations including the Romans, Byzantines, Ottomans, British, and Arabs. It was not until 1948 that the Jews gained control over West Jerusalem. Finally, in 1967 Israel gained complete control over Jerusalem during the Arab-Israeli War. Obviously, the "times of the Gentiles" to rule over Jerusalem had not wrapped up by 1844, because Jerusalem was still controlled at that time by the gentile Ottoman Empire.

Another example of unfulfilled prophecy was when Christ predicted the gospel message would be preached in the entire world *before* He returned:

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in **all the world** for a witness **unto all nations**; and **then** shall the end come (Matthew 24:14).

As discussed in the previous chapter, there were thousands of languages and dialects that had never heard the gospel in



**1844. For Christ to come in 1844 would be a direct contradiction of His own prophecy!**

**4)** William Miller used poor Biblical exegesis in coming up with his infamous “15 proofs” of Christ’s return in 1844. Some of the texts he used to prove the return of Christ were not even prophetic passages, and others were badly misused. For example, in his 15<sup>th</sup> proof, Miller added the 1335 days of Daniel 12 with the number 666 from Revelation 13 and somehow managed to end up with 1844!<sup>8</sup>

If a man walked into your church and told you Jesus was going to return on a certain date because he added the number 666 to some other number in the Bible and came up with a certain date, would you believe him? Of course you wouldn’t! You would recite the verse “no man knows the day nor the hour” while you escorted him out the door. The Christians in 1844 were not that much different from us today. They were not a bunch of simpletons. They were literate people who knew their Bibles. Likewise, most believers today are well enough grounded in the Bible to know not to follow after every fanatic who walks down the church aisle spewing out “proofs” and “Bible truths” showing that Christ is returning on a certain date.

## **What Would You Have Done?**

Now that you understand the four reasons for rejecting Miller, what would you have done if you had been there? There is little doubt that if you were the one sitting in the pew in 1844, you would have stood firmly on the four principles enunciated above and rejected Miller’s movement. That is exactly what the vast majority of Christians did. However, some believers, like the frail and sickly 17-year-old Ellen Harmon, were captivated by the excitement of the moment. They allowed their desire for Christ’s soon return to cloud their judgment. In their yearning for Christ’s return, they refused to see the solid

Biblical reasons for rejecting Miller's date. They were so anxious for Jesus to return to relieve their misery and fulfill their hopes that they seemingly lost their objectivity.

## Conflict Erupts

As in any serious conflict of ideas, the situation turned a little heated in 1844. When churches began shutting their doors to Miller and scoffed at his fake predictions, the Millerites retaliated in turn, deriding the churches as "Babylon" and the "Synagogue of Satan."<sup>9</sup> Like Ellen Harmon, Miller had little tolerance for those who believed differently than him. Although he refused to go so far as James White and Ellen Harmon in labeling the Protestant churches as "Babylon," he had the sternest denunciations for those who did not adhere to his theories:

He [Miller] is evidently disposed to make but little allowance for those who think differently from him on the Millennium; dealing often in terrible denunciations against such as oppose his particular views on this point.<sup>10</sup>

Miller's sharp denunciations were not well received by his opponents. Ellen White, in the first edition of *Great Controversy*, acknowledged the opposition to Miller, but she spun it a different way. She interpreted that opposition as *hypocrisy*:

The preaching of **definite time** called forth great opposition from all classes, from the minister in the pulpit down to the most reckless, heaven-daring sinner. No man knoweth the day nor the hour was heard from the **hypocritical minister and the bold scoffer**.<sup>11</sup>

Stop now and think this through! Remember what the *mature* Ellen White said? Earlier in this chapter it was noted that she said that those preaching "**definite time...are advancing infidelity rather than Christianity**" and time-

setting “**suits the purposes of Satan.**” However, the young Ellen White said that ministers who “objected” to preaching “definite time” were “hypocrites.” How could both statements be true? They cannot! Either preaching “definite time” advances infidelity or it does not. If it does indeed advance infidelity, then when Mrs. White embraced and endorsed Millerism, she was, by her own admission, “advancing infidelity!”

Get this picture. These Protestant ministers had given their lives to the study of God’s Word. Many were well-advanced in learning, and recognized by their communities as men of experience and character. Some were scholars in Greek and Hebrew, doctors of theology. Some had served for decades as missionaries. Others had served 30, 40, or even 50 years in the ministry. During their distinguished careers, these godly men had withstood many a fanatical “prophet” and faced down many a misguided extremist. **These men had earned their right to be called men of God!** Now witness an uneducated and impressionable 17-year-old “prophetess” enter the scene. She is caught up in the throes of a fanatical movement led by a former high-degree Freemason and farmer who was teaching “definite time.” By the *prophetess’s* own later words, Miller was, “advancing infidelity” and “suing the purposes of Satan” by setting a definite time for the Lord’s return.

Instead of respecting these Protestant ministers of God who had given their lives to His service, what did she do? **In tones echoing of haughty blasphemy, she derides these servants of God in the most hateful and degrading manner:**

Many shepherds of the flock, who professed to love Jesus, said that they had no opposition to the preaching of Christ’s coming, but **they objected to the definite time.** God’s all-seeing eye read their hearts. **They did not love Jesus near.** They knew that their **unchristian lives** would not stand the test, for they were not walking in the humble path laid out by Him.<sup>12</sup>

Mrs. White adds insult to injury, claiming that angels were sent to lead people out of the Protestant churches that rejected Miller's false teaching of definite time:

I saw Jesus turn His face from those who rejected and despised His coming, and then He bade angels lead His people out from among the unclean, lest they should be defiled.<sup>13</sup>

It is a fallacious slander for Mrs. White to claim that there were Christians who "rejected and despised" Christ's return. Just because they rejected Miller's falsehood does not mean they rejected the return of Christ. There is no evidence ever presented by Ellen White that Christians who rejected Miller also despised Christ's return. In fact, many who rejected Miller also pronounced their love for Christ and their desire for His return. What they despised and rejected was the false and fanatical time-setting of Miller. The only "angels" leading people out of those Bible-believing Protestant churches to join the throes of delusional fanaticism were the angels of Satan.

To those like Ellen Harmon, who embraced the delusion of Christ's return in 1844, anyone fighting against Miller's message *must* be fighting against God. Ellen Harmon either could not or would not fathom the idea that there were very valid reasons for rejecting Miller's date. In her mind, the righteous and devoted ones, such as James and herself, accepted Miller's delusion while the ungodly rejected it:

The most devoted gladly received the message. **They knew that it was from God**, and that it was delivered at the right time. Angels were watching with the deepest interest the result of the **heavenly message**...<sup>14</sup>

One can only wonder how Ellen White could write of the 1844 movement with words such as, "it was from God" and a "heavenly message," but later write that those preaching definite time were "advancing infidelity rather than Christianity." Apparently, it was acceptable to preach

definite time so long as she and James were the ones doing the preaching!

## **Probation's Door Slams Shut**

After the Great Disappointment of 1844, Miller confessed his foolhardy mistake and had the dignity and courage to admit he was wrong. Millerite leader Joshua Himes also admitted the October 22 date was wrong. He subsequently worked hard to quell the growing fanaticism and bizarre doctrines creeping in amongst the few remaining Adventists. Mrs. White admitted that many disappointed ones realized their foolhardiness and abandoned Miller and “united” with those ridiculing Miller.<sup>15</sup> In Ellen White’s mind, their failure to keep on believing the false teaching of “definite time” cost them their salvation. She explains:

The passing of the definite time had tested and proved them, and very many were weighed in the balance and found wanting.<sup>16</sup>

Why should they not abandon Miller? After all, Miller and the other leading Advent leaders had all admitted their teachings were wrong! Jesus obviously had not returned! The only logical, sensible, and godly course of action was to admit their mistake and move on with their lives.

However, some stubbornly refused to admit they had been deluded by a false teacher. Despite all the evidence that Miller was mistaken, a few could not humble their pride and admit they were mistaken. This small group of radical die-hards included Joseph Bates, James White, and Ellen Harmon. They continued to insist and teach that something of significance happened on October 22, 1844. They soon concocted the idea that the door of probation closed at this time. At first, the Whites taught the door of salvation was shut to all who had not joined the Millerite movement. However, they later modified their view so that only those people who *rejected* the message of Christ’s imminent return in 1844 (referred to as the first angel’s message) and rejected

the call to leave the churches of “Babylon” (referred to as the second angel’s message) had a door of probation shut upon them. This left the door open for those who had not heard Miller’s preaching.

Ellen White, writing in 1883, explains how the door of salvation was shut in 1844:

I was shown in vision, and I still believe, that there was a shut door in 1844. All who saw the light of the first and second angels’ messages and rejected that light, were left in darkness. And those who accepted it and received the Holy Spirit which attended the proclamation of the message from heaven, and who afterward renounced their faith and pronounced their experience a delusion, thereby rejected the Spirit of God, and it no longer pleaded with them.

Those who did not see the light, had not the guilt of its rejection. It was only the class who had despised the **light from heaven** that **the Spirit of God could not reach**. And this class included, as I have stated, both those who refused to accept the message when it was presented to them, and also those who, having received it, afterward renounced their faith. These might have a form of godliness, and profess to be followers of Christ; but having no living connection with God, they would be taken captive by the delusions of Satan. These two classes are brought to view in the vision—those who declared the light which they had followed a delusion, and the wicked of the world who, having rejected the light, had been rejected of God. No reference is made to those who had not seen the light, and therefore were not guilty of its rejection.<sup>17</sup>

Why was probation’s door supposedly shut on these Christians? Was it because of some great sin they committed? Did they transgress God’s law? Were they guilty of crimes similar to those living before Noah’s flood? No, no, no! Their singular “mistake” was that they did not fall

for William Miller's delusion and leave their churches to follow him. These were Christians who testified that they loved Jesus and wanted Him to return, but they simply could not accept the foolhardy idea of setting a definite time for His return in 1844.

Once again, what was their crime? It was being right! They were guilty of being correct. They failed to be deluded. They refused to be led away in chains of falsehood by false prophets. Now follow this line of reasoning. If Miller and Himes were the ones who were wrong (as they both admitted), and if the Bible-believing Christians were the ones who were right, then why would God close a door of probation upon them? To claim that God closed the door of salvation upon these Christians who believed His Son's words is absolute blasphemy upon His character.

### **It's Right to Be Wrong and Wrong to Be Right**

The churches *correctly* responded to William Miller by rejecting his false message. Yet, amazingly, Mrs. White claimed that probation closed upon them *because* they rejected a *false* teaching. She claimed God's Spirit left the Christian churches and went with those who were deluded into accepting a false teaching. In effect, Mrs. White was saying, it was right to be wrong and wrong to be right.

As noted above, Ellen White said the Millerites who afterward "pronounced their experience a delusion" had "thereby rejected the Spirit of God, and it no longer pleaded with them." One would think this exclusion from salvation must have included William Miller who openly and humbly admitted his mistake, denying that it was a fulfillment of any Bible prophecy whatsoever. Notice what he said:

We expected the personal coming of Christ at that time; and now **to contend that we were not mistaken, is dishonest.** We should never be ashamed frankly to confess our errors. I have no confidence in any of the new theories that grew out of that

movement, namely, that Christ then came as the Bridegroom, that the door of mercy was closed, that there is no salvation for sinners, that the seventh trumpet then sounded, or that it was a fulfillment of prophecy in any sense.<sup>18</sup>

A humbled Miller rightly concluded that it was “dishonest” to try to fabricate new teachings to cover up the error of their mistake. He further rejected many of the fanatical teachings that were swirling around shut-door Adventists like Joseph Bates, James White, and Ellen Harmon. Miller’s defection must have caused Mrs. White great consternation. The question she and others were then faced with was, how can the captain deserting the ranks be explained away? She could not so easily consign to perdition her former leader, a man whom she had unwisely equated with no less a personage than John the Baptist:

As John the Baptist heralded the first advent of Jesus, and prepared the way for His coming, so also Wm. Miller and those who joined him, proclaimed the second advent of the Son of God.<sup>19</sup>

How could the door of salvation be shut upon one whose mind, according to Mrs. White, was so divinely inspired?

God directed the mind of William Miller to the prophecies and gave him great light upon the book of Revelation.<sup>20</sup>

Angels of God repeatedly visited that chosen one [Miller], and guided his mind, and opened his understanding to prophecies which had ever been dark to God's people.<sup>21</sup>

Mrs. White solved the dilemma by conveniently claiming the “chosen one”—William Miller—was not really responsible for...

...suffering his influence to go against the truth. Others led him to this. Others must account for it. But



angels watch the precious dust of this servant of God,  
and he will come forth at the sound of the last trump.<sup>22</sup>

So, although the “angels” were able to “guide” Miller’s mind and convince him to set an *incorrect* date for Christ’s return, those same angels were unable to convince Miller to accept Joseph Bates’ and James White’s “truths” about the shut door of salvation and the Sabbath as the seal of God.

Despite abandoning the ship, despite deserting the troops, **despite doing the exact same thing that she damned other Christians for doing**, Mrs. White was forced to come up with some clever way to sneak the modern “John the Baptist” past the shut door of salvation. Here was a man who had studied the return of Christ for more than a quarter of a century—perhaps more in-depth than any other person alive at that time. Here was a man who supposedly had angels standing by his side guiding him while he studied. Despite all this knowledge, despite having angels at his side, Miller abandoned the “truth.” Despite all the “light” this teacher was accountable for, Mrs. White allows him to slip through the shut door. However, those who studied the issue far less, who did not have the benefit of having angels by their side, those who had far less light on the subject than Miller, were doomed to suffer eternal damnation outside probation’s shut door! Does that make any sense at all? Whatever happened to the idea of fairness that Jesus spoke of, “to whom much is given, much is expected” (Luke 12:48)? While it is at least comforting to know the “chosen one” escaped the wrath of Ellen White’s shut door of salvation, one must wonder just how many other sincere Christians were not so fortunate?

Stop now and reflect on this. It is time for a “reality check.” If you were alive in 1844, what would you have done? It is amazing what happens when you put yourself in someone else’s shoes for a moment! It is a lot easier to write off some Christian you never met or heard of who lived way back in 1844 than it is to send yourself to eternal damnation. When you are about to close the door of salvation upon

yourself, you suddenly start looking very carefully to make sure you are not missing something. You start asking yourself, is there a valid basis for a door of salvation to be shut in 1844?<sup>23</sup> And, if there is no valid reason for it to be shut, then one must seriously question whether Mrs. White was a true prophet of God or a delusional fanatic.

Ellen White claimed, “I saw that God was in the proclamation of the time in 1843.”<sup>24</sup> Is this how God operates? Does God lead a man to set a definite time for Christ’s return even though Christ forbade that very practice in Matthew 25:13? Does God turn away from churches that stand firmly upon His word and refuse to be caught up in a delusional movement? Does God send angels to call people out of such churches where the truth is proclaimed to lead them into the clutches of a fanatical movement? Does God close the door of probation on Christians who stood firm and refused to be deluded by the falsehood proclaimed by Miller? Is that how God operates? No, it is not! **It is a slander upon the character of God to charge Him with being responsible for the 1844 delusion. It is blasphemy to accuse God of shutting a door of probation in 1844 against innocent people whose only crime was refusing to believe a fake message.**

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (Isaiah 5:20)

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 401.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., John Dowling, *An Exposition of the Prophecies, Supposed by William Miller to Predict the Second Coming of Christ, in 1843*, (Boston: Croker & Brewster, 1840), and A. Cosmopolite, *Miller Overthrown: Or the False Prophet Confounded*, (Boston: Abel Tompkins, 1840).

<sup>3</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, 307.

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<sup>4</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 457.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 456-457.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 457.

<sup>7</sup> Only the Father knows the time of Christ's return. Jesus further told His disciples, "...It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1:7).

<sup>8</sup> William Miller, 15th proof, as quoted in *History of the Second Advent Believers*, 689: "It can be proved by the numbers in Rev. xiii. 18: 'Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six,' connected with Daniel xii. 12, as before quoted. This text shows the number of years that Rome would exist under the blasphemous head of Paganism, after it was connected with the people of God by league; beginning B. C. 158, add 666 years, will bring us to A. D. 508, when the daily sacrifice was done away. Then add, Daniel xii. 12, the 1335 to 508, makes the year 1843."

Note: After the 1843 failure, this proof was recalculated to point to 1844.

<sup>9</sup> See for example, Charles Fitch's comment, as quoted in Jonathon Butler, *The Disappointed*, 197: "If you are a Christian, come out of Babylon. If you intend to be found a Christian when Christ appears, come out of Babylon, and come out now..."

<sup>10</sup> Joshua Himes, *Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology, Selected from Manuscripts of William Miller with a Memoir of His Life* (Boston: Moses A. Dow, 1841), 3.

<sup>11</sup> Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1 (1858), 134.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ellen White, Manuscript 4, 1883. Also in *Selected Messages*, book 1, 63, 64.

<sup>18</sup> William Miller as cited in *History of the Advent Message*, 410, 412.

<sup>19</sup> White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, 129.

<sup>20</sup> Ellen White, *Early Writings*, 231. Apparently, this "great light" on Revelation that Miller supposedly received from God included his 15th proof, which states the number 666 of Rev. 13:8 ended in 1843.

<sup>21</sup> White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, 128.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>23</sup> The only other Biblical account of a symbolic door of salvation being shut is just prior to the Flood. The door of the Ark was shut one week before the flood. Even if someone had wanted to enter the ark during that week, they could not have because the door was shut. What was

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the basis of God shutting the door of salvation before Noah's flood? "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Compare this to the basis for shutting the door in 1844. The only reason given for the shutting of this door was the "sin" of refusing to accept Miller's false teaching about the Second Advent. Some SDAs have recently concocted a new reason that the door was shut, namely that it was shut upon those who taught post-millennialism (Christ's return after the 1000-year Millennium). In effect, this would make the issue of the timing of the Millennium a salvation issue. It would mean that God cut off people's probation because they misinterpreted the Book of Revelation. This would seem to contradict the teaching of Jesus in Matt. 12:31 that "all manner of sin" would be forgiven. It is blasphemy against God to say He would shut the door of salvation upon someone for holding a false view of the Millennium. It makes God out to be an unjust tyrant. Besides, there is evidence that a number of pre-millennialists Christians in 1844 also rejected the teaching of William Miller, thus shutting the "door of salvation" upon themselves. What justification would God have in shutting the door of salvation upon these pre-millennialists?

<sup>24</sup> White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, 133.

# CHAPTER 21

## *Litch's Fake Date*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 22 Examined

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In 1838, Millerite leader Josiah Litch made a prediction based upon his understanding of a prophecy found in Revelation 9:15. He predicted the Ottoman Empire would fall on August 11, 1840. Ellen White gives a glowing endorsement of Litch's prediction in *Great Controversy*:

In the year 1840 another **remarkable fulfillment of prophecy** excited widespread interest. Two years before, Josiah Litch, one of the leading ministers preaching the second advent, published an exposition of Revelation 9, predicting the fall of the Ottoman Empire. According to his calculations, this power was to be overthrown "in A.D. 1840, sometime in the month of August;" and only a few days previous to its accomplishment he wrote: "Allowing the first period, 150 years, to have been exactly fulfilled before Deacozes ascended the throne by permission of the Turks, and that the 391 years, fifteen days, commenced at the close of the first period, it will end on the 11th of August, 1840, when the Ottoman power in Constantinople may be expected to be broken. And this, I believe, will be found to be the case." --Josiah Litch, in *Signs of the Times, and Expositor of Prophecy*, Aug. 1, 1840.

At the very time specified, Turkey, through her ambassadors, accepted the protection of the allied powers of Europe, and thus placed herself under the control of Christian nations. The event exactly fulfilled the prediction. When it became known, multitudes were convinced of the correctness of the

principles of prophetic interpretation adopted by Miller and his associates, and a wonderful impetus was given to the advent movement.<sup>1</sup>

## A Prophecy about the Ottomans?

The prophecy in question involves this verse:

And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men (Rev. 9:15).

There are four serious problems with Litch's interpretation on this verse. First, there is no reason to convert "an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year" into a 391-year time period using the prophetic year-day principle. The concept of a time period bracketed by beginning and ending events is not portrayed in the verse. Only a single event is portrayed. This proves that the verse is not specifying a *period* of time, but an event that is to take place at a *point* in time. The verse is simply saying the angels were prepared to be loosed at a specific date and time—nothing more.

Second, the angels "were released to kill a third of mankind."<sup>2</sup> While it is true that the Ottoman Empire killed and even massacred their enemies during their reign (1299 to 1923), it was nowhere near the apocalyptic scale described in Revelation.

Third, verse 16 says the slaughter of a third of mankind will be carried out by an army consisting of 200,000,000 horsemen. The largest army ever amassed by the Ottoman Empire was only about 1% of that size, and that was mostly foot soldiers, not cavalry.<sup>3</sup> Based on these three points, Litch's interpretation could not possibly have been correct.

## Litch's Predicament

The fourth and most profound problem with Litch's theory is that the Ottoman Empire did not fall as Litch predicted. In August of 1840, those familiar with Litch's prediction were

watching events taking place in Turkey to see if the Ottoman Empire would fall. They were disappointed when nothing happened. The month came and passed without any evidence of the empire falling. This placed Litch in a quandary. He admitted that the "world" was triumphing at the failure of his prediction.<sup>4</sup> He waited until November and then came out with a statement in an Adventist periodical stating that the Ottoman Empire's rejection of a European peace offer on August 15, 1840, assured war with Europe, and doomed the empire. However, by early 1841, it was becoming increasingly evident that war was not going to transpire as he had predicted. So, Litch came up with yet another theory. He argued that the fulfillment of prophecy had occurred exactly on August 11, 1840, as originally predicted, with one caveat. He now claimed that the "fall" of the Ottoman Empire consisted of a "voluntary surrender of Turkish supremacy in Constantinople to Christian influence."<sup>5</sup> He claimed the Turkish ruler was now a puppet "of the great Christian powers of Europe."<sup>6</sup> The fall, according to Litch, was a loss of Ottoman sovereignty to the Christian nations that offered to protect the Ottomans against the Russians.

Many Christians questioned Litch's new theory. The Millerite critic O.E. Daggett argued that the Ottoman Empire did not "fall" in August of 1840. At that time the Ottoman Empire covered a vast territory, including a large part of North Africa, Anatolia, Arabia, Palestine, Mesopotamia, southern Russia, Armenia, Georgia, and most of the European Balkan states. James Hazen argued persuasively that the European intervention had actually *saved* the Ottoman Empire from falling. Hazen said the argument that in accepting European aid the Ottoman Empire fell was "ridiculous."<sup>7</sup>

The decline of the Ottoman Empire was a long and complex process, marked by military defeats, territorial losses, and increasing European influence. The August 1840 event was simply one event in a long series of events marking the gradual decay of the empire. While the Ottoman

leaders faced increasing pressure and interventions from European powers, and the empire was in a state of decline, it is an overstatement to say the Turkish ruler became a “puppet” of the great Christian powers of Europe in 1840.

### **When Did the Ottoman Empire *Really* Fall?**

In 1831, an internal uprising in the Ottoman Empire threatened its existence. The Russians sent troops to support the Ottoman government. Shortly thereafter, in 1833, the two nations signed a mutual defense agreement that effectively made the Ottoman Empire a “protectorate of Russia.”<sup>8</sup> Other European nations desired to be involved, and when an internal crisis threatened the stability of the Ottoman Empire, a new treaty was signed on July 15, 1840, between the Ottoman Empire and Austria, Britain, Prussia, and Russia.<sup>9</sup> If the signing of a protectorate agreement did indeed signal the fall of the Ottoman Empire, then the agreement signed with Russia in 1833 would have marked the “fall” of Turkey, rather than the similar arrangement of 1840. The 1840 treaty was simply a replacement for the existing 1833 treaty! Furthermore, the treaty was signed in July, not August.

In actuality, although weakened, the Ottoman Empire did not *fall* in either 1833 or 1840.<sup>10</sup> In fact, in 1850, they still ruled over large sections of Southern Europe, Northern Africa, the Middle East, and Arabia, as can be seen in Appendix 6.<sup>11</sup>

The Ottoman Empire gradually weakened throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and lost additional territory until World War I, when it sided with Germany. Early in the war, the Ottomans won a dramatic victory over the invading British and French armies at Gallipoli, resulting in over 300,000 Allied soldiers killed, wounded, or incapacitated with illness. It was the worst Allied defeat of the war. Surprisingly, the Ottomans defeated two of the mightiest empires on the earth at that



time! The Ottomans even invaded southern Russia, and soon other victories followed:

Though Tsar Nicholas I of Russia had dismissed the Ottoman Empire as “the sick man of Europe”, the Ottoman victory over the Allies at Gallipoli renewed Turkey’s visions for the empire. In Mesopotamia the Turks surrounded a British expedition at Kut Al Amara, forcing their surrender in 1916. From southern Palestine the Turks pushed into the Sinai with the aim of capturing the Suez Canal and driving the British from Egypt.<sup>12</sup>

Despite initial successes, the Ottoman Empire eventually succumbed to the Allied armies and sued for peace in 1918. It was at this point that the Turkish government was placed under the control of the Allied powers. It could be argued that this was the real “fall” of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>13</sup> In conclusion, Revelation 9 has nothing to do with the Ottoman Empire. The time and event predicted by Litch did not align with any significant event in Ottoman history.

### **Did Litch's Prediction Convince Multitudes?**

Ellen White claimed that “multitudes were convinced of the correctness” of William Miller’s calculations because of Litch’s successful prediction. Is that truly the case? She no doubt arrived at this conclusion from reading J.N. Loughborough’s recollection of the event. Loughborough, who was eight years old at the time of the fulfillment, wrote that the fulfillment sparked great interest among the public. He claimed “the public became aroused and ears were opened everywhere,” and asserted that Litch declared that at least a thousand infidels had been converted.<sup>14</sup>

There is no evidence of any widespread acceptance of Litch’s new theory. There is no evidence of a thousand infidels accepting the Bible because of Litch’s theory, especially in light of the fact that the Ottoman Empire did not fall! As noted earlier, the empire flourished for another

eighty years. Protestant clergymen quickly refuted Litch's claim that Turkey had fallen. By 1842, even Litch was lamenting the lack of acceptance of his teaching amongst Adventists.<sup>15</sup> Litch lamented that while many had initially heard his theory, no one was now paying any attention to it. This is quite different from the picture painted by Ellen White! Given Litch's comments about the world triumphing at the failure of his prediction, and given his complaints about the lack of widespread acceptance of his teaching, it is evident the "multitudes" were **not** convinced that the Ottoman Empire had fallen, nor were they convinced that prophecy had been fulfilled. Who would be in a better position to judge whether the multitudes were convinced? Litch? Or the then 14-year-old Ellen Harmon?

## Litch Abandons His Theory

To his credit, in 1845 Litch admitted the mistake of the Millerite Movement, writing, "I believe we erred and ran off our track."<sup>16</sup> Further to his credit, he opposed the shut-door Adventist group led by Joseph Bates and the Whites.<sup>17</sup> As he grew older and wiser, Josiah Litch abandoned some of his earlier views. In 1867, he published a rejection of the prophetic year-day rule as a general principle of hermeneutics. For example, he concluded the 2,300 evenings-mornings of Daniel 8:14 were literal days.<sup>18</sup> In 1873, Litch wrote on the 6th trumpet of Revelation 9:15:

The exact hour for [the angels] to be loosed was fixed. They were prepared *unto* an hour, day, month, and year. That is, the exact time for their loosing was fixed, to a year, a month, a day, and an hour; **it is not an exact period during which they should act.**<sup>19</sup>

Thus, Litch settled upon the position held by many Bible scholars today, namely that the verse is not describing a time period, but a point-in-time event. Gone are his dubious claims that the events of August 11, 1840, marked the ending date of the 391-year supremacy of the Ottoman Empire.

## SDA Leaders Secretly Confounded

Making changes to *Great Controversy* has always proved a challenge for the leading SDA brethren. They loathed having to change a book that had been billed as the “spirit of prophecy” and sold to the trusting flock as a work authored by a visionary guided by angels. Before the release of the 1911 version of *Great Controversy*, a committee was formed to study some of the historical problems, including Litch’s fake date. SDA Professor W.W. Prescott and Elder W.A. Spicer—both members of the committee—went to the United States Library of Congress to search for evidence validating the beginning and ending dates for the Bible prophecies that allegedly pointed to the Ottoman Empire. They discovered that Litch’s starting date of 1299 should have been 1301 or even 1302. Later research by SDA Professor Benton showed “conclusively that the ultimatum of the Powers was not delivered to the Pasha of Egypt on August 11, 1840.”<sup>20</sup> This cast even more doubt on that already suspect date. Elder Spicer then presented these findings to the council:

You may well understand that some of the brethren had to sit up and take notice. ... **It is remarkable how loath people are to look at facts, or to correct any facts.** But they had to agree that we must study this thing.<sup>21</sup>

At the 1919 Conference on the Spirit of Prophecy, Elder Prescott recalled, “All the committee came to the conclusion that there was not sufficient evidence to establish the date Aug. 11, 1840.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, SDA scholars, having done their due diligence in researching the matter, came to the unanimous agreement that Ellen White and Litch were wrong. Then, the matter was referred to another council. However, rather than fix the problem with the book, this council decided to insert a footnote directing readers to find corroborating evidence for Mrs. White’s falsehood in books written by SDA pioneers Uriah Smith and J.N. Loughborough.<sup>23</sup> This proves

that Ellen White's source of inspiration for this chapter was these men and not visions from God. Of course, those books did not represent either the latest or best scholarship on the subject. The only thing those outdated books had going for them was that they agreed with the prophet's writings (most likely because Ellen had copied the section from Smith). How ironic it is that a sect that claims to be the last bastion of "truth" upon the earth are in reality the ones who are obfuscating the truth! This is more evidence that propping up their failing prophet is of greater importance to SDA corporate leaders than the truth.

### **SDAs Stuck with Litch's Blunder**

Litch made a blunder in attributing Rev. 9:15 to events in the Ottoman Empire that culminated on August 11, 1840. Early SDA authors, Smith and Loughborough, endorsed Litch's mistake as factual, apparently without validating the dates. Mrs. White incorporated the same theory into her writings, apparently copying from the 1865 version of Uriah Smith's *Revelation*.<sup>24</sup> When Mrs. White endorsed this erroneous date and placed it in *Great Controversy*—a book allegedly written with the aid of angels—she put her prophetic seal of approval on Litch's mistake. She even claimed that this false prediction "convinced multitudes" that Miller's calculations were correct. This is in spite of the fact that Litch himself complained that few paid any attention to his prediction. Litch eventually realized his mistake and repudiated it. SDA leaders also became aware of the problems with Litch's dates when SDA professors researched the subject and concluded Litch's calculations were indeed erroneous. A committee reached a consensus behind closed doors that the date could not be substantiated by history, but SDA corporate leaders refused to correct the problem, passing on to millions of readers a fake fulfillment of prophecy under the guise of *inspiration*.

## The “Tarrying Time”

After Christ failed to return in the spring of 1844, according to Miller's initial prediction, many Millerites were ready to give up their faith in Miller's delusion. Mrs. White writes in chapter 22 of *Great Controversy* that two Bible passages supplied the Millerites with the encouragement to continue believing in the delusion: Habakkuk 2:1-4, and Ezekiel 12:21-28.

Habakkuk 2:1-4 is God's answer to a question that Habakkuk asked in the last verse of the prior chapter: “Shall they [the Babylonian Empire] therefore empty their net, and continue to slay nations without pity?” (Hab 1:17 NKJV). He was asking how long Babylon would be allowed to continue destroying nations like Judah. God replied in chapter two by telling Habbakuk to be patient regarding the “vision...because it will surely come, it will not tarry” (Hab. 2:3). By the “vision” God appeared to be pointing to the prophetic passages about the downfall of Babylon (Isa. 13-14, 46-47; Jer. 50-51). There is no reason to believe this verse has any connection to Miller's fake date of March 21, 1844. Miller never had a “vision” about this date. It was *calculated* based on his arbitrary interpretation of Daniel's visions in Daniel 8 and 12. However, Habakkuk 2:1-4 was fulfilled in 539 B.C. when the Persian Empire under Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon. It could not have pointed to any vision in Daniel because Habakkuk was written around the reign of Jehoiakim (609-598 B.C.), and Daniel was not written until around 553 B.C.<sup>25</sup> Thus, Daniel's prophecy had not even been written when God pointed Habakkuk to a vision about Babylon's fall. Therefore, it cannot possibly be connected to the 1844 Movement.

The second passage mentioned by Ellen White was Ezekiel 12:21-28. In this passage, God addressed the false proverb circulating in Israel that “the days grow long, and every vision fails,” implying that God's prophetic warnings to Israel were empty and delayed indefinitely. God declared

this proverb false, stating that His words would indeed be fulfilled without further delay. He emphasizes that the visions spoken by Ezekiel and other prophets concerning the destruction and exile would surely come to pass in the lifetime of that very generation, underscoring the imminence and certainty of divine judgment and the reliability of His prophetic word. Once again, this passage has nothing to do with Miller's false prophecy that Jesus would return in the spring of 1844. It was fulfilled in 586 B.C. when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem.

After quoting these passages, Mrs. White writes as if the purpose of these passages was to encourage the Millerites to continue believing in Miller's delusion:

Had it not been for such portions of Scripture, **admonishing them to wait with patience and to hold fast their confidence in God's word**, their faith would have failed in that trying hour.<sup>26</sup>

This statement is problematic for three reasons.

First, the Millerites may have been in danger of losing confidence in "God's word," but that is not because God said He was returning in 1843. That was Miller's word, not God's word. The Millerites were in danger of losing faith in Miller's false interpretations of God's word. That's the danger of believing in Freemasons like Miller who twist and pervert God's word, and when their false teachings do not come to pass, people lose faith in God's word—not because His word is wrong, but because the interpretations were wrong. In reality, God instructed His followers to do the opposite of what Miller did. He told them not to concern themselves with the time of His return (Acts 1:6-7).

Second, it would have been better if their faith in Miller's delusion had failed in March rather than suffer a second and more devastating disappointment on October 22, 1844.

Third, these two passages were meant for Israel and Judah and were fulfilled thousands of years before 1844. These verses were misapplied by Millerite leaders in a

desperate attempt to explain away Miller's failure and give his followers a reason to continue to believe in the delusion. However, these verses were already fulfilled. They were not "admonishing" anyone to wait for the fulfillment of Miller's false predictions for another seven painful months.

October 22, 1844

After Miller's first date failed, Millerite leaders eventually settled upon October 22, 1844, as the true date of Christ's return. Mrs. White wrote in *Great Controversy*:

The tenth day of the seventh month, the great Day of Atonement, the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary, which **in the year 1844 fell upon the twenty-second of October**, was regarded as the time of the Lord's coming.<sup>27</sup>

During the summer of 1844, all eyes in America were focused on whether or not Christ would return on October 22. However, did the Day of Atonement *really* fall upon October 22, or was Ellen White mistaken?

After the failure of Christ to return by March 21, 1844, Millerite leader Samuel Snow proclaimed that Christ would return on the Day of Atonement, on "the tenth day of the seventh month of the year of jubilee: and that is the present year, 1844."<sup>28</sup> Miller eventually got onboard with this date. Before long, it became known as the date of the Great Disappointment when Christ did not return. How did Snow arrive at this date?

According to SDA apologist Daniel Golovenko, Snow relied on an "obsolete calendar to generate October 22 as the modern 'tenth day of the seventh month.'"<sup>29</sup> However, no evidence of the existence of that "obsolete calendar" has ever been produced by the SDA sect. An alternative explanation is provided by the historian Isaac Wellcome. In 1844, he was a preacher in the Millerite Delusion and was familiar with Snow. He recollects that Snow arrived at his knowledge of the date in a more mystic way. He writes that Snow was deep in "meditation" when he was "suddenly

impressed" that Jesus would return on the Day of Atonement.<sup>30</sup> This explanation appears more in alignment with Snow's character. According to the *SDA Encyclopedia*, "In 1845 Snow declared himself to be Elijah the prophet." It seems that Snow had a bad habit of interpreting his "impressions" to be messages from God. Unfortunately, his impressions were not always right. He later proclaimed himself to be Christ's "Prime Minister" and demanded that all earthly leaders surrender their authority to him.<sup>31</sup> Obviously, Snow was struggling under strong delusion.

While the exact method of how Prophet Snow fabricated the October 22 date remains shrouded in mystery, the actual Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) in 1844—based on the Karaite and Orthodox Jewish calendars—was September 23, 1844.<sup>32</sup> All evidence indicates that the Jews celebrated it upon that date in 1844.<sup>33</sup> There is no evidence that any community of Jews celebrated it on October 22, 1844. In 1939, the leading Karaite rabbi—Youseff Ibrahim Marzork—confirmed the date of Yom Kippur: "In the year 1844 it is on Monday 23rd September for the Karaite and Rabinnical."<sup>34</sup> Finally, according to Susan Prohowsky of Purdue University, the "Day of Atonement has never occurred so late in the year as October 22."<sup>35</sup> Rabbi Loschak explains:

**It is impossible for Yom Kippur to occur that late in the month of October** no matter what alleged change (to the Jewish calendar) there may have been. Simply put the Torah tells us that the first month of the Jewish year is the month of Passover which must occur in the Spring, and the latest secular date it can start is about April 19. Yom Kippur is always 173 days after this date, and that would be October 9. **There is no way it could work out to be October 22.**<sup>36</sup>

In 1844, the Jews celebrated Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) on September 23, 1844. The date of October 22, 1844, was a fake date invented by Samuel Snow.



## White's Endorsement of Snow's Fake Date

During the Millerite Delusion of 1844, Ellen Harmon and other Adventists looked forward to October 22 with great anticipation. After Christ did not return on that date, O.R.L. Crosier devised a theory that instead of returning to the earth, Christ moved from the Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary to the Most Holy Place on Oct. 22. In 1846, Ellen Harmon had a vision endorsing Crosier's view.<sup>37</sup> Subsequently, the shut-door Adventists, led by Joseph Bates and James and Ellen White, adopted Crosier's theory as a fundamental teaching of their sect. To this day, SDAs revere October 22 as the starting point of the Investigative Judgment.

Today, many SDAs believe heavenly events of great relevance to them occurred on October 22, 1844. They have not been informed that the date is fraudulent. They have not been informed that the Jews celebrated the actual Day of Atonement in 1844 on September 23rd. What a tragedy that this so-called church is so embarrassed about its origin that they would allow their followers to believe a White lie!

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 335.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 9:15 NIV. The same power mentioned also in verse 18, "A third of mankind was killed..."

<sup>3</sup> The Ottoman Empire had 2.8 million men serve during the entire period of World War I. (*Wikipedia*) The Calvary was only a small percent of those forces. Even if all the Turkish soldiers were horsemen, that would only be about 1% of the size the horsemen of Rev. 19:6.

<sup>4</sup> Josiah Litch, *Signs of the Times*, Nov. 1, 1840, 117-118.

<sup>5</sup> Litch, *Signs of the Times*, Feb. 1, 1841, 168-169.

<sup>6</sup> Eric Anderson, "The Millerite Use of Prophecy," *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century* eds. Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan M. Butler (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993), 85.

<sup>7</sup> *The Disappointed*, 87.

<sup>8</sup> "Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi," *Wikipedia*, extracted on Aug. 21, 2015.

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- <sup>9</sup> The Convention of London was signed on July 15, 1840.
- <sup>10</sup> In part because of the 1841 treaty, Britain and France later came to the aid of Turkey in 1853, and defeated Russia in the Crimean War.
- <sup>11</sup> "Rise and Fall of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1923," Wikipedia, extracted on Aug. 17, 2008.
- <sup>12</sup> "Battle of Gallipoli," Wikipedia, extracted on Aug. 10, 2008.
- <sup>13</sup> It could also be argued that 1923 was the actual end date of the empire. Under the peace treaty at the end of WW I, large parts of Turkey were occupied by Greek, British, French, and Italian soldiers. However, Turkey soon rebelled against the treaty and attacked the occupying troops. They drove the Greeks out of Asia Minor, and expelled the British, French, and Italian occupation forces by 1923. After regaining independence, the Ottoman Empire officially came to an end in 1923, with the establishment of a new form of government called the Turkish Republic.
- <sup>14</sup> J.N. Loughborough, *The Rise and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists: With Tokens of God's Hand in the Movement and a Brief Sketch of the Advent Cause from 1831 to 1844* (Battle Creek, MI: General Conference Assn. of Seventh-day Adventists, 1892), 41. Loughborough was eight years old at the time of the supposed fulfillment in 1840. On the same page, he claims that Litch "ascertained" that 1,000 infidels accepted the Bible as a result of the fulfillment.
- <sup>15</sup> *The Disappointed*, 86. Litch wrote: "There are few persons, in New England at least, whose minds were not arrested and turned to the 11th of August; and vast multitudes were ready to say, ay, did say, If this event takes place according to the calculation, at the time specified, we will believe the doctrine of the *advent near*. But how is it with them now? Why, just as it was with the old Jews in the days of Christ; when he was every day performing the most stupendous miracles in their sight, they said to him, 'Master, we would see a sign of thee.' So now: men desire a sign from heaven. But let them be assured, they can never have a more convincing one than this..."
- <sup>16</sup> Josiah Litch, letter published in *The Advent Herald*, May 21, 1845.
- <sup>17</sup> Daniel Royo, "Josiah Litch: His Life, Work, and Use of His Writings, on Selected Topics, by Seventh-day Adventist Writers," M.A. thesis: Andrews University, 2009, 41-43.
- <sup>18</sup> See *Prophetic Significance of Eastern and European Movements*, 15-16.
- <sup>19</sup> Josiah Litch, *A Complete Harmony of Daniel and the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, 1873), 170.
- <sup>20</sup> W.A. Spicer letter to L.R. Conradi, Nov. 13, 1914.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.

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- <sup>22</sup> W.W. Prescott quoted in the 1919 Bible Conference on the Spirit of Prophecy, as quoted in Desmond Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, 212.
- <sup>23</sup> Appendix of *Great Controversy*, 691. Books cited are J.N. Loughborough's *The Great Second Advent Movement* (1905), 129-132, and Uriah Smith's *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation* (1944), 506-517.
- <sup>24</sup> Walter T. Rea, *Great Controversy Notes*, chapter 18, unpublished manuscript, <https://www.nonegw.org/rea/gc7.htm>.
- <sup>25</sup> In Daniel 7:1, Daniel claimed to be writing during the reign of "Belshazzar," which historians date to approximately 553 B.C.
- <sup>26</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 393.
- <sup>27</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 399.
- <sup>28</sup> Samuel Snow, *The True Midnight Cry*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Aug. 22, 1844).
- <sup>29</sup> Daniel Golovenko, "Where Did October 22 Come From?" *Adventist Today*, Oct. 18, 2022.
- <sup>30</sup> Isaac Cummings Wellcome, *History of the Second Advent Message and Mission, Doctrine and People* (Boston: Advent Christian Publication Society, 1874), 357.
- <sup>31</sup> George R. Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1993), 191-205.
- <sup>32</sup> According to the official Hebrew Calendar, "Yom Kippur for Hebrew Year 5605 began on Sunday, 22 September 1844 and ended on Monday, 23 September 1844." ([www.hebcal.com/holidays/yom-kippur-1844](http://www.hebcal.com/holidays/yom-kippur-1844)). See Robert Sanders, "Day of Atonement of the Karaite Jews in 1844," [www.truthorfables.com/Day\\_of\\_Atonement\\_of\\_the\\_Karaite .htm](http://www.truthorfables.com/Day_of_Atonement_of_the_Karaite.htm). Evidence for the Sep. 23 date comes from a Karaite Tomb Stone inscription cited by Abraham Firkowitz in *Avnei Zicharon* (1872).
- <sup>33</sup> The tenth day of the seventh month (Tishrei) in the Jewish year 5605 = Sep. 23, 1844. This web site can be used to verify the date: [www.chabad.org/calendar/converter.asp?hdate=7/10/5605](http://www.chabad.org/calendar/converter.asp?hdate=7/10/5605).
- <sup>34</sup> Letter from Youseff Ibrahim Marzork to C.L. Price (1939), as quoted by E.S. Ballenger in *The Gathering Call*, May-June, 1941.
- <sup>35</sup> Quote by Sydney Cleveland, *White Washed* (Greenwood, IN: self published, 2000), 166. From a conversation with Robert K. Sanders, Lafayette, Indiana, in November, 1994.
- <sup>36</sup> Rabbi Loschak, AskMoses.com, Subject: Holidays, Thread:2079297.
- <sup>37</sup> Ellen White, letter to Eli Curtis, April 21, 1847. Published in *A Word to the Little Flock*, 11-12. "The Lord shew me in vision, more than one year ago, that Brother Crosier [O.R.L. Crosier] had the true light, on the cleansing of the Sanctuary..." Crosier originally espoused his theory in the *Day-Dawn* of 1845, and then provided a further explanation in his article "The Law of Moses" in the *Day-Star Extra* (Feb 7, 1846). Crosier later repudiated this doctrine as a falsehood.

# CHAPTER 22

## *The Fake Pillar<sup>1</sup>*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 23 Examined

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Mrs. White makes a stunning statement in chapter 23 of *Great Controversy*:

The scripture which above all others had been both **the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith** was the declaration: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Daniel 8:14.<sup>2</sup>

Of all the verses in the Bible, this one seems to be the least likely to be called “the foundation and the central pillar” of any Christian denomination. Nevertheless, this obscure verse became the central pillar of Seventh-day Adventism. The 2,300 evenings-mornings prophecy has already been discussed in chapter 15 of this book. In this chapter, the “cleansing of the sanctuary” doctrine will be examined.

Before the Great Disappointment, the Millerites taught that the cleansing of the sanctuary (Daniel 8:14) referred to the destruction of the earth at the return of Christ. After 1844, this view was abandoned by Adventists. Ellen White rightly concludes, “There is no Scripture evidence sustaining the popular view that the earth is the sanctuary.”<sup>3</sup> After the Great Disappointment, the shut-door Adventists concluded that the “sanctuary” of Daniel 8:14 was the temple of God. While this is correct, the context of Daniel 8 points to the cleansing taking place in the earthly sanctuary in Jerusalem, whereas SDAs proclaim that the cleansing is focused upon the heavenly sanctuary. Which is it?

Daniel 8:8-12 describes a period during the Greek empire of the second century B.C. This context leads nearly all scholars to conclude that the sanctuary being “cleansed” was the temple at Jerusalem during the second century. SDAs, however, insist the “evenings-mornings” of Daniel 8:14 are years (not days), which forces them to extend the “cleansing” out to the date of 1844. Since an earthly sanctuary no longer exists, this forces them to conclude that the “sanctuary” is the *heavenly* sanctuary. Mrs. White spells this out in *Great Controversy*:

The question, What is the sanctuary? is clearly answered in the Scriptures. The term sanctuary, as used in the Bible, refers, first, to the tabernacle built by Moses, as a pattern of heavenly things; and, secondly, to the "true tabernacle" in Heaven, to which the earthly sanctuary pointed. At the death of Christ the typical service ended. The "true tabernacle" in Heaven is the sanctuary of the new covenant. And as the prophecy of **Daniel 8:14 is fulfilled in this dispensation**, the sanctuary to which it refers must be the sanctuary of the new covenant. At the termination of the 2300 days, in 1844, there had been no sanctuary on earth for many centuries. Thus the prophecy, “Unto two thousand three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed,” **unquestionably points to the sanctuary in Heaven.**<sup>4</sup>

Mrs. White assures her readers that the SDA interpretation is so solid it is beyond question. However, equating the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 with the *heavenly* sanctuary opens up a Pandora’s Box of problems.

First and foremost, 457 B.C. is said to be the starting point of the 2,300 years. What event occurred then? To understand the initiating event of the 2,300 days, one must examine the context of Daniel 8. Verses 11-14 read as follows:

Yea, he [little horn] magnified [himself] even to the prince of the host, and **(1) by him the daily [sacrifice]**

**was taken away, and (2) the place of his sanctuary was cast down.** And an host was given [him] against the daily [sacrifice] by reason of transgression, and **(3) it cast down the truth to the ground;** and it practised, and prospered. Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain [saint] which spake, How long [shall be] the vision [concerning] the daily [sacrifice], and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be **(4) trodden underfoot?** And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days [evening-mornings]; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed (Dan. 8:11-14).

## Trodden Underfoot

The passage above specifically says the sanctuary would be “trodden underfoot” or desolated for 2,300 “evening-mornings.” Notice that four events are said to happen during this 2,300 evening-morning period:

1. The daily sacrifice was to be taken away
2. The sanctuary was to be cast down
3. Truth was to be cast down
4. The sanctuary was to be trodden underfoot

Did any of this commence in 457 B.C.? Absolutely not! Before the destruction of Jerusalem (and the temple) in 70 A.D., there was only a single period in history when all four of the events noted above occurred. That period was 167 B.C. to 164 B.C. when Antiochus Epiphanes did exactly what Daniel 8 prophesied would happen.

SDAs dismiss this precise fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Instead, they claim the sanctuary was “trodden underfoot” by the pagan Romans starting with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. However, here is where their theory unravels. Ellen White taught that at Christ’s death (sometime between 30 A.D. and 33 A.D.) the services of the earthly sanctuary were transferred to the heavenly sanctuary and the earthly temple was at that point left desolate. So, in reality,

Rome never actually trampled a sacred “sanctuary” because the early sanctuary’s significance and activities had already been transferred up to heaven.

This transfer from the earthly to the heavenly sanctuary is necessary to make the SDA theology of the “little horn” of Daniel 8 work. According to SDA theology, the “little horn” of Daniel 8 is Rome. Rome is supposed to have “trampled underfoot” the sanctuary for 2,300 years (Dan. 8:11-14). Since pagan Rome came to its demise by 500 A.D. and the prophecy extends to 1844, then that would leave over 1,300 years with no Roman power around to do the trampling upon the sanctuary! To address this flaw, SDAs concocted the idea that *papal Rome* took up where *pagan Rome* left off. One problem with this transfer from *pagan* to *papal* is that *papal Rome* never “trampled underfoot” the *earthly* sanctuary! So, SDAs are stuck with having to change both the *location* of the sanctuary and the *meaning* of “trodden underfoot” right in the middle of the 2,300 years. Oh, what a tangled web they have woven!

To get the Romans to be trampling the sanctuary for 2,300 years, they have to shift gears from *literal* to *spiritual*, from *earthly* to *heavenly*. This is the only way they can twist this prophecy to make it fit into their prophetic jigsaw puzzle, and even then, it raises more questions than answers.

SDAs teach that the sanctuary of Daniel 8 is the *earthly* sanctuary *until Christ's death*, and then it switches to the *heavenly* sanctuary. Whereas *pagan Rome* is supposed to have physically desecrated the *earthly* sanctuary, *papal Rome* is alleged to have desecrated the *heavenly* sanctuary in a *symbolic* sense.<sup>5</sup> How did *papal Rome* trample the heavenly sanctuary? Supposedly the trampling occurred as the Papacy “obscured” Christ’s intercessory work in the heavenly sanctuary by instituting their own priesthood, establishing the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the confessional.

Next, the dates and historical events will be examined. Could the *pagan* Romans have fulfilled *any* of the 2,300

years of Daniel 8:14? The Romans never interfered with Jewish temple services until 70 A.D., over 500 years after the 2,300 years were supposed to have started in 457 B.C. So then, who desecrated the sanctuary during the first 526 years of the prophecy? No Roman power did any trampling during this period. The only trampling that occurred during this entire time period was during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes!

According to Ellen White, the transfer of the sanctuary and its services occurred at the death of Christ:

But lo, this veil is rent in twain. **The most holy place of the earthly sanctuary is no longer sacred.** ... Henceforth the Saviour was to officiate as priest and advocate in the heaven of heavens.<sup>6</sup>

When Christ on the cross cried out, "It is finished," the veil of the temple was rent in twain. ... He who had hitherto dwelt in the temple made with hands, **had gone forth never again to grace it with His presence.**<sup>7</sup>

Even Jesus said:

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate (Matt. 23:38).

According to Ellen White, the Shekinah glory of God departed from the earthly sanctuary when Christ died and it was **no longer sacred**. Since it was no longer sacred, and since it was already "desolate," then how could it have been desolated by Rome in 70 A.D.? Only something that is "holy" can be desecrated. Therefore, according to their own teachings, the sanctuary that Rome "trod underfoot" in 70 A.D. was not, at that time, the sanctuary of Daniel 8 because the "earthly sanctuary" was "no longer sacred." According to SDAs, when Christ died, the sanctuary of Daniel 8 became the *heavenly* sanctuary where God transferred His presence. So, if Rome did not trample the sanctuary underfoot in 70 A.D., then what event started the trampling underfoot?



SDAs also teach that the Roman Catholic confessional (made mandatory by the Lateran Council in 1215) is the defilement of Daniel 8:12.<sup>8</sup>

So, the date when the “trampling underfoot” commences is said to be 1215 A.D.—nearly 1,700 years after the 2,300 years was supposed to have started. But how can the Catholic Church upon this earth “trample underfoot” the *heavenly* sanctuary? Since the dawn of mankind, there have been false religions with false priesthoods that obscured the truth of God’s religion. Why do not these qualify for “trampling underfoot” the heavenly sanctuary? Why only papal Rome? Why not the Albigenses who taught Satan was the Old Testament god? Why not every other false religion? SDAs picked the Catholic religion—not because it obscured the truth more than any other false religion—but because it fit nicely into the anti-Catholic prophetic jigsaw puzzle they were concocting.

Daniel 8:13 asks “how long” will the trampling underfoot continue? Verse 14 answers that question with “2,300 evening-mornings.” Therefore, if these were indeed years, then the trampling would be expected to end in 1844. Did papal Rome repeal the Lateran council in 1844? No. Did papal Rome do anything of significance at all in 1844? No. Nothing. So, when it comes to the trampling underfoot, nothing of significance in history can be matched to the proposed beginning and ending points of this prophecy!

Consider all the thorny questions the SDA interpretation raises:

- If Rome did not start trampling the sanctuary until 70 A.D., then who was the little horn power trampling the sanctuary between 457 B.C. and 70 A.D.?
- Is it valid for SDAs to switch from interpreting the sanctuary in Daniel 8 as *literal* to *spiritual* when their literal interpretation fails?
- If the sanctuary was transferred to heaven at the death of Christ, then can it be rightly said that Rome

trampled the sanctuary in 70 A.D. since that earthly sanctuary was already “left desolate” by Christ?

- The Papacy did not even arise to pre-eminence until around 600 A.D. So, who was “trampling underfoot” the *heavenly* sanctuary between 70 A.D. and 600 A.D.?
- Why is there no evidence of any change in Catholic dogma or practice in 1844? If the Papacy taught and practiced the same doctrines after 1844 as they did in 1844, then how could the 2300-day prophecy have ended in 1844?

## Sanctuary Cleansed

Next, what does the *cleansing* of the sanctuary mean? Mrs. White taught that when Christ ascended to Heaven, he entered the “first apartment” of the sanctuary, but the atonement was not complete:

For eighteen centuries this work of ministration continued in the first apartment of the sanctuary. The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father, **yet their sins still remained upon the books of record.** As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before Christ's work for the redemption of men is completed there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary. **This is the service which began when the 2300 days ended. At that time, as foretold by Daniel the prophet, our High Priest entered the most holy, to perform the last division of His solemn work--to cleanse the sanctuary.**<sup>9</sup>

Ellen White taught that the “cleansing of the sanctuary” of Daniel 8:14 refers to the Hebrew Day of Atonement. This concept introduces a whole host of problems.

Daniel writes that at the end of the 2,300 evenings-mornings prophecy the sanctuary will be *cleansed*. The

Hebrew word for “cleansed”, *tsa-daq*, is used 41 times in the Old Testament, and Daniel 8:14 is the only time the word is translated as “cleansed.” The word typically means “to vindicate” or “to justify.”<sup>10</sup>

Notice how the word is translated in other versions of the Bible:

The other replied, “It will take twenty-three hundred evenings and mornings; then the **Temple will be restored.**” (NLT)

He said to me, “It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the **sanctuary will be reconsecrated.**” (NIV)

And he said to me, “For 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the **sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state.**” (ESV)

He said to me, “For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the **holy place will be properly restored.**” (NASB)

And he said to him, “For two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then the **sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state.**” (RSV)

And he said unto me, “Until two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings: then shall the **sanctuary be vindicated.**” (DBY)

And he said to me, “For two thousand, three hundred evenings and mornings. Then the **sanctuary shall be vindicated.**” (Green’s Modern KJV)

And he saith unto me, “Till evening--morning two thousand and three hundred, then is the **holy place declared right.**” (YNG)

## Cleansed from What?

Daniel is saying the sanctuary is to be vindicated from having been trampled upon by the little horn. Did any power ever trample upon the earthly sanctuary? Historical records

indicate that Antiochus Epiphanes stopped the daily sacrifices and desecrated the temple.

He ordered them not to offer burnt offerings, grain offerings, or wine offerings in the Temple... They were even ordered to **defile** the Temple and the holy things in it.<sup>11</sup>

Antiochus Epiphanes profaned the temple of God by offering sacrifices to idols upon the holy altar of God with unclean animals. After several years, Antiochus was driven out of Jerusalem. According to the KJV translation of Maccabees, the priests “cleansed the sanctuary” (re-consecrated it to God).<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, the Day of Atonement, described in Leviticus 16 uses a completely different Hebrew word for “cleanse.” Russell Kelly explains:

In the Day of Atonement ritual of Leviticus 16, “cleanse” is the Hebrew word, *ta-heer*, not *ta-da-q*. “Cleanse” is *taheer* in all 15 occurrences in Leviticus. This strongly indicates that Daniel 8:8-14 does not refer to the Day of Atonement.<sup>13</sup>

There is no contextual evidence in Daniel 8 that the sanctuary is being cleansed from the sins of God’s people, and yet this is what Ellen White teaches in *Great Controversy*. She teaches that it is the sins of God’s people that are transmitted into the heavenly sanctuary and are polluting it. Therefore, God must “cleanse” the heavenly sanctuary to remove the sins of His people.

## Does Blood Transport Sin?

Ellen White makes the heretical claim that sins of the saints are moved up to the heavenly sanctuary. She writes:

As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant **the sins of the repentant are by faith placed**

**upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary.**<sup>14</sup>

It is a heresy for Ellen White to claim that the sins of God's people are transmitted up into heaven to pollute the heavenly sanctuary. The Bible teaches that the blood sanctifies or makes holy (Heb. 9:13). Christ's blood is never described anywhere in the Bible as a transportation mechanism to move sins from sinners into the heavenly sanctuary. Kelly explains:

Contrary to what SDAs teach, there is no Bible text which says that *atoned* sins defile the sanctuary!!! ... The atoned sins were washed away by the sinless blood of the sacrificial animal, a type of Christ. This death occurred at the "doorway" of the inner court... When the sacrifice died as a sin offering at the entrance of the sanctuary, the payment for the confessed sin was complete. The ministering priest collected its blood which had become *most holy* (Lev. 4:20; 5:6; 6:7,25-27; Numb. 18:9). ... **The blood was brought inside the sanctuary, not to defile it, but as a proof (receipt of payment rendered) that the redemption price had already been fully paid.** ... The blood was not brought into the sanctuary, as Ellen White wrote, "to make satisfaction for its claims" (GC 420). The "satisfaction" had *already* been made and announced when the sacrificial animal's blood was shed.<sup>15</sup>

The blood of Jesus does not transmit human sins anywhere. Rather, it pulverizes sins, for "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Jesus Christ has "washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev. 1:5). The blood is not a transportation medium for sin. The blood of Jesus contains a power that eradicates sin, making whatever it touches holy and sanctified.

## **Sins Remembered?**

In the *Great Controversy* passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Ellen White said the sins of the people of God

“remained upon the books of record.” This is contrary to the Bible, which teaches that the High Priest of heaven says, “their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. 8:12). The Atonement was completed when Jesus, the Lamb of God, was slain on the Cross of Calvary. His atoning sacrifice paid the penalty for the sins of humanity:

For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10:14).

The Apostle Peter encouraged sinners to repent so that their sins could be removed:

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out... (Acts 3:19).

How could sins be “blotted out” if they remained on the books of Heaven? Paul understood the true significance of the completed atonement. This is why he could announce with joy that the benefits of the atoning sacrifice were now available to all humanity:

...we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom **we have now received the atonement** (Rom. 5:18).

How could Paul have received atonement in the first century if it did not begin until 1844?

## The Terrible SDA Dilemma

Daniel 8:11-12 says that the “little horn” was the one who “cast down” the “sanctuary.” In the context of Daniel 8, it is the “little horn” that made such a mess of the sanctuary that it needed to be cleansed and vindicated. One can search in vain for any mention in Daniel 8 of the sins of the righteous polluting the sanctuary. SDAs teach that the “little horn” power represents Roman Catholicism, which ascended to power during the dark ages and persecuted Christians. They claim that the Papacy established its own priesthood and thereby obscured Christ’s work in the sanctuary:

Papal Rome effectively obscured the priestly, mediatorial ministry of Christ in behalf of sinners in the heavenly sanctuary (see Heb. 8:1,2) by substituting a priesthood that purports to offer forgiveness through the mediation of men. This apostate power would be quite successful, for 'he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered' (Dan. 8:12).<sup>16</sup>

Carefully think this through. SDAs teach that *papal Rome* was the little horn power of Daniel 8:9-12 that defiled the heavenly sanctuary by substituting its own priesthood. Then, in Daniel 8:13, the question is asked: How long will the defilement continue? Or, using SDA reasoning, "How long will papal Rome be permitted to defile the sanctuary?"

Verse 14 answers the question posed in verse 13 by saying that after 2300 days, "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Cleansed from what? From the defilement in verses 9-12. SDAs claim that Catholicism defiled the sanctuary, so one would think that to be consistent, they would teach that the "cleansing" refers to ending papal Rome's defilement of the heavenly sanctuary. However, they do not! Instead, they switch to a completely different subject, and say that the "cleansing" of the sanctuary has nothing to do with papal Rome, but is instead describing the cleansing of the sins of the righteous from the heavenly sanctuary during the anti-typical Day of Atonement!

SDAs ignore the question asked in verse 13 and answer an entirely *different* question in verse 14! Instead of verse 13 asking, "How long will the little horn defile the sanctuary?" SDAs have changed the question to be: "How long will the heavenly sanctuary be defiled by the confessed sins of God's people?" This is a **completely different question** than the one being asked in Daniel 8:13!

Here is the *Terrible SDA Dilemma*: Nowhere in Daniel 8 does it say that the sins of God's people have desecrated the sanctuary. On the contrary, the passage specifically indicates that it is the "little horn" power that has desolated the sanctuary! Keep in mind that Daniel 8:14 is an answer—an

answer to a question asked in Daniel 8:13. Daniel 8:13 asks how long the little horn power will continue to trample on the sanctuary. Therefore, the answer given in the next verse cannot refer to anything other than the question being asked. If Daniel 8:14 truly refers to the Day of Atonement, then it is answering a completely different question than was asked in verse 8:13!

The question of Daniel 8:13 puts SDAs in a *terrible dilemma*! Daniel 8 teaches that the sanctuary was desecrated by the little horn, yet SDAs say it was desecrated by the sins of God's people. Both cannot be true! Either the sanctuary was polluted by the little horn (as described in Daniel 8) or else it was polluted by the sins of God's people. Which is it?

SDA scholar Raymond Cottrell explains the *Terrible SDA Dilemma*:

The context of Daniel 8:14 attributes the defiling of the sanctuary to the little horn. SDA's interpretation attributes it to the transfer of confessed sins to the heavenly sanctuary by the priestly ministry of Christ. To pretend to ourselves that the SDA interpretation reads Daniel 8:14 in context then would thus be to **identify the little horn as Christ**. In other words, we can't have both the context and the Adventist interpretation in so far as the Bible itself is concerned.<sup>17</sup>

If one is going to be consistent with SDA logic and say that the cleansing of the sanctuary was the Day of Atonement, then **one is forced to conclude that Christ and His people are the little horn power that polluted the sanctuary!** This is a heretical conclusion and leaves the SDAs in a dilemma from which it is impossible to extricate themselves.

## Conclusion

- Daniel 8:11-14 never mentions any activity or symbol from the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16).



- Daniel 8 never mentions an atoning sacrifice or a scapegoat.
- Daniel 8 never mentions the sins of the righteous.
- Daniel 8 never mentions an atonement.
- Daniel 8 never mentions that “sins” are defiling the sanctuary.

The idea that confessed sins are transferred to the sanctuary and defiled it is not found anywhere in the passage of Daniel 8. Examine below what various SDA scholars have written regarding this terrible dilemma. C.L. Price writes:

What has defiled the sanctuary and made necessary its “cleansing” is its defilement by the little horn. Confessed sins are not referred to at all; that is an alien thought, wholly brought in by the Adventist writers themselves.<sup>18</sup>

Desmond Ford writes:

When would heaven intervene and stop the wicked aggressor? Verse 14 was the answer to that inquiry. But SDAs refuse to connect the two! Instead, they jump from the theme of evil deeds by an anti-God power to the theme of sins of the saints defiling a heavenly sanctuary. Let it not be missed: **the context says nothing about believers defiling anything. Nor do the Old or New Testaments anywhere else teach that confessed sins defile the heavenly sanctuary.** Even on earth the sanctuary of Moses was defiled by the act of sin, not by its confession. (Num. 19:13, 20; Lev. 20:3)<sup>19</sup>

Robert Brinsmead writes:

In the context of Daniel 8:14, “cleansing the sanctuary” means cleansing it from the pollution of the desolator (see Dan. 11:31 for a parallel scripture). **To introduce into Daniel 8:14 the idea of cleansing the sanctuary from the confessed sins of the saints is not only a diversion but contrary to the context. The sanctuary is defiled not by the confessed sins of the saints, but**

**by the evil actions of the little horn.** (Even in the Old Testament tabernacle, which the Adventist interpretation brings in at this point, what defiled wasn't confessed sins but covenant-breaking and unconfessed sin.)<sup>20</sup>

Raymond Cottrell writes:

Coming again to the Book of Daniel **I determined to try once more to find a way to be absolutely faithful to both Daniel and the traditional Adventist interpretation of 8:14, but again found it impossible. I then formulated six questions regarding the Hebrew text of the passage and its context, which I submitted to every college teacher versed in Hebrew and every head of the religion department in all of our North American colleges—all personal friends of mine. Without exception they replied that there is no linguistic or contextual basis for the traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14.**<sup>21</sup>

It should cause every SDA grave concern when Cottrell, the sect's leading Hebrew scholar, inquires of *every* qualified SDA professor in North America to find out whether or not there is any Biblical basis for the SDA teaching of Daniel 8:14 and **not a single one could provide an answer.** Considering this is the “foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith,” it should lead one to seriously question the validity of this sect.

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<sup>1</sup> Primary sources for this chapter: Desmond Ford, *Daniel 8:14 and The 2300-day Prophecy of Daniel 8* (Bible Advocate Press).

<sup>2</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 409.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 411.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 417.

<sup>5</sup> Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1907), 222; *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. IV (1957), 843.

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<sup>6</sup> Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, 757.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen White, *Signs of the Times*, Dec. 8, 1898.

<sup>8</sup> Russell Earl Kelly, *Exposing Seventh-day Adventism* (New York: iUniverse, 2005), 28.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 421.

<sup>10</sup> *Strong's* definition: 06663 רָצַח tsâdaq, tsaw-dak'; a primitive root; to be (causatively, make) right (in a moral or forensic sense):—cleanse, clear self, (be, do) just(-ice, -ify, -ify self), (be turn to) righteous(-ness). Stem: Niphal

AV - justify 23, righteous 10, just 3, justice 2, cleansed 1, clear ourselves 1, righteousness 1; 41

1b) (Niphal) to be put or made right, be justified

*Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*: to be declared just; hence to be vindicated from wrongs.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Maccabees 1:45-46 GNT.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Maccabees 4:43 KJV. The same Greek word ἐκαθάρισαν is used in the LXX of Nehemiah 13:9 when he “cleansed the chambers” of the pagan Tobiah who had been allowed to occupy a room in the temple.

<sup>13</sup> Kelly, 33.

<sup>14</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 421. The heretical statement first appeared in White's writings in 1884, and a slightly modified version of that statement continues to appear in her 1911 *Great Controversy* which is marketed heavily by the SDA sect today. The original statement also appears in two compilations that were published long after White's death, indicating the sect's continual approval of and promotion of the statement:

*The Spirit of Prophecy* vol. 4 (1884), 266, para. 1

*Great Controversy* (1888), 421, para. 3

*Great Controversy* (1911), 421, para. 3

*The Story of Redemption* (1947), 378, para. 2

*The Faith I Live By* (1958), 206, para. 6

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>16</sup> *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1989), 322.

<sup>17</sup> Raymond Cottrell, as quoted in Desmond Ford, *Daniel 8:14*, A-115-116.

<sup>18</sup> C. L. Price, “Should a Question be Answered? A Study of Daniel 8:14,” *New Light on Old Problems* (1973).

<sup>19</sup> Desmond Ford, *Daniel 8:14*.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Brinsmead, *Judged by the Gospel*.

<sup>21</sup> Raymond F. Cottrell, “The Sanctuary Doctrine – Asset or Liability?”

# CHAPTER 23

## *The Location of Christ*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 24 Examined

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Mrs. White spends considerable effort in *Great Controversy* defending, explaining, and trying to make sense of the Great Disappointment of 1844. Whereas nearly all those who endured the disappointment eventually concluded that the whole matter was a dismal mistake, the shut-door Adventists—led by James and Ellen White—stubbornly insisted the calculations were correct and that something of grave importance happened on October 22, 1844:

Though, like the first disciples, they themselves had failed to understand the message which they bore, yet **it had been in every respect correct.** In proclaiming it they had fulfilled the purpose of God, and their labor had not been in vain in the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

To begin, it is fraudulent to claim the *message* was “in every respect correct.” It is more accurate to state that the *message* was “in every respect wrong.” The *message* was that Christ would return in 1844. He did not. The *message* said that the earth was the sanctuary. It was not. Of Miller’s 15 proofs, the SDAs have abandoned 14 of them and no longer teach them. This proves they do not regard those proofs as “correct.” The one proof they continue to teach is that the 2300 evening-mornings of Daniel 8:14 are years. As discussed earlier in this book, that is also incorrect. Finally, the inventor of the *message*, Freemason Miller, admitted the whole thing was incorrect. Likewise, all of the major leaders of the movement eventually admitted the same. The truth is that no prophetic event occurred in 1844, and those who

labored in this movement did indeed labor in vain. In every respect the *message* was wrong!

The only saving grace of the entire debacle is that some people began studying their Bibles and discovered that the wicked are annihilated, not burned forever in hell. This teaching was discovered by Sunday-keeping Adventists, who went on to form what is known today as the Advent Christian Church. The doctrine of annihilation was later adopted by Ellen White and the shut-door Adventists who evolved into the SDA sect. This is the only noteworthy Biblical truth uncovered by Adventists, and even this was not unique to Seventh-day Adventists.

The one truly unique doctrine of Seventh-day Adventism is their sanctuary teaching. After the Disappointment, shut-door Adventists concocted the idea that Christ did something of significance on October 22, 1844. Ellen White writes that Christ “entered **the most holy place of the temple of God in heaven.**”<sup>2</sup>

## **A Special Work After 1844?**

Mrs. White proceeds to explain that a special work of perfection was initiated in 1844:

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.<sup>3</sup>

Mrs. White goes through great effort to differentiate the era *after* 1844 as one in which there will be “purification” and “putting away of sin.” However, there is no Biblical evidence that God commenced a new work of purification from sin in 1844. Jesus told His disciples in the first century to “be ye therefore perfect.” (Matt. 5:48) It is apparent He expected the same perfection in the first century as Ellen White said would be necessary after 1844.

The first-century Christians were commanded by Jesus to “be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 24:44). If the first-century Christians were to “be ready” then they are no different from the 19<sup>th</sup> century Christians in this regard. Christians of every age are called upon to “be ready” for Christ’s return. There is no Biblical reason to believe Christians living after 1844 have to be any more “perfect” or any more “ready” than Christians living before 1844!

Neither did the SDAs add any new significant moral teaching. The seventh-day Sabbath was not “discovered” by Adventists, but was taught by the Seventh Day Baptists for over a century before the first Adventists adopted it from them. Many churches today that were never part of the SDA sect are teaching the Sabbath. Even the vegetarian diet was not new. Health reforms like Sylvester Graham were teaching it before 1844. Throughout the ages, radical Christian sects have adopted equally fanatical diets. There is nothing in the Bible to suggest that any new moral teaching would arise after 1844, and in fact no major moral teaching arose in that year.

The SDA sect’s interpretation of the seven churches of Revelation describes themselves as being part of the “lukewarm” church of Laodicea. Ellen White admits that the majority of SDAs are “lukewarm”:

The Laodicean message applies to the people of God who profess to believe present truth. The greater part are lukewarm professors, having a name but no zeal...

they are unwilling to die to self and follow out closely the principles of their faith.<sup>4</sup>

That hardly sounds like a church ready to stand without an intercessor! The church of Laodicea is described in Revelation as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” (Rev. 3:17) Again, this does not sound like the “spotless” church described by Ellen White in *Great Controversy*, but it does sound like the modern SDA Church.

## The Atonement Started in 1844?

Mrs. White claims Jesus moved from the Holy Place to the Most Holy Place in 1844 to perform the duties of the Day of Atonement:

So when Christ entered the holy of holies to perform the closing work of the atonement, He ceased His ministration in the first apartment. But when the ministration in the first apartment ended, the ministration in the second apartment began. When in the typical service the high priest left the holy on the Day of Atonement, he went in before God to present the blood of the sin offering in behalf of all Israel who truly repented of their sins.<sup>5</sup>

The problem with this theory is that Jesus already completed the Atonement at His ascension. This is why Paul could talk in the past tense about already receiving the atonement: “We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom **we have now received the atonement**” (Rom. 5:11). How could Paul have received (past tense) the atonement if it did not even start until 1844?

The Bible teaches that Christ entered the Most Holy Place at His ascension, not in 1844. By comparing the Biblical evidence found in the Old Testament description of the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16) with the New Testament description of the Day of Atonement (Heb. 9), it can be determined when the Day of Atonement happened.

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, **now to appear in the presence of God for us** (Heb. 9:24).

Christ is said to now “appear in the presence of God.” Where in the sanctuary does the “presence of God” manifest?

And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place **within the veil before the mercy seat**, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for **I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat** (Lev. 16:2).

Scripture specifically states that the place of the Lord’s presence in the Old Testament Tabernacle was upon the mercy seat in the Most Holy Place. The author of Hebrews frequently draws upon Old Testament imagery and wording to describe Christ’s present work. When the author writes that Christ now “appear[s] in the presence of God for us,” anyone familiar with Leviticus would immediately recognize that Christ must have entered into the Most Holy Place to appear before the mercy seat of God.

The author of Hebrews continues to describe the atoning work of Christ by adding, “...but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26). The Greek word for “hath he appeared” is *φανερώω* which is in the *perfect* tense. This tense “describes an action which is viewed as having been completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated.”<sup>6</sup> Christ appeared before the throne of God at His ascension to present His perfect sacrifice for humanity’s redemption.

The fact that Jesus was in the Most Holy Place before 1844 is further evidenced by the fact that the authors of the New Testament repeatedly refer to Jesus as sitting or standing on the right hand of God. Notice what Mark, Luke, Stephen, Paul, the author of Hebrews, and Peter say:



- ... he was received up into heaven, and **sat on the right hand of God** (Mark 16:19).
- Hereafter shall the Son of man **sit on the right hand of the power of God** (Luke 22:69).
- But he [Stephen]...saw...**Jesus standing on the right hand of God**. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the **Son of man standing on the right hand of God** (Acts 7:55-56).
- ...Christ...is risen again, who is **even at the right hand of God**... (Rom. 8:34).
- ...he raised him from the dead, and **set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places** (Eph. 1:20).
- ...Christ sitteth on the **right hand of God** (Col. 3:1).
- ...**sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high**. (Heb. 1:3)
- We have such an high priest, who is **set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty** in the heavens (Heb. 8:1).
- But this man [Christ]...**sat down on the right hand of God** (Hebrews 10:12).
- ...Jesus...is **set down at the right hand of the throne of God** (Heb. 12:2).
- [Jesus] Who is gone into heaven, and **is on the right hand of God**... (1 Pet. 3:22).

### **Is Jesus Doing Something New After 1844?**

What is Jesus doing differently after 1844? Not even Ellen White can explain it:

So Christ had only completed one part of His work as our intercessor, to enter upon another portion of the work, and **He still pleaded His blood before the Father in behalf of sinners. ...**

But while it was true that that door of hope and mercy by which men had for eighteen hundred years found access to God, was closed, another door was opened, and **forgiveness of sins was offered to men through the intercession of Christ** in the most holy. One part of His ministration had closed, only to give place to another. There was still an “open door” to the heavenly sanctuary, where **Christ was ministering in the sinner’s behalf.**<sup>7</sup>

According to Mrs. White, Jesus is doing the exact same activities in the Most Holy Place as He was in the Holy Place!

What is the “door” that Ellen White says was shut? Originally the shut-door Adventists taught that the door of salvation was shut on those who did not join Miller’s movement. Ellen White saw a shut door in *vision*, and this was widely published, so SDAs are now stuck with it. After they opened the door of salvation in the early 1850s to accept those who had not heard Miller’s message, they still needed a shut door to explain away Mrs. White’s *visions*. So, they decided that the door that was shut was the door entering the Holy Place. The problem with that theory is that the door to the Holy Place was the *only* door into the Tabernacle. There was no separate door to enter the Most Holy Place. To enter the Most Holy, one must first enter the door into the Holy Place, and then pass through the veil into the holiest. Thus, if the door was shut to the holy place, then no one could access either the Holy Place or the Most Holy Place! This completely repudiates the idea that a door was shut in 1844. If the door to the sanctuary was indeed shut, then access to *both* compartments was obstructed!

Furthermore, the author of Hebrews notes that the way to the Most Holy Place was open in the first century. The “veil” in the earthly sanctuary which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place was a symbol used to represent the sacrifice of Jesus:

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, **through the veil, that is to say, his flesh** (Heb. 10:19,20).

This passage indicates that no piece of cloth is hanging in heaven between the apartments of the heavenly sanctuary, but that Jesus Christ is Himself the veil. Note what happened when Christ died on the cross:

And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom (Mark 15:38).

The tearing of the veil indicated that Christ had opened up the way into the Most Holy Place. Christ Himself is the veil that was “rent.” Just as the Levitical priesthood ministered in the earthly tabernacle, the “royal priesthood” (1 Pet. 2:9) of believers has access to the heavenly tabernacle. Unlike the Levitical priesthood, however, the royal priesthood has direct access to the “throne of grace” (Heb. 4:16) in the Most Holy Place through the “new and living way” that Christ has opened for us through the veil, which is His body. Therefore, ever since the first century Christians have had access to the Most Holy Place through Christ.

## A Salvation Issue

Mrs. White explains the criticality of believers adopting the peculiar SDA interpretation of the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary:

It is those who by faith follow Jesus in the great work of the atonement who receive the benefits of His mediation in their behalf, while those who reject the light which brings to view this work of ministration are not benefited thereby.<sup>8</sup>

In other words, SDAs who accept the false teaching that Christ moved into the Most Holy Place in 1844 will be able to benefit from Christ’s mediation. However, all other Christians who reject this false view are not benefited by

Christ's ministry in the heavenly temple. This means that when Christians who have rejected this doctrine approach the Throne of Grace to find grace and forgiveness, they will not receive it. Thus, their sins will remain on the books of heaven, implying that they will bear their own sins in the judgment and fail of obtaining eternal life.

She goes on to compare Christians who reject this SDA doctrine to the Jews who rejected Jesus:

The condition of the unbelieving Jews illustrates the condition of the careless and unbelieving among professed Christians, who are willingly ignorant of the work of our merciful High Priest.<sup>9</sup>

According to Mrs. White, just as the Jews were deceived to rely upon animal sacrifices to atone for their sins *after* the sacrifice of Christ, so are modern Christians deceived to vainly look for Jesus in the Holy Place when he has moved to the Most Holy Place. In the forerunner to *Great Controversy*, she writes of these Christians:

Like the Jews, who offered their useless sacrifices, they offer up their **useless prayers** to the apartment which Jesus has left, and Satan, pleased with the deception of the professed followers of Christ, fastens them in his snare, and assumes a religious character, and leads the minds of these professed Christians to himself...<sup>10</sup>

According to Mrs. White, Christians who reject this doctrine are now offering up “useless prayers.” In other words, they do not reach God because Jesus moved to a different room, and apparently His hearing is so poor that He cannot hear the prayers of the saints from the other room. Ironically, non-SDA churches do not teach that Jesus is dwelling in the Holy Place. They teach that when Jesus ascended to heaven, He sat down at the right hand of God, which is in the Most Holy Place (Heb. 8:1, 10:12, 12:2). So, Ellen White is charging them with a crime—praying to Jesus in the Holy Place—that they have not even committed!

Mrs. White concludes with a harsh warning for those who reject her false teaching about the location of Jesus: “As they reject the teachings of His word, God withdraws His Spirit and leaves them to the deceptions which they love.”<sup>11</sup> Essentially, if anyone rejects her teaching, not only will their sins be unforgiven by Jesus, but the Holy Spirit will stop wasting time on them. This elevates the SDA interpretation of the Sanctuary to an issue of eternal salvation. If one agrees with the SDA interpretation, then they can be saved. If one disagrees, then, unless they can live the remainder of their life free from any sin, they will sacrifice their salvation. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit will depart from them, ensuring they can never turn back and find the path of life.

## Conclusion

Mrs. White wraps up this pathetic chapter by slamming Christians who do not accept the bizarre and unscriptural theories about the movement of Christ between the sanctuary apartments. Even though Christ is allegedly doing the same high-priestly work in the Most Holy Place as He was doing in the Holy Place, Mrs. White warns that Christians who do not believe He moved to the holiest in 1844 will not benefit from His ministry. This means that their salvation is dependent upon them accepting the SDA doctrine of Christ’s location in the sanctuary.

Interestingly enough, the SDA sect is the only denomination to teach this unique doctrine. They have elevated it to a “pillar,” such that the only way to obtain the ministry of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins is to accept this SDA doctrine. Since no other church teaches this doctrine, this makes Seventh-day Adventism the only repository of “truth” and the only way to salvation.

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<sup>1</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 421.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 424.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 425.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 87.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 428.

<sup>6</sup> *Strong's*.

<sup>7</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 428-429.

<sup>8</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 430.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 430.

<sup>10</sup> Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1 (1858), 171.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 431.

# CHAPTER 24

## *Shut Door Adventists*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 25 Examined

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In chapter 25 of *Great Controversy*, Ellen White makes the case that the third angel's message of Revelation 14:9-11 is about keeping the commandments of God, particularly the seventh day Sabbath.

At the time of the Great Disappointment nearly all Christian churches upheld the Ten Commandments, but Protestant churches continued the early Christian (second century) practice of observing Sunday as their day of worship. Thus, nearly all early Adventists were Sunday-keepers. During the days following the Disappointment there was a renewed interest in studying the Bible. Many new doctrines surfaced and floated around amongst the Advent believers. William Miller lamented:

As time has progressed, I have been pained to see many errors which have been embraced in different sections of the country by some who have labored in connection with myself... I have no confidence in any of the new theories that have grown out of that movement, viz., that Christ then came as the Bridegroom, **that the door of mercy was closed, that there is no salvation for sinners**, that the seventh trumpet then sounded, or that it was a fulfilment of prophecy in any sense.<sup>1</sup>

One *new* doctrine that emerged was the observance of the seventh day Sabbath. Thomas Preble learned of the Sabbath from Seventh Day Baptists.<sup>2</sup> He wrote a tract and published an article about the Sabbath. A small number of Adventists adopted the Sabbath. These Sabbath-keepers divided into two distinct camps. One group accepted the Sabbath but did

not associate it with the “seal of God,” the third angel’s message, or Ellen White’s *visions*. Historian Isaac Wellcome writes of this group:

Many of those who observe the seventh-day Sabbath, however, have repudiated the visions [of Ellen White], after some experience, as an imposition, instead of acknowledging them of divine origin and authority for church government, while others never accepted them.<sup>3</sup>

This group also rejected the radical shut-door teaching and worked for the salvation of the lost. This group later evolved into the Church of God (seventh day).

The second camp was the shut-door Adventists led by former sea captain Joseph Bates. Bates taught that a door of salvation was shut on October 22, 1844, for all who did not accept Miller’s message. Bates declared that the gospel era ended in 1844: “The gospel message ended at the appointed time with the closing of the 2,300 days.”<sup>4</sup> Bates accepted the Sabbath after reading Preble’s writings, and adopted the theory that Sunday keeping was the “Mark of the Beast” and Sabbath-keeping was the “Seal of God.”<sup>5</sup> Bates also taught that the anti-typical “Day of Atonement” began in the fall of 1844 and would last for a period of seven years, terminating in the fall of 1851 with the return of Christ.<sup>6</sup> Bates regarded this seven year period as a “testing time” when Advent believers would be tested on the Sabbath doctrine, which he believed to be the third angel’s message. During this testing time all Adventists who did not accept the Sabbath doctrine would have their names blotted out of the Book of Life.

In the fall of 1846, the White joined Bates and adopted his views. Before long, Mrs. White was having *visions* supporting Bates’ theories of the third angel’s message and the shut door. In an early church periodical she wrote:

...I was shown that the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, relating to the shut door, could not be separated... My accompanying angel bade me look for the travail of soul for sinners as used to be.



I looked, but could not see it; for **the time for their salvation is past.**<sup>7</sup>

For nearly seven years, the shut-door Adventists, while claiming to have “present truth,” and while claiming to be guided by *visions*, refused to fulfill the most important command of Christ: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Even SDA apologists now admits their founders were utterly deluded into ignoring the most important work of the church for a period of nearly seven years. They published the following notice in the forward to Ellen White’s *Early Writings*:

...it should be noted that the early Sabbathkeeping Adventists at first had a burden to reach with the Sabbath truth only their former brethren in the great Advent Awakening; that is, those who had been with them in the first and the second angels’ messages. Consequently **for about seven years after 1844, their labors were very largely for Adventists who had not yet taken their stand on the third angel’s message.**<sup>8</sup>

This fanatical group of shut-door Adventists made little headway in converting others to their teachings. In the 1858 version of *Great Controversy* Mrs. White admits progress was slow in the first years following the Disappointment:

But in the period of doubt and uncertainty that followed the Disappointment, many of the Advent believers yielded their faith. Dissensions and divisions came in. **The majority opposed** with voice and pen the few who, following in the providence of God, received the Sabbath reform and began to proclaim the third angel’s message. Many who should have devoted their time and talents to the one purpose of sounding warning to the world, were absorbed in opposing the Sabbath truth, and in turn, the labor of its advocates was necessarily spent in answering these opponents and defending the truth. Thus the work was hindered, and **the world was left in darkness.**<sup>9</sup>

It is mind-boggling that Mrs. White casts the blame for the world being “in darkness” on those who did not accept the shut-door teaching. In reality, it was those *outside* her group who were proclaiming the gospel and sending out missionaries while the shut-door Adventists refused to do any work for the lost for nearly seven years!

After 1851 passed without event, interest in the Whites and their shut door doctrine quickly waned. It must have dawned upon the Whites that to be successful they must revamp their theology. They quietly dropped the shut-door doctrine, and when James republished his wife’s *visions* in 1851, he carefully removed mention of a shut door of salvation.<sup>10</sup> Historian Isaac Wellcome makes note of this shift in doctrine:

Eld. White had published several of Ellen’s visions on small sheets for general distribution; but as time passed on **the theology of her later visions was materially different from former ones, and they were suppressed** to give place to those better adapted to enforce the new theological platform which was being framed for future operations. ... This was the process of generating and shaping a new system under the title of “Seventh-day Adventism,” which by a new classification and application of certain Scriptures has been gradually maturing and being confirmed by frequent visions, with which Mrs. White was favored; **but these visions as published now are greatly in conflict with those which acquaintances and witnesses in New England were accustomed to hear from her lips**, after recovering from her clairvoyant state, or to read on sheets as published at first, by Eld. White. However, they are called by their adherents, “as true as the Bible.” With these beginnings a sect has been founded, and through persevering efforts, and “visions,” a system of dictatorial ecclesiastical government has been established for a class of believers in the Advent near, who have taken the name of “Seventh-day Adventists.”<sup>11</sup>

Having doctored up the *visions*, and having discarded the shut-door theology Ellen saw in *vision*, the Whites moved westward and reinvented themselves as proponents of the Sabbath doctrine, which they described as the “third angel’s message.” Rather than spreading the gospel, they saw themselves as having a unique mission to spread Sabbatarianism to Sunday-observing Christians.

Mrs. White envisioned her sect as the fulfillment of the prophecies of Revelation 14. She writes in the forerunner to *Great Controversy*

Since 1844, in fulfillment of the prophecy of the third angel’s message, the attention of the world has been called to the true Sabbath, and a constantly increasing number are returning to the observance of God’s holy day.<sup>12</sup>

Whether it was a fulfillment of Bible prophecy or merely a self-fulfilling prophecy will be left to the reader to decide. SDAs are quick to take credit for being the fulfillment of the third angel’s message. However, even if the third angel’s message was indeed the Sabbath doctrine, it was being spread much earlier than 1844. The Seventh Day Baptist Church was formed around 1650, and they were teaching the Sabbath for nearly two centuries before 1844. Even after 1844, non-SDA Sabbatarians dwarfed the size of the SDA sect until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was not until SDA theology began drifting toward Evangelicalism, while deftly pushing Ellen White’s teachings into the background, that the SDA sect began experiencing its greatest growth rates.<sup>13</sup>

## Conclusion

After 1851, SDAs shelved their shut-door theology and reinvented themselves as Sabbath advocates, with a special mandate from God to spread Sabbatarianism around the world. Instead of seeking and saving the lost as Christ had commanded his disciples to do, they made it their mission to convince other Christians of their Sabbatarian views. Ellen

White, while shining the spotlight on her sect as the ones who were spreading Sabbatarianism throughout the world, conveniently omitted the fact that the Seventh Day Baptists had been spreading the same message for centuries.

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<sup>1</sup> William Miller, *Apology and [sic] Defence* (Boston: J.V. Himes, 1845), 26, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Dirk Anderson, *National Sunday Law – Fact or Fiction?* (self-published, 2023), chapter 1. The Millerite preacher Thomas Preble appears to have learned of the Sabbath doctrine from a Seventh Day Baptist. Some say it was Rachel Oakes, but others contend it was Oakes' daughter who convinced Frederick Wheeler of the Sabbath, and then Wheeler convinced Preble.

<sup>3</sup> Isaac Wellcome, *History of the Second Advent Message*, vol. 5 (1874), 401-409.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Bates, *Second Advent Way Marks and High Heaps Or A Connected View, of the Fulfilment of Prophecy, by God's Peculiar People, from the Year 1840 to 1847*, (New Bedford: Benjamin Lindsey, 1847), 97-110

<sup>5</sup> Anderson, *Ibid*.

<sup>6</sup> Bates later wrote out his theories: "The seven spots of blood on the Golden Altar and before the mercy seat, I fully believe, represent the duration of the judicial proceedings on the living saints in the Most Holy, all of which time they will be in their affliction, even seven years; God by his voice will deliver them, 'for it is the blood that maketh the atonement for the soul' (Lev. 17:11). Then the number seven will finish the day of atonement." (*An Explanation of the Typical and Anti-typical Sanctuary, by the Scriptures, with a Chart*, (New Bedford: Benjamin Lindsey, 1850), 10).

<sup>7</sup> Ellen White, *Present Truth*, Aug., 1849.

<sup>8</sup> Publishers, *Early Writings*, Introduction, xxvii.

<sup>9</sup> Ellen White, *Selected Messages* vol. 1, 68.

<sup>10</sup> See Dirk Anderson, *White Out*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.

<sup>11</sup> Wellcome, *Ibid*.

<sup>12</sup> Ellen White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, 286.

<sup>13</sup> "History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," Wikipedia, extracted Dec. 13, 2023. Sidebar: Graph of church membership over time.

# CHAPTER 25

## *The Fake Prophet*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 26 Examined

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In *Great Controversy* chapter 26, Mrs. White spends considerable effort rebuking those who set dates for the Lord's return.

The majority of Adventists rejected the truths concerning the sanctuary and the law of God, and many also renounced their faith in the advent movement and adopted unsound and conflicting views of the prophecies which applied to that work. **Some were led into the error of repeatedly fixing upon a definite time for the coming of Christ.** The light which was now shining on the subject of the sanctuary should have shown them that no prophetic period extends to the second advent; that **the exact time of this advent is not foretold. But, turning from the light, they continued to set time after time for the Lord to come, and as often they were disappointed.**<sup>1</sup>

How ironic that one who was caught up in William Miller's date-setting delusion would now criticize others for doing the same thing she did! She calls the setting of "definite time" an "error" and says that those who did so were "turning from the light." Astonishingly, she even admits "the exact time of the advent is not foretold." If "the exact time of the Advent is not foretold" then why did she criticize the Christians living in the 1840s who rejected Miller's dates? The truth is that those Christians acted appropriately by rejecting the message of Miller because in her own words, "the exact time of the advent is not foretold!" Furthermore,

the Adventists acted foolishly by setting a definite time when “the exact time of the advent is not foretold.”

Mrs. White said that there were some who “continued to set time after time for the Lord to come.” Who were these fanatics? They were among the remnant of the Adventists who refused to admit they were on the wrong track. Mrs. White describes them:

Many Adventists have felt that unless they could fix their faith upon a definite time for the Lord’s coming, they could not be zealous and diligent in the work of preparation. **But as their hopes are again and again excited, only to be destroyed, their faith receives such a shock that it becomes well-nigh impossible for them to be impressed by the great truths of prophecy.**<sup>2</sup>

Here Mrs. White accurately sums up the major problems with setting definite time: 1) It destroys “hopes,” 2) it gives a “shock” to one’s faith, and 3) it causes believers to become insensitive to the real prophecies of the Bible. While Mrs. White assured her readers that Miller’s setting of definite time was “ordered by God,” the question remains: If these three points were true *after* 1844, then why were they not true *before* 1844? These three problems were exactly what the Adventists experienced after the Disappointment. It is preposterous to propose that Miller’s setting of dates was “ordered by God.”<sup>3</sup>

Mrs. White continues describing the problems of setting definite time on the next page of the book:

The more frequently a definite time is set for the second advent, and the more widely it is taught, the better **it suits the purposes of Satan**. After the time has passed, he excites ridicule and contempt of its advocates, and thus casts reproach upon the great advent movement of 1843 and 1844. Those who persist in this error will at last fix upon a date too far in the future for the coming of Christ. Thus they will be led to rest in a false security, and many will not be undeceived until it is too late.<sup>4</sup>

Once again Mrs. White accurately states the problems of fixing a definite time for the return of Christ. Setting time “suits the purposes of Satan” because it 1) brings “reproach” upon those who teach it, and 2) causes some to fix dates too far in the future which leads to “false security.”

In what is perhaps the most accurate section in the entire book, in these two paragraphs, Mrs. White spells out the five reasons why it is foolhardy for Christians to set a definite time for the return of Christ:

1. Destroys one’s hope.
2. Shocks one’s faith.
3. Leads one to be insensitive to real Bible prophecies.
4. Causes one to feel the reproach of other Christians.
5. Future dates could lead to a false sense of security.

Mrs. White’s summary is written brilliantly. These are many of the same points Protestant ministers made regarding the 1844 delusion, and yet Mrs. White called them false professors for not believing Miller. How contradictory!

## Ellen White Sets Dates for Christ’s Return

Who were these awful people who were suiting “the purposes of Satan” by setting definite time? The answer is that one of them was the fake prophet, Ellen White! After the Disappointment, she repeatedly set definite times for the Lord’s return from her *visions*.

Lucinda Burdick, a minister’s wife and a friend of Mrs. White in the 1840s, explains how Mrs. White repeatedly predicted Christ’s return:

I became acquainted with James White and Ellen Harmon (now Mrs. White) early in 1845. ... She pretended God showed her things which did not come to pass. **At one time she saw that the Lord would come the second time in June 1845.** The prophecy was discussed in all the churches, and in a little “shut-door paper” published in Portland, Me. During the summer,

after June passed, I heard a friend ask her how she accounted for the vision? She replied that “they told her in the language of Canaan, and she did not understand the language; that **it was the next September that the Lord was coming**, and the second growth of grass instead of the first in June.” September passed, and many more have passed since, and we have not seen the Lord yet. It soon became evident to all candid persons, that many things must have been “told her in the language of Canaan,” or some other which she did not understand, as **there were repeated failures**. I could mention many which I knew of myself.<sup>5</sup>

Despite her first two failures to predict the return of Christ in 1844 and 1845, Mrs. White continued prophesying Christ’s imminent return. She had a *vision* on Nov. 18, 1848, in Dorchester, and Joseph Bates published a transcript of it in his 1849 book, *The Seal of the Living God*. In that vision, Ellen White said:

**The time of trouble has commenced**, the reason why the four winds have not been let go, for the saints are not all sealed...

This *vision* should be of great interest to SDAs because Mrs. White published in the 1911 *Great Controversy* that the “time of trouble” was yet future.<sup>6</sup> It is impossible that both of these statements are true! It is obvious the earlier *vision* was a delusion. It seems the winds of *strong delusion* blowing in the early days of Adventism were still driving her to erroneous conclusions. Her associate, Joseph Bates, also warned in the same book that the “time of trouble has began [sic].” In the summer of 1849, a cholera epidemic struck American cities leaving hundreds of people dead. Mrs. White saw this event as an end-time fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy of “pestilences” and other events that were the “beginning of sorrows” (Matt. 24:7-8). She instilled terror in her readers with a graphic prophecy that soon the believers will be surrounded by dead bodies:



What we have seen and heard of the pestilence, is but the beginning of what we shall see and hear. **Soon the dead and dying will be all around us.**<sup>7</sup>

Not long after this prophecy was penned the epidemic ended and the United States entered a period of relative peace and prosperity that lasted for many years. The above highlighted line was removed when the passage was republished 33 years later in *Early Writings*.<sup>8</sup> Today, thanks to the clever foresight of those who quietly deleted it, few SDAs are even aware of this fake prophecy.

On March 24, 1849, Mrs. White had a *vision* of an unnamed man:

I saw that this person was a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction, reserved for the seven last plagues...<sup>9</sup>

That man died long ago without ever experiencing the “seven last plagues” as Mrs. White predicted from what she “saw” in *vision*. This is another definitive proof her visions are false.

In March of 1849, Mrs. White wrote to Sister Hastings of the immediate immanence of Christ’s return:

**A few more days** here in toil and then we shall be free.  
**Time is short;** let us hold fast unto the end.<sup>10</sup>

Since then, over 64,000 days have passed. One must wonder what she meant by “few.”

## The “Shaking”

The shut-door Adventists understood the “shaking” of Isaiah 24:13 to be the separation of the “tares” from the “wheat” at the time of the final harvest (Matt. 13:30). By April of 1850, Mrs. White was claiming that the “mighty shaking has commenced and will go on, and all will be shaken out who are not willing to take a bold and unyielding stand for the truth...”<sup>11</sup> However, by 1857, her visions were now describing the “shaking” as yet future. In the following quote, she repeatedly uses future tense verbs to describe it:

I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen. I was shown that it **would be** caused by the straight testimony... **It will** have its effect upon the heart of the receiver of the testimony, and **it will** lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. This straight testimony, some **will not bear**. They **will rise up** against it, and this **will cause** a shaking among God's people.<sup>12</sup>

The very next year, the above quote describing a *future* shaking was incorporated verbatim into the first edition of *Great Controversy*, in a chapter entitled, "The Shaking."<sup>13</sup> In 1860, Mrs. White reiterated that the "shaking" was yet future, when she wrote that the "shaking must soon take place to purify the church."<sup>14</sup>

However, by 1861, she said the "shaking" had started:

**The shaking time has, I believe, come.** Those who will not come up to the gospel standard must be shaken off.<sup>15</sup>

Apparently, Mrs. White was mistaken about the "shaking" beginning in 1861, because in a testimony published in 1882, she once again describes it in terms of a future event:

The Lord has faithful servants who in the shaking, testing time **will be** disclosed to view. There are precious ones **now hidden** who have not bowed the knee to Baal.<sup>16</sup>

In 1887, she reiterates that it is yet future:

There **will be** a shaking of the sieve. The chaff must in time be separated from the wheat.<sup>17</sup>

Ten years later, in 1897, she once again indicated the "shaking" was in the future when writing to the SDA sect's ministers: "When the shaking comes..."<sup>18</sup>

Then, in 1900, she announced in a testimony that the shaking has arrived (once again):

We are in the shaking time, the time when everything that can be shaken will be shaken.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, in the 1911 *Great Controversy*, the term “shaking” no longer appears. Instead, Mrs. White writes of a “sifting” to take place in the future during the “time of trouble”:

To all the testing time **will come**. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian **will be** revealed.<sup>20</sup>

During the seventy years of Ellen White’s prophetic career, the SDA people must have been in constant turmoil with all of these shakings going on! Finally, after Mrs. White passed away, the sect settled on the reality that the shaking was yet future—a position it holds to this day, in contradiction to Mrs. White’s 1900 testimony.<sup>21</sup>

## The “Sealing Time”

The “sealing time” is a period immediately prior to the return of Christ when the 144,000 of God receive the Seal of God in their foreheads. In January of 1849, the Whites published a pamphlet entitled: “To Those who are Receiving the Seal of the Living God.” The title is in present tense, indicating an action currently taking place. In that pamphlet, Mrs. White wrote that not only were they in the sealing time, but they were nearing the *end* of the sealing period: “**The sealing time is very short, and soon will be over.**”<sup>22</sup> In August of 1849, Mrs. White again warned Adventists that they were in the midst of the “sealing time:

Satan is now using every device **in this sealing time...**  
I saw that Satan was at work in these ways to distract,  
deceive, and draw away God’s people, just **now in this**  
**sealing time.**<sup>23</sup>

In his book *A Seal of the Living God*, published in 1849, Joseph Bates quoted from a *vision* that Ellen White had of the sealing time. In this vision, Mrs. White claimed that the “time of trouble” had commenced and “not all” of the saints had been sealed yet, implying that some had already been sealed:

The angels have not let go, for **the saints are not all sealed. The time of trouble has commenced. It has begun.** The reason why the four winds are not let go, is because **the saints are not all sealed.** It [the trouble] is on the increase more and more; that trouble will never end until the earth is rid of the wicked. Why, they [the winds] are just ready to blow. There is a check put on because **the saints are not all sealed.**<sup>24</sup>

Mrs. White even identified some of those who had received the seal of God during the sealing time. Adventist believer Mrs. Hastings had recently passed away and in 1850 and Mrs. White, “Saw that she was sealed...and would be with the 144,000.”<sup>25</sup>

In September 1850, Mrs. White warned that the sealing time was nearly over:

I saw that the time for Jesus to be in the most Holy place was nearly finished, and that time cannot last but a **very little longer.** ... **The sealing time is very short and soon will be over.**<sup>26</sup>

It appears that Mrs. White adopted Bates’ theory that the sealing period was from 1844 to 1851 because she taught from her *visions* that the sealing period was in full swing in the late 1840s and early 1850s. For a while, the Whites were caught up in and taught this fanatical error, but by the end of August 1851, it was apparent Christ was not returning. James acknowledged that their belief in Bates’ seven-year period was a false teaching:

It is well known that some of the brethren have been teaching that the great work of salvation for the remnant, through the intercession of our great High Priest, would close in seven years from the termination of the 2300 days, in the autumn of 1844. Some who have thus taught we esteem very highly, and love “fervently” as brethren, and we feel that it becomes us to be slow to say anything to hurt their feelings; yet we cannot refrain from giving some reasons why we do not receive the time.<sup>27</sup>

James then added, “We are now emphatically in the **waiting time**.”<sup>28</sup> Notice below how Ellen White’s *inspired* writings changed after James made his statement:

1864 We have been, and still are, in the patient **waiting time**.<sup>29</sup>

1876 We are in the **waiting time**...<sup>30</sup>

1883 We are in the **waiting time**...<sup>31</sup>

1885 Here we are in the **waiting time**...<sup>32</sup>

1910 We are in the **waiting time**...<sup>33</sup>

As further evidence that Mrs. White considered the sealing to be in the future after 1851, in 1889, she wrote, “In a little while every one who is a child of God will have His seal placed upon him.”<sup>34</sup> In 1911, in *Great Controversy*, Mrs. White describes the sealing as taking place *after* the “final test” when humanity will be faced with a universal law requiring Sunday observance.<sup>35</sup>

Bates’ sealing-time theory was a false teaching. While one would expect a prophet of God to detect and rebuke a false teaching, Mrs. White adopted it and taught it based upon her *visions*. Later, she reversed it. This demonstrates she was not a prophet who was hearing from God.

## Time is “Almost Finished”

On June 27, 1850, Mrs. White wrote that only a few months remained before the return of Christ:

My accompanying angel said, “Time is almost finished. Get ready, get ready, get ready.” . . . now time is almost finished. . . and what we have been years learning, **they will have to learn in a few months**.<sup>36</sup>

Here Mrs. White is saying that the new *truths* that she and her shut-door cohorts had spent the last five years nursing to life would have to be assimilated by new Adventists in only “a few months.” As of this writing, it has been over 2,100 months since she said “a few months.” *Webster’s Dictionary*

defines “few” as “only a small number.” Thus, it is clear that either Ellen White was a fake prophet or else she redefined the meaning of the word “few.” Although she eventually learned her lesson about setting hard dates for the return of Christ, she continually made references such as “few days,” “few months,” and “very little longer,” which have proven over time to be false.

Perhaps Mrs. White later had second thoughts about the imminent return of Christ because in the Spring of 1857, she declared that Adventists needed more time to “develop character.” She wrote: “I saw that this message would not accomplish its work in a few short months.”<sup>37</sup> This *vision* was a direct contradiction of the statement she made in 1850, that new converts would have to learn the doctrines “in a few months” because time was so short.

## Food for Worms

One of Mrs. White’s most spectacular failed predictions of Christ’s return was made at a conference of believers in 1856. The Whites had such confidence in this *vision* that it was published in Mrs. White’s *Testimonies to the Church* and received widespread distribution within the SDA sect. Mrs. White claimed she was “shown” that some of those present at the 1856 conference would be translated:

**I was shown** the company present at the Conference. Said the angel: “Some food for worms, some subjects of the seven last plagues, some will be alive and remain upon the earth to be translated at the coming of Jesus.”<sup>38</sup>

Once again, although she does not set a definite date, she does place a finite time frame on the return of Christ. Mrs. White specifically states that some of those attending the conference would suffer the seven last plagues, and some would be alive when Jesus returned. In effect, she was saying Jesus would return in that generation. However, in 1943, J.H. Kellogg, a small child when he attended the 1856 conference, was the last attendee to pass away. Thus, all

those who attended the conference passed away, leaving the sect's corporate leaders with the all-too-familiar dilemma of trying to figure out how to explain away their prophetess's failed visions.

The Bible leaves no doubt that when a prophet makes a prediction that does not come to pass, that prophet is not speaking for the Lord (Deut. 18:22). If Ellen White's angelic guide was heavenly, then one must necessarily conclude that heavenly angels are liars. Why? Jesus said

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, **not the angels of heaven**, but **my Father only**. (Matt. 24:36)

The angels of heaven do not know the day of Christ's return! The return date is a secret known only to Father. The very purpose of Christ making this statement is to warn his followers not to believe any human or angelic being who claims to know the day of Christ's return. If the angels do not know the day of Christ's return, then how could they have told Ellen White that some of those present at the 1856 conference would be translated? Did the Father go against Christ's word and let the angels in on the secret?

Consider this. God is omniscient. He is all-knowing. He knows the future. God knows the exact time He is returning to earth (Matt. 24:36). He has known that exact time since before He created the world. Furthermore, God "cannot lie" (Titus 1:2). Thus, it is impossible that God could have told His angels He was returning within the life span of the 1856 conference attendees. If He had told his angels that he was returning in the 1800s, while knowing all along that the day and hour were yet far into the future, then He would be a liar.

Finally, why would God—who knows the exact time of Christ's return—allow His angel to tell His prophet something that He knew would **not** happen? This is certain: If an angel did tell Ellen White Christ was going to return while some at that conference were still alive, it was not God's angel!

## The Sunday Law Crisis and New Predictions

Starting again in 1888, for a period of several years, there was much debate in the United States about a national Sunday law. During this time, Mrs. White once again warned that the return of Christ would be witnessed by the current generation. She wrote:

The hour will come; it is not far distant, and **some of us who now believe will be alive upon the earth, and shall see the prediction verified, and hear the voice of the archangel**, and the trump of God echo from mountain and plain and sea, to the uttermost parts of the earth.<sup>39</sup>

As of this book's writing, it has been 137 years since Ellen White wrote this, and every person who was part of the "some of us" she was addressing, is now long deceased.

In 1892, she wrote:

Something great and decisive is to take place, and that right early. If any delay, the character of God and his throne will be compromised.<sup>40</sup>

Since there has been a delay of over 133 years since this was written, has the character of God been compromised?

## One More Failed Prediction

In 1885, Mrs. White wrote that the return of Christ was so imminent it was no use for SDAs to get married:

In this age of the world, as the scenes of earth's history are soon to close and **we are about to enter upon the time of trouble** such as never was, **the fewer the marriages contracted, the better for all, both men and women.**<sup>41</sup>

Fortunately, by this time many SDAs had learned through bitter experience that it was prudent to disregard any of Mrs. White's *testimonies* that contradicted common sense;



otherwise, there would be far fewer members, if any, in the SDA sect today!

## Conclusion

Ellen White did the exact same thing that she condemned others for doing by repeatedly setting both hard and soft dates for the return of Christ. Her predictions were repeatedly proven wrong by the passing of time, thus demonstrating that she was not a true prophet of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 456.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 457.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Lucinda Burdick as quoted in Miles Grant, *An Examination of Mrs. Ellen White's Visions*, Boston: Published by the Advent Christian Publication Society, 1877).

<sup>6</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, chapter 39 clearly states that the “time of trouble” commences at the close of the “third angel’s message” (613).

<sup>7</sup> Ellen White, *Present Truth*, Sep. 1849.

<sup>8</sup> See *Early Writings*, 1882.

<sup>9</sup> Ellen White, Manuscript 7, 1849, written March 24, at Topsham, Maine.

<sup>10</sup> Ellen White, Letter 4, 1849 to Brother and Sister Hastings, March 22 from Topsham, Maine.

<sup>11</sup> Ellen White, *Present Truth*, April, 1850.

<sup>12</sup> Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, Dec. 31, 1857.

<sup>13</sup> Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1 (1858), chapter 32

<sup>14</sup> Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2 (1860), p. 284.

<sup>15</sup> Ellen White, Letter 32, 1861, Battle Creek, MI, to Brother Ingraham.

<sup>16</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5 (1882), 80, 81.

<sup>17</sup> Ellen White, Letter 46, 1887. Cited in *Last Day Events*, 173.

<sup>18</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (1897), 112.

<sup>19</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6 (1900), 332.

<sup>20</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 625, in chapter 39 entitled, “The Time of Trouble.”

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- <sup>21</sup> Kavin Paulson, “Shaken out of What? Part III,” June 11, 2013: “...it is clear from the statements we have considered that the final, ultimately decisive shaking is still future.”
- <sup>22</sup> Ellen White, “To Those who are Receiving the Seal of the Living God,” Jan. 31, 1849.
- <sup>23</sup> Ellen White, *Review*, August 1, 1849.
- <sup>24</sup> Ellen White as quoted by Joseph Bates in *A Seal of the Living God*, 25,26.
- <sup>25</sup> Ellen White, Letter 10, 1850, *Selected Messages*, book 2, 263.
- <sup>26</sup> Ellen White, *Experience & Views*, 46-47.
- <sup>27</sup> James White, *Review and Herald*, Aug. 19, 1851.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid. See Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Years Volume 1 - 1827-1862* (1985), 209.
- <sup>29</sup> Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4b (1864), 151.
- <sup>30</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4 (1876-1881), 123.
- <sup>31</sup> Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, Jan. 9, 1883.
- <sup>32</sup> Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, Aug. 18, 1885.
- <sup>33</sup> Ellen White, *The Gospel Herald*, Aug. 1, 1910.
- <sup>34</sup> Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, May 28, 1889. From a sermon at Potterville, Mich., November 23, 1888
- <sup>35</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 605, 614.
- <sup>36</sup> Ellen White, *Early Writings*, 64-67. In Letter 26, 1850, to Brother and Sister Loveland, Ellen White wrote: “Time is almost finished.”
- <sup>37</sup> Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, 223.
- <sup>38</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 131.
- <sup>39</sup> Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, July 31, 1888.
- <sup>40</sup> Ellen White, “The Crisis Imminent,” Manuscript 27, Australia, February 18, 1892. The manuscript was released by the White Estate in 2014. The quote was also published in *Special Testimonies Series A*, No. 1b, (1892), 38.
- <sup>41</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 366.

# CHAPTER 26

## *Modern Revivals*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 27 Examined

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Mrs. White took a dim view of any Christian evangelistic activity happening outside of the SDA sect. While admitting that Christian evangelistic efforts had netted “large accessions to the churches,” she assures her readers that what was *really* happening was that Satan was extending “his influence over the Christian world,” and there was a “lack of the Spirit and power of God in the revivals of our time.”<sup>1</sup> In words hinting of blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, she adds that “it is evident that these movements are not the work of the Spirit of God.”<sup>2</sup> Is it true that there were no true revivals outside of the SDA sect after 1844? Or is Mrs. White painting a fake picture of history?

### **The 1857 New York Revival**

While Mrs. White would have one believe that the only *real* Christian revivals taking place on earth were amongst the SDA sect, the historical facts tell a far different story. One example is the 1857 revival in New York. In September of that year, a layman named Jeremiah Lanphier began a prayer meeting in the Dutch Reformed Church of Manhattan. Prayer meetings soon spread throughout the city of New York. Before long, “people were converted, at times 10,000 people a week in New York City alone.”<sup>3</sup> Before long the prayer meetings started spreading to other major American cities:

The revival spread all across America and pastors were baptizing 20,000 people every week. ... It was

estimated that in the period 1858-59 fully one million people were converted from a population of less than thirty million.<sup>4</sup>

## **The Welsh Revival**

Another revival is the Great Welsh Revival of 1904-1905:

It touched all classes and ages. Newspapers kept tally as the churches swelled with new converts—over 100,000 in one six-month period. In Cardiff police reported a 60% decrease in drunkenness and 40% fewer people in jail at the New Year of 1905. In Glamorgan the convictions for drunkenness decreased from 11,282 in 1904 to 5,615 in 1907. Stocks of Welsh Bibles were sold out. Profanity was so diminished in the coal mines that the pitponies dragging the coal carts in the tunnels did not understand their commands any more and stood still, confused.<sup>5</sup>

Soon the revival “spread to America as well as many other countries,” and by “early spring the Methodists in Philadelphia were claiming ten thousand converts...the movement was characterized by an intense sensation of the presence of God in the congregations.”<sup>6</sup> These revivals were marked not only by the salvation of souls, but there were other fruits such as families being united, bars and saloons closing down, and crime rates dropping drastically. What power accomplished these mighty works if it was not the power of God?

## **Evangelism**

Several prominent evangelists led massive campaigns that witnessed the conversion of millions. One prominent evangelist named Billy Sunday ran evangelistic crusades across America. He held one campaign in the early 1900s in New York City and over 100,000 people accepted salvation. Witnesses reported on the effect of the crusade:

...not only were souls saved, but homes were reunited. Thousands of these converts were young men whose mothers and fathers had prayed for them to be saved. ...Businessmen found out that a Billy Sunday revival meant their business would be run honestly. Bars were closed, and cities benefited by the drop in crime.<sup>7</sup>

Another great evangelist of the nineteenth century was Charles Spurgeon who is estimated to have preached to ten million people.<sup>8</sup> Yet another is Dwight Moody, who “without radio or television...reached 100 million people.”<sup>9</sup> These evangelists, among others such as William Booth and Aimee Semple McPherson, played crucial roles in shaping the religious landscape of Ellen White’s era, contributing to the spread and spiritual growth of Christianity in America.

In an era when most SDA missionaries were sent to Christian nations and focused on proselytizing other Christians to adopt SDA doctrines, Protestant churches were focused on carrying the Gospel commission into all the world. During the mid-19th century to the early 20th century, various prominent missionaries were instrumental in spreading the Gospel outside of North America. Some notable missionaries from that period include Hudson Taylor (China), David Livingstone (Africa), Mary Slessor (Nigeria), Amy Carmichael (India), Adoniram Judson (Burma), C.T. Studd (China, India, and Africa), Isobel Kuhn (China), and John G. Paton (New Hebrides). These missionaries, along with many others, brought Christianity to regions outside of North America during this era. Their dedication and contributions should be applauded instead of blasphemed as “Satan extending his influence.”

## Conclusion

Many more examples of revivals could be cited, such as the Holiness Movement and the Student Volunteer Movement. In addition to these larger movements, there were numerous local and regional revivals, and evangelistic campaigns,

including revivals in the African-American community, that contributed to the spiritual fervor and religious vitality of the time. Numerous books have been written about the great Christian revivals that occurred after 1844.<sup>10</sup> Ellen White's petty statements about no *real* revivals happening outside of the SDA sect are not only patently false but border on blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 463-464.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 464.

<sup>3</sup> J. Edwin Orr, "Potent Answers to Persistent Prayer," in *The Rebirth of America* (Philadelphia: Arthur S. DeMos Foundation, 1986).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> John Piper, "The American Revival of 1905," posted Sep. 14, 1987. [www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> "Billy Sunday," <http://menwhosawrevival.blogspot.com/p/billy-sunday.html>, extracted on Oct. 17, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> "Charles Spurgeon," *Wikipedia*.

<sup>9</sup> Front cover, *Christian History Magazine* 9, no. 25.

<sup>10</sup> For a few examples of the many books on this subject, see *A History of American Revivals* by Charles Grandison Finney; *The Second Great Awakening and the Transcendentalists* by Barry Hankins; *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* by Harvey Cox; *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* by William G. McLoughlin; *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* by Grant Wacker; *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* by Vinson Synan; *African American Religious Cultures* edited by Anthony B. Pinn and Emilie M. Townes.

# CHAPTER 27

## *The Atonement*<sup>1</sup>

*Great Controversy* Chapter 28 Examined

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The work of the Day of Atonement is plainly described in Leviticus 16. The essentials of this day were the selection of two goats and their disposition. The high priest cast lots on these two goats: one for the Lord's goat and the other for the scapegoat.

After making prescribed preparations the high priest slew the goat that was selected for the Lord's goat, carried the blood into the most holy place, and sprinkled the blood upon and before the mercy seat seven times. Following this service, he laid his hands on the head of the live goat and "confessed over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel ... putting them upon the head of the goat and then sent him away" by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. This goat, it was said, "shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land of separation" (Lev. 16:21, 22, margin).

This service was repeated once every year. It is understood as a "type" that foreshadows a corresponding reality in the New Testament. Scholars unanimously agree that the slaying of the Lord's goat was an object lesson of the death of Christ on the cross. There is no such unity of opinion regarding the scapegoat. However, all agree that they were both types which pointed forward to some future event. Other than Jews and SDAs, none deny that the typical services of the Day of Atonement came to an end at the cross.

### **Atonement Happened During the 70 Weeks**

The unanimous teaching of the SDA denomination, including their Ellen White, placed the atonement *after*

1844. This, like all of their sanctuary teaching, is contrary to the Bible. In the Septuagint translation, Dan. 9:24 reads:

Seventy weeks have been determined upon thy people, and upon the holy city, for sin to be ended, and to seal up transgressions, and to blot out the iniquities, and to make atonement for iniquities, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal the vision and the prophet, and to anoint the Most Holy.

This is a correct translation for it is in harmony with the original. The word “reconciliation” as found in the authorized version, is translated from the Hebrew word *kaphar*. It is found 95 times in the Old Testament and is translated as “atonement” 73 times. This Hebrew word is found 16 times in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus, the chapter giving directions for the Day of Atonement and it is translated as “atonement” 15 times. In the 20th verse, it is rendered “reconciling” but here it is translated as “atonement” in the Septuagint version.

Dan. 9:24 teaches the atonement was made *before* the close of the “seventy weeks.” Therefore, it did not happen on or after 1844. New Testament scholars, other than *some* SDA scholars, are unanimous in teaching that the atonement was made on the cross.

## A Knotty Question

Question: If the Day of Atonement did not begin until 1844, then why was the typical Day of Atonement no longer celebrated by Christians after the cross?

Mrs. White says [in *Great Controversy*]:

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.<sup>2</sup>

If the work that is now going on in the sanctuary above is as essential as Christ's death upon the cross, then why should not the *type* calling attention to that great essential have



continued until that work (the atonement) began? If the typical service had been continued till 1844, when SDAs say the atonement began, the Christian world would not have forgotten it for 1800 years. It would have been understood by those who gave the 1844 message. Hence, they would have been spared the great mistake of 1844 and would have been kept from floundering for years before they discovered this alleged important truth.

In Leviticus 16, how long did the Day of Atonement activities last? How much time elapsed between the killing of the goat and the taking of its blood into the most holy place and the sending of the live goat out of the camp? Can eighteen centuries be found between the two? Mrs. White says: "We are now living in the great day of atonement."<sup>3</sup> And this day, she teaches, began on Oct. 22, 1844. If the death of the Lord's goat met its antitype in the death of Christ on the cross, then why should it take over 1800 years after the cross to begin the Day of Atonement? Why is there nothing in the type that hinted at such a lapse of time?

The ancient Day of Atonement lasted but 24 hours. Why should the beginning of that day in the antitype be delayed for 1800 years after Christ shed his blood? Then, when it did start, why did it continue for over 180 years? And no telling how much longer it will continue. To any candid mind, this seems to be altogether out of harmony with the type. The scapegoat was sent to the wilderness immediately after the blood of the goat was sprinkled on the mercy seat. If the Day of Atonement began in 1844 why shouldn't the scapegoat have been sent to the wilderness in 1844? If the type is any guide to our understanding of the antitype, humanity would be in great difficulty, for no goat could live that long, and the scapegoat would have died a natural death before he was sent out of the camp.

The SDA denomination teaches that Christ closed a door of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844<sup>4</sup>, but there is nothing in the earthly service to indicate the shutting of any door. The only antecedent for such a notion is found in Joseph Bates'

teaching that for seven years the “door of mercy” was closed in 1844 to all but Advent believers.

The pioneers, including Mrs. White, taught that as the Aaronic high priest carried the names of the twelve tribes of Israel into the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement, so Christ carried all the names of those who could be saved on His breastplate as He entered the most holy apartment of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844. But this too, is contrary to the type, for the high priest did not wear the breastplate when he went into the holiest on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:4, 23).

The many inconsistent and unscriptural interpretations of the sanctuary question, as taught by SDAs have troubled the thinking Bible teachers in their ranks for many years until some of them have ceased to discuss the question or to teach it in public. This question is sadly in need of a re-study.

This is one of the questions that prompted the Australasian delegation to petition the SDA General Conference to call a general council for the purpose of restudying. The failure or refusal of the General Conference to call such a council is a strong indication that they recognize the weakness of their teaching on this subject and fear having this fundamental feature of the creed exposed to the light of investigation.

Bear in mind that the events of the ancient service of atonement were performed in one day of 24 hours. There is no warrant in separating these events. All agree that the death of the Lord’s goat met its fulfillment on the cross. Therefore, if one is guided by the type, one must find the fulfillment of that part which applies to the scapegoat not far removed from the death of Christ.

## **Details of the Day of Atonement**

Here are the facts regarding the ancient service:

- The scapegoat was not killed on the Day of Atonement, but he was taken to a land of separation on that day.
- When he was taken to the wilderness, he was not expected to die an unnatural death. The wilderness was his natural habitat and he was free to wander at large. He was not bound.
- The natural inference is that he was never allowed to return to the camp.

### **Day of Atonement Completed at the Cross**

The complete fulfillment of the types is found in the events of the crucifixion. Christ's death on the cross fulfilled the type of the slaying of the Lord's goat, and just following His resurrection He ascended to His Father, and His sacrifice was accepted. Proof: After quoting John 20:17, "Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended to My Father," Mrs. White says:

Jesus quickly ascended to His Father to hear from His lips that He accepted the sacrifice, and to receive all power in heaven and upon earth... The same day He returned, and showed Himself to His disciples.<sup>5</sup>

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 man had been ample, that thru His blood all might gain eternal life.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, the Day of Atonement was completed so far as it applied to Christ. His blood was shed and immediately after His resurrection, He entered the most holy apartment of the heavenly sanctuary and the Father accepted His sacrifice and pronounced it ample and complete. Following this, there "was war in heaven" and the scapegoat, Satan, was cast out of heaven "into a land of separation," this earth. And so, the

entire Day of Atonement was completed in a very brief space of time in perfect harmony with the type.

## Denying the Atonement on the Cross

To support their sanctuary theory, SDAs are obliged to deny that the atonement was made on the cross. Says Elder Smith: **“Christ did not make the atonement when he shed his blood upon the cross. Let this fact be fixed forever in the mind.”**<sup>7</sup>

And this leads into another blind alley of superstition: The atonement did not begin until 1844. This places them in a most absurd position, contrary to both reason and the Bible. In the tabernacle service the high priest, on the Day of Atonement, took the blood of the Lord’s goat while it was fresh and warm directly into the Most Holy Place and sprinkled it on the mercy seat. SDAs teach that Christ kept his blood for over 1800 years after it was shed upon the cross before He sprinkled it in the heavenly tabernacle.

They are obliged to reverse the order of service of the type, for the high priest served in the first apartment for 364 days before beginning the day of atonement; but the denomination has Christ performing the first service of the Day of Atonement by shedding His blood and then making Him do service in the first apartment *before* entering the Most Holy Place to complete the Day of Atonement.

## Conclusion

This false teaching is the very foundation of the SDA creed. Ellen White is assured of the correctness of this doctrine: “It is as certain that we have the truth as that God lives.”<sup>8</sup> SDAs teach that the subject of the Sanctuary is “the key to the great advent movement,” that they cannot do without it, and that it is the “most timely truth that could be presented to men.”<sup>9</sup>

Further, this sect, built on such gross errors, lays claim to being “the only object on earth upon which Christ bestows His supreme regard.” “There is but one church in the world

who is at the present time standing in the breach, and making up the hedge, building up the old waste places.” “God has a people in which all heaven is interested, and they are the one object on earth dear to the heart of God.”<sup>10</sup> Nothing could be further from the truth.

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter was taken from the Nov./Dec. 1937 edition of *Gathering Call* (vol. 24, no. 6), edited by Edward S. Ballenger. It was entitled “The Sanctuary Special - An Unbiased Examination of the Chief Cornerstone of the Seventh-day Adventist Creed.” Editing was done to format the article for this book, to correct spelling anomalies, to add clarity, and to remove material not relevant to the topic.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 489.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 490.

<sup>4</sup> See *Early Writings*, 42, 43, 251.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen White, *Early Writings* 187, 188.

<sup>6</sup> Ellen White, *Desire of Ages* 790.

<sup>7</sup> Uriah Smith, *Looking Unto Jesus* (Chicago, Review and Herald, 1898), 237.

<sup>8</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 595.

<sup>9</sup> “A correct and intelligent faith sees the adorable Redeemer in the most holy of the true tabernacle, offering his blood before the mercy seat for the sins of those who have broken the law of God beneath it in the ark... The subject of the cleansing of this sanctuary, then, is one of the most thrilling interest, especially to all Adventists. It is the key to the great Advent movement, making all plain, without it the movement is inexplicable.” “Seventh-day Adventists cannot spare the subject of the sanctuary, as it is the great center around which all revealed truth relative to salvation clusters, and contributes more toward defining their present position, than any other.” *Life Incidents*, 308. 309. “Today our preaching of the doctrine of the sanctuary is the preaching of the most timely truth that could be presented to men.” (*Review and Herald*, May 27, 1937, 7 (Editorial).

<sup>10</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, 48, 50, 41.

# CHAPTER 28

## *Investigative Judgment*<sup>1</sup>

*Great Controversy* Chapter 28 Examined

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In chapter 28 of *Great Controversy*, Mrs. White introduces her readers to the peculiar SDA doctrine called the “Investigative Judgment.” This doctrine teaches that Christ began investigating and judging His people in October of 1844. He started with the dead believers, and when He is finished with their cases, near the end of time, He will begin judging the living believers. Mrs. White explains in *Great Controversy* that every believer is examined, starting with Adam...

As the books of record are opened in the Judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review **before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth**, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected.<sup>2</sup>

During this Investigative Judgment God either blots out the sins of the believer, or else He removes the name of the person from the Book of Life. When His judgment is complete, the door of probation will be shut and Jesus will return to earth to reward His people according to their works. Is this doctrine logically and Biblically sound?

First, is it true that God needs to examine every case to figure out who is saved? The Bible teaches that an *Investigative Judgment* is unnecessary because God already knows who are His own:

I am the good shepherd, and **know my sheep...** (John 10:14).

God is greater than our heart, and **knoweth all things** (1 John 3:20).

The Lord knoweth them that are His. (2 Tim. 2:19).

The omniscient Father does not need 180+ years to wrestle over who is saved and who is lost because he already “knoweth them that are His.”

Secondly, Ellen White presents a picture where Jesus is acting as the lawyer for believers in the heavenly courtroom presenting cases before God for Him to decide. This is again contrary to the Biblical evidence which teaches that Jesus, not the Father, is humanity’s judge:

For the Father judgeth no man, but **hath committed all judgment unto the Son.** (John 5:22)

And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. (Acts 10:42; see also Acts 17:31)

While Jesus is our Advocate with the Father in terms of being our Intercessor and High Priest, in the New Testament there is no concept of a “judgment” with Jesus acting as a lawyer, and God acting as judge. This whole scene describing an Investigative Judgment is simply fake. Under the New Covenant, judgment has been handed over to Jesus and He is humanity’s *only* judge.

Ellen White continues by telling her readers that every individual *must* pass through the Investigative Judgment:

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.<sup>3</sup>

In the New Testament, the only judgment for believers is to appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the reward for their works:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Cor. 5:10)

This is not an “investigative judgment” where God ponders the believer’s fate. This is an event where every believer appears before Christ to receive their reward. According to Jesus’ teachings, some will receive little while others will receive much.<sup>4</sup> Regardless, the Bible teaches that true believers have nothing to fear regarding the condemnation or judgment of unbelievers:

“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and **will not be judged** but has crossed over from death to life. (John 5:24 NIV)

The ESV, NASB, and RSV Bibles all likewise say the believer “does not come into judgment.”

Next, Ellen White explains that the believer’s sins are not blotted out until *after* the Investigative Judgment:

But, according to the unerring word of God, every man will be judged and rewarded according as his works have been, and we are admonished to so speak and to so do as “they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.” When sin has been repented of, confessed, and forsaken, then pardon is written against the sinner’s name; but **his sins are not blotted out until after the Investigative Judgment.**<sup>5</sup>

On the contrary, the Bible teaches that the sins of believers *are* blotted out as soon as they repent and are converted:



**I have blotted out**, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. (Isaiah 44:22)

**Repent** ye therefore, and be **converted**, that your **sins may be blotted out**, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. (Acts 3:19)

...and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)

In 1850, six years after the supposed start of the Investigative Judgment, Ellen White wrote that Jesus was “almost finished” with that work:

I then saw Brother Edson that he must gird on the whole armor and stand in readiness to go, for a journey was before him, and that souls needed help and that **Jesus’ work was almost finished in the Sanctuary...**<sup>6</sup>

On the contrary, the Bible teaches that the atonement was finished on the cross.

Jesus said, “**It is finished**” (John 19:30).

Paul wrote in the first century that he had already received the atonement:

And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom **we have now received the atonement** (Rom. 5:11).

The Bible teaches that Christ’s atonement on the cross has perfected (past tense) His children:

But this man [Jesus], after **he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever**, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering **he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified** (Heb. 10:12-14).

Christians are not made perfect during the Investigative Judgment period. If a believer is “in Christ,” then he was

made perfect 2,000 years ago through Christ's perfect sacrifice on Calvary.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Rom. 8:1)

Much more then, being now **justified by his blood**, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (Rom. 5:9)

## People Skipping the Investigative Judgment

Mrs. White said "**all**" must pass through the investigative judgment to determine whether or not they will be saved.<sup>7</sup> Contrary to this, the Bible teaches that the cases of many people have already been decided *before* the so-called Investigative Judgment:

**The thief on the cross:** More than 1,800 years before the Investigative Judgment supposedly started, Jesus declared to the thief on the cross, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 22:43). The thief's case was determined around 30 A.D. when he repented and accepted Jesus on the cross. This proves that Christ needs no Investigative Judgment to determine who will be saved.

**Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:** The Bible says Abraham was justified (accounted righteous) by faith (Rom. 4:2-5). Nearly 1,800 years before the Investigative Judgment supposedly began, Jesus declared:

And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with **Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven**. Matt. 8:11

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not need to pass through any Investigative Judgment to determine their cases.

**Moses:** The Scriptures state that Moses sinned (Num. 20:12), died (Deut. 34:5), was resurrected by Michael (Jude 9), and is alive in the heavenly realms (Matt. 17:3). If a believer's sins are not blotted out until *after* the Investigative

Judgment, how could Moses have been resurrected? Jesus taught there are two resurrections: One of “life” and the other of “damnation” or “judgment” (John 5:29). Therefore, for Moses to receive the resurrection of life, his sins must have been blotted out *before* 1844!

**Elijah:** How did Elijah escape the Investigative Judgment? There is no mention of an Investigative Judgment when Ellen White relates how Elijah was taken directly to the throne of heaven:

There was yet a great work for Elijah to do; and when his work was done, he was not to perish in discouragement and solitude in the wilderness. Not for him the descent into the dust of death, but **the ascent in glory, with the convoy of celestial chariots, to the throne on high.**<sup>8</sup>

**Enoch:** Mrs. White claims to have seen Enoch on an unfallen world:

There I saw good old Enoch, who had been translated.<sup>9</sup>

She supposedly asked Enoch if that was his home, and he reportedly told her, “It is not; but the city is my home, and I have come to visit this place.”<sup>10</sup> Regardless of whether or not this fanciful tale really happened, the question is: How could Enoch be translated and living in a heavenly city before the Investigative Judgment?

**A Multitude:** Ellen White writes that those who were resurrected at the time of Christ’s resurrection (Matt. 27:52-53) were taken to the heavenly realms without passing through an Investigative Judgment:

As Christ arose, He brought from the grave a multitude of captives . . . Those who came forth from the grave at Christ’s resurrection, were raised to everlasting life.<sup>11</sup>

**William Miller:** Miller is an interesting case. First, Mrs. White stated that none could be saved who rejected the *light* upon the Sabbath:

If they have light upon the Sabbath, they cannot be saved in rejecting that light.<sup>12</sup>

Statements made by the Whites and others suggest that Miller was fully acquainted with the Sabbath doctrine, but never accepted it. James White notes Miller's rejection of the *light*:

It is proper here to state that Mr. Miller did not view the second message as we do. Neither did he change his views upon the immortality and Sabbath questions.<sup>13</sup>

Despite his rejection of the Sabbath *light*, Mrs. White indicates Miller will be saved:

Moses erred as he was about to enter the Promised Land. So also, **I saw** that William Miller erred as he was soon to enter the heavenly Canaan, in suffering his influence to go against the truth. Others led him to this; others must account for it. But angels watch the precious dust of this servant of God, and **he will come forth at the sound of the last trump.**<sup>14</sup>

William Miller's case is very interesting from the standpoint that here was a man who rejected the Sabbath *light*—a message that Mrs. White said *must* be accepted for one to be saved—and yet she saw in *vision* that he was saved. How did Mrs. White know Miller would be saved? At the time she made her statement, it was *before* his case came up in the Investigative Judgment!<sup>15</sup> So, not only did Miller slip in through the “shut door” of salvation, not only did he get excused from accepting the Sabbath *truth*, but he also apparently bypassed the Investigative Judgment entirely! What a lucky man!

**Mrs. Hastings:** In 1850 Mrs. White wrote:

I saw that she [Mrs. Hastings] **was sealed and would come up at the voice of God and stand upon the earth, and would be with the 144,000.**<sup>16</sup>

Here is yet another incidence of someone having their case decided *before* the Investigative Judgment. How were Miller and Hastings able to beat the system and be declared righteous *before* their cases came up in the Investigative Judgment?

**Brothers Fitch, Stockman, and Others:** In 1845, Ellen Harmon had a *vision* where she was in heaven with the redeemed. After being shown the Tree of Life, Ellen met some brethren who had passed away before 1845:

We all went under the tree, and sat down to look at the glory of the place, when Bro. Fitch, and Stockman, who had preached the gospel of the kingdom, whom God had laid in the grave to save them, came up to us and asked us what we had passed through while they were sleeping.<sup>17</sup>

God must have already investigated and decided the cases of these two recently deceased believers by Dec. 20, 1845; otherwise, He would never have shown Ellen Harmon a vision with them in heaven. In the same *vision*, she also sees several Biblical heroes in heaven:

Here we saw good old father Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Noah, Daniel, and many like them.<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, the cases of these five Biblical figures must have already been decided within fourteen months of the commencement of the Investigative Judgment.

**Thomas Paine:** In addition to the righteous, Mrs. White also pointed out the cases of several *unrighteous* souls who bypassed her Investigative Judgment. Apparently, the case of Thomas Paine (1737-1809) was already decided by 1854 when Ellen White published the following quote:

Thomas Paine, whose body has now moldered to dust and who is to be called forth at the end of the one thousand years, at the second resurrection, to receive his reward and suffer the second death, is represented by Satan as being in heaven, and highly exalted there.<sup>19</sup>

**Napoleon:** In 1858, Mrs. White announced that Napoleon's (1769-1821) fate had been decided and that he would be one of the resurrected wicked who leads an attack upon the righteous at the end of the Millennium:

There was the proud, ambitious Napoleon, whose approach had caused kingdoms to tremble.<sup>20</sup>

It is obvious from all these examples in the Bible, and even from Ellen White's own writings, that there is no such thing as an Investigative Judgment. To make their prophetic jigsaw puzzle fit together, SDAs needed a judgment to commence in 1844 as a fulfillment of the first angel's message regarding the hour of judgment (Rev. 14:7). Lacking any real event, they concocted the idea of an Investigative Judgment. However, such a concept is foreign to the Bible.

## The Truth about the Pre-Advent Judgment

While the Bible never teaches an Investigative Judgment as taught by Mrs. White, it *does* describe a *pre-advent judgment*. The first angel of Revelation 14 announces that the time for God's judgment has come (Rev. 14:7). In heaven a court sits and the books are opened and a judgment takes place (Dan. 7:10). What is the purpose of this judgment? The Bible is very specific:

But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his [little horn power] dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end (Dan. 7:26).

The wicked are weighed in the balances of heaven's court and are found wanting. The purpose of the judgment is to determine that the wicked have filled up their cup of wrath and are worthy of the punishment that God is about to mete out to them, taking away their dominion and giving it to the saints (Dan. 7:27). The punishment of the wicked is clearly spelled out in the third angel's message:

The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. Rev. 14:10

No one can read the passages of Daniel 7 and Revelation 14 and derive the idea of an “investigative” judgment of righteous people. The concept is entirely foreign to those passages. The only judgment described in these passages is the judgment of God upon the wicked. This is the purpose of the pre-advent judgment. The heavenly court finds that the wicked are unfit to rule the earth, and their kingdom is taken away from them and they are subsequently tormented with fire and brimstone.

## The Truth of the Gospel

Jesus, as mankind’s substitute, was judged on the cross in the believer’s stead. He paid the price for all sin for all time. His righteousness has been credited to every believer’s account. The good news of the judgment is that all who believe and trust in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ can say with assurance, “I’ve been acquitted!” The believer has already been judged in Christ. Those who reject the gospel, judge themselves unworthy of eternal life. Those who accept the gospel have passed from death into life and will not enter into the condemnation of judgment (John 5:24).

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is taken from Ernesto Gil’s and Dirk Anderson’s article, “The Investigative Judgment”, <https://nonsda.org/egw/egw36.shtml>.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen White, *The Great Controversy* (1888), 483.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 19:27-30; Rom. 2:6; Rev. 22:12.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen White, *The Signs of the Times*, May 16, 1895.

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<sup>6</sup> Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases* Vol. 6, p. 250.

<sup>7</sup> *Great Controversy*, (1888), 483.

<sup>8</sup> Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, 301.

<sup>9</sup> Ellen White, "To Those Who Are Receiving the Seal of the Living God," Jan. 31, 1849, para. 8.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> White, *Desire of Ages*, 768.

<sup>12</sup> Ellen White, *Historical Sketches*, 234.

<sup>13</sup> James White, *Sketches of the Christian Life and Public Labors of William Miller*.

<sup>14</sup> Ellen White, *Early Writings*, 258 (1882). Statement was first published in 1858, in *Spiritual Gifts* vol. 1, 168.

<sup>15</sup> Ellen White made her statement regarding Miller's righteousness in 1882. In 1884, on page 314 of *The Spirit of Prophecy* (vol. 4) she wrote that the judgment of the living had not yet commenced, "The Judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. Forty years has this work been in progress. **Soon--none know how soon--it will pass to the cases of the living.**"

<sup>16</sup> Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, 263.

<sup>17</sup> Ellen White, *The Day-Star*, January 24, 1846.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Ellen White, *Supplement to the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White*, 8.

<sup>20</sup> Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts* vol. 1, 215.



# CHAPTER 29

## *Satan or Lucifer?*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 29 Examined

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In chapter 29 of *Great Controversy*, Mrs. White introduces her readers to a devious character named “Lucifer.” This is a name she uses throughout her writings to refer to the devil as if Lucifer were his proper name. In the Ellen White Estate’s database of her published writings, Satan is referred to as Lucifer 414 times. In *Great Controversy*, Mrs. White cites Isaiah 14:12 as evidence of Satan (Lucifer) being expelled from Heaven:

The prophet Isaiah, looking forward to the time of Satan’s overthrow, exclaims: “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!”<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. White is seemingly unaware that “Lucifer” is not a proper name nor is it even found in the original Hebrew text of Isaiah 14:12. So where did the name “Lucifer” come from?

The Hebrew word translated as “Lucifer” in Isaiah 14:12 in the KJV is לִילִי, and literally means “shining one,” “morning star,” “light bearer,” etc.<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 14:12 is the only place in scripture where this Hebrew word appears.

The use of Lucifer appears to have originated from the Latin *Vulgate*. The *Vulgate* was produced by Jerome (347-420 AD) by translating available Greek and Hebrew manuscripts into Latin... It would seem that Jerome understood the meaning of the Hebrew word לִילִי, and translated it into “Lucifer,” the Latin word meaning “light bearer” (from the Latin lux “light” and

ferre “to bear or bring.”). Because many people thought this passage was referring to Satan, people began to think of the term of “lucifer” as a proper name “Lucifer.” However, this is not what “lucifer” meant. “Lucifer,” at the time of the Vulgate and even at the time of the KJV translation, meant “morning star” or “day star” in reference to Venus.<sup>3</sup>

That Jerome never intended “lucifer” to be used as a proper name for Satan can be demonstrated by his usage of the same word in Job 11:17 and 2 Peter 1:19, neither of which refers to Satan. In fact, 2 Peter 1:19 is most likely a reference to Christ.<sup>4</sup>

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star [*Vulgate: lucifer*] arise in your hearts:

Therefore, it is evident that lucifer was never intended to be used as a proper name for Satan.

## Satan Has a Body?

Mrs. White had a *vision* in which she claimed to have seen the body of Satan. The vision was published in *Spiritual Gifts* and the 1888 version of *Great Controversy*. However, it was later removed and no longer appears in the *Great Controversy* that is sold by the SDA sect today. Perhaps the publishers believed the statement would cause a great controversy because it contradicts the Biblical teaching on the nature of Satan. Here is what Mrs. White saw in *vision*:

I was then shown Satan as he was, a happy, exalted angel. Then I was shown him as he now is. He still bears a kingly form. His features are still noble, for he is an angel fallen. But the expression of his countenance is full of anxiety, care, unhappiness, malice, hate, mischief, deceit, and every evil. That brow which was once so noble, I particularly noticed. His **forehead commenced from his eyes to recede**

**backward.** I saw that he had demeaned himself so long, that every good quality was debased, and every evil trait was developed. His **eyes** were cunning, sly, and showed great penetration. **His frame was large,** but the **flesh hung loosely about his hands and face.** As I beheld him, his **chin was resting upon his left hand.** He appeared to be in deep thought. A smile was upon his countenance, which made me tremble, it was so full of evil, and Satanic slyness.<sup>5</sup>

Ellen White states that Satan is a fallen “angel.” She then goes on to describe a number of his physical characteristics:

1. Receding forehead.
2. Penetrating eyes.
3. Large frame.
4. Loose “flesh” on the hands and face.

## Bible Truth about Satan

The Bible teaches that angelic beings are not composed of flesh and blood as humans are:

For we wrestle **not** against **flesh and blood**, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against **spiritual wickedness** in high places. (Eph. 6:12)

The Bible consistently refers to evil angels as “spirits”:

- ...he cast out the **spirits** with [his] word... (Matt. 8:16)
- ...he gave them power [against] **unclean spirits**, to cast them out... (Matt. 10:1)
- ...the **evil spirits** went out of them... (Acts 19:12)
- ...in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing **spirits**... (1 Tim. 4:1)
- ...For they are the **spirits** of devils, working miracles... (Rev. 16:4)

Satan, the leader of the fallen angels, is described in the Bible as an “**angel** of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). In Hebrews, angelic beings are described as “spirits”:

And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels  
**spirits**... Are they not all ministering **spirits**, sent forth  
 to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?  
 (Heb. 1:7,14)

These verses show that the Bible teaches that angelic beings are “spirits” and spirit beings do not have a body composed of “flesh and blood.” Jesus reinforced this when He said, “**a spirit hath not flesh and bones**, as ye see me have” (Luke 24:39).

Ellen White saw in *vision* that Satan had “flesh” and bones (“his **frame** was large”). This is a direct contradiction of Jesus’ statement that spirits do not have “flesh and bones.” It is also a contradiction of Paul’s statement that we wrestle not against “flesh and blood.” Since Ellen White’s *vision* of Satan so obviously contradicted the Bible, it should be no surprise that like so many of her other false *visions*, it was quietly removed from her writings.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 659, (1911). See also *Great Controversy*, 494, 503, 660, 673; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 35.; *Prophets and Kings*, 350.

<sup>2</sup> Strong’s #1966: *Heylel*.

<sup>3</sup> Brian Tegart, “Isaiah 14:12, Job 38:7 & Revelation 22:16 - Will The Real ‘morning star’ Please Stand Up...”, extracted on Dec. 13, 2023, [https://www.gabitos.com/DESENMASCARANDO\\_LAS\\_FALSAS\\_DOCTRINAS/template.php?nm=1611351867](https://www.gabitos.com/DESENMASCARANDO_LAS_FALSAS_DOCTRINAS/template.php?nm=1611351867).

<sup>4</sup> Christ calls Himself “the bright morning star” (Rev. 22:16).

<sup>5</sup> Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, 27.

# CHAPTER 30

## *Rapping*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 34 Examined

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*Note: This chapter is not about music. It is about knocking or tapping sounds associated with paranormal activity. In the nineteenth century, this activity was called “rapping.”*

On March 31, 1848, near Rochester, New York (USA), two sisters named Katherine and Margaret Fox, ages 11 and 13, claimed to hear inexplicable rapping sounds emanating from a room in their farmhouse. Soon carriages lined up outside their home as people came to witness the sisters supposedly communicating with the spirit of a murdered itinerant peddler rumored to have been buried in the basement of the house five years earlier.

Katherine and Margaret’s abilities soon became widely known, and they embarked on a profitable career as mediums, performing séances in private parlors around the USA and England. Mrs. White was familiar with them and she wrote about this phenomenon in *Great Controversy*:

The mysterious rapping with which modern spiritualism began was **not the result of human trickery or cunning**, but was **the direct work of evil angels**, who thus introduced one of the most successful of soul-destroying delusions.<sup>1</sup>

Was Mrs. White correct? Was the rapping *really* the work of evil angels?

In 1888, after 40 years of deception, the Fox sisters could no longer bear to conceal the truth any longer:

They produced the rapping sounds, they admitted, first by using an apple tied to a string, which they thudded against the wall of a darkened room by tugging the string, and later by simply popping the joints of their big toes. They then began an “exposure tour,” and amazingly, audiences still came to see them perform.<sup>2</sup>

Late in life, Margaret Fox confessed in a widely read newspaper article:

Finding we could make raps with our feet—first with one foot and then with both—we practiced until we could do this easily when the room was dark. No one suspected us of any trick because we were such young children...all the neighbors thought there was something, and they wanted to find out what it was. They were convinced some one had been murdered in the house. They asked us about it, and we would rap one for the spirit answer “yes,” not three, as we did afterwards. **We did not know anything about Spiritualism** then. The murder, they concluded, must have been committed in the house. ... **As far as spirits were concerned, neither my sister nor I thought about it...**I have seen so much miserable deception that I am willing to assist in any way and to positively state that **Spiritualism is a fraud** of the worst description. I do so before my God, and my idea is to expose it...I trust that this statement, coming solemnly from me, the first and most successful in this deception, will break the force of the rapid growth of Spiritualism and prove that **it is all a fraud**, a hypocrisy and a delusion.<sup>3</sup>

The sisters admitted what many skeptics already believed, that the rapping was merely a clever hoax foisted upon gullible people. One of those fooled was the SDA prophetess Ellen White. Mrs. White claimed she saw **in vision from God** that the rapping was produced by the power of Satan:

August 24, 1850, **I saw that the “mysterious rapping” was the power of Satan**; some of it was directly from him, and some indirectly, through his agents, but it all proceeded from Satan.<sup>4</sup>

Notice that this *vision* is directly contrary to the confession of the Fox sisters, who admitted they made the rapping noises using tricks that they developed and refined during repeated practice sessions in their childhood.

Oddly, Mrs. White even went so far as to make a prophecy about the rapping:

**I saw that soon it would be considered blasphemy to speak against the rapping, and that it would spread more and more**, that Satan's power would increase and some of his devoted followers would have power to work miracles and even to bring down fire from heaven in the sight of men.<sup>5</sup>

This prophecy, like so many of her other prophecies, was a marked failure. There is no evidence it was ever considered “blasphemy” to speak against the rapping. Spiritualism enjoyed a brief period of popular interest during the mid-nineteenth century when it garnered millions of followers.<sup>6</sup> However, the movement was short-lived. Its popularity “dropped sharply by the end of the century mainly because many mediums were exposed as frauds.”<sup>7</sup> The entire Spiritualist movement fizzled out in the 1920s after popular magician Harry Houdini—a former séance leader—exposed numerous popular mediums as fakes:

Houdini actively exposed mediums by 1923. He attended many séances in disguise accompanied by a reporter and police officer to have mediums arrested and their stories published in local newspapers. He also hired psychic researchers to investigate mediums. He sent them to cities ahead of his show to find frauds and report on their activities. When the Houdini tour came to town, he used the information in his performance. He often challenged local mediums to prove their powers on stage.<sup>8</sup>

## A Failed Prophecy

Mrs. White foresaw Spiritualism as a great power that would unite with Protestants and Catholics to persecute Seventh-day Adventists for going to church on Saturday. In 1884, in the forerunner to the book *Great Controversy*, she wrote:

Protestantism will yet stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of Spiritualism; she will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, our country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience.<sup>9</sup>

Mrs. White's scenario may have seemed remotely plausible in 1884 when she published this passage. The Spiritualist movement reached its zenith around the year 1870 with around eleven million members and 35,000 mediums in the United States.<sup>10</sup> However, by the early 1900s, it was crumbling rapidly. The scientific community failed to validate spiritualistic phenomena and the movement disintegrated and moved to the fringes of society, where it remains today. Both Catholic and Protestant churches, along with most secularists and Jewish groups, condemn modern psychics, Tarot card readers, and séances. While the Catholic Church approves of prayers to the dead "saints," Protestant churches as a whole utterly reject any type of communication with the spirits of the dead.<sup>11</sup>

In the late 1800s, adherents to Spiritualism greatly outnumbered those in the SDA sect by a factor of more than 100-to-1. However, 100 years later that is no longer the case. **SDAs now greatly out-number spiritualists.** In 2022, the SDA Church claimed to have 22,234,406 members throughout the world.<sup>12</sup> By comparison, the worldwide number of spiritists in 2020 was 14,779,228.<sup>13</sup> Thus, SDAs now outnumber spiritualists by nearly 8 million adherents.



## What about the Occult?

After the Spiritualist Movement fizzled out, the guardians of Ellen White's writings probably wondered what to do with all of the failed predictions about Spiritualism. How would the three-fold union between Protestantism, Catholicism, and Spiritualism succeed with the downfall of Spiritualism? SDA apologists suggested SDAs should re-interpret Ellen White's statements to apply to the occult in general, or to the fledgling "New Age" movement. Ellen White never used the word "occult" in her writings, but in 1979, the publishers of the Ellen White devotional *This Day with God* placed a series of her quotes on Spiritualism under the title "Beware the Occult" (chapter 239). However, such a post-humus re-interpretation of the meaning of the word "Spiritualism" is questionable.<sup>14</sup>

## What about the New Age?

When Mrs. White spoke of Spiritualism forming a threefold union, could it be that she was referring to the New Age? The foundation of the New Age philosophy is formed from the pagan religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism. The New Age gained some attention in Western nations during the 1960s, thanks in large part to *The Beatles*, a rock music group who adopted and promoted aspects of these religions. In brief, according to New Age teachings, each person is a god and everyone has innate supernatural powers in themselves that can be developed and strengthened. The New Age adopted one aspect of spiritualism: belief in contact with the spirits of the dead and contact with angelic spirits.

The New Age religion is fundamentally and dramatically different from the Spiritualist religion. The religions are diametrically opposed on several points.<sup>15</sup> If one were to use Mrs. White's vernacular, the most accurate terms that could be used to describe the New Age would be the words "pagan" and "pantheistic." Mrs. White frequently used these

terms in references to religions similar to the New Age. Therefore, while some New Agers have incorporated communication with the dead into their practices, it would be a mistake to identify the religion as “Spiritualism.” Instead, it would be more accurate to describe the New Age movement as a pagan or pantheistic religion.

The New Age peaked in the 1980s. In the late 1980s, “three to five million Americans identified themselves as New Agers or as accepting the beliefs and practices of the New Age movement.”<sup>16</sup> However, by the end of the 1980s, “the New Age movement had lost its momentum. ... By the mid-1990s, it was evident that the movement was dying...”<sup>17</sup> Even if one redefined Ellen White’s comments on Spiritualism to refer to an entirely different religion—the New Age—it would still be a small group that is vastly outnumbered by SDAs, and hardly a threat to them. Furthermore, the Catholic and Protestant denominations are staunchly anti-New Age. This can be verified by the flurry of anti-New Age literature, audio, and video programs produced by these Christian organizations.

## Conclusion

Like so many other aspects of *Great Controversy*, Ellen White’s predictions about rapping and Spiritualism have utterly failed. She “saw” that “the mysterious rapping with which modern spiritualism began was not the result of human trickery or cunning, but was the direct work of evil angels.”<sup>18</sup> However, the very ones who did the rapping later confessed it was indeed done by human trickery rather than by Satanic power. The Fox sisters even traveled around the country on an “exposure tour” showing audiences exactly how they produced the rapping sounds through human trickery and cunning.<sup>19</sup> This is irrefutable evidence that Ellen White’s *visions* did not come from God. Furthermore, Spiritualism has dwindled to the point where a three-fold union between Catholicism, Protestantism, and Spiritualism

would be of little or no benefit to the Catholics and Protestants. Furthermore, Catholic and Protestant denominations continue to loathe both Spiritualism and the New Age, making any such union between the three extremely unlikely.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 553.

<sup>2</sup> *People Magazine*, Oct. 25, 1999, 125.

<sup>3</sup> *New York World Newspaper*, October 21, 1888,  
<https://psychicinvestigator.com/demo/Foxtxt.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen White, *Early Writings*, 59.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> The Houdini Historical Center, a virtual museum exhibit presented by Kimberly Louagie, Curator for The Outagamie County Historical Society, Appleton, Wisconsin, USA,  
<http://www.foxvalleyhistory.org/spirits.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ellen White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, 405.

<sup>10</sup> Katie Keckeisen, "Beyond the Veil: Spiritualism in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century," Online Exhibition (Oct. 2018), 5,  
<https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Parks/OHenry/spiritualism.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Christians in general reject Spiritualism based in part upon Lev. 19:31, 20:6; Deut. 18:11,12; 1 Sam. 28; Isa. 8:19; Luke 16:27-31. See for example, *Demons In Disguise: The Dangers of Talking to the Dead*, by Steve Wohlberg (2007). "A biblical expert with B.A. and M-Div Degrees in theology, Wohlberg demonstrates conclusively that... 'necromancy' (dialog with the dead)... is strictly forbidden in the Bible (see Deut. 18:11); and for good reason. "Deceptive ghosts can easily impersonate dead loved ones," Wohlberg warns.... Steve Wohlberg is the Speaker/ Director of White Horse Media (Fresno, CA). TV producer, radio host, and the author of 15 books, he's been a guest on over 500 radio and TV shows, including CNN Radio, USA Radio, American Family Radio, Cable Radio Network, Information Radio Network, Focus 4, and The Harvest Show." ("Halloween Spooks: Should We 'Talk to the Dead'", ChristianNewsWire.com, Oct. 8, 2007.)

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- <sup>12</sup> Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research “2023 Annual Statistical Report”, New Series, vol. 5, <https://adventiststatistics.org/>.
- <sup>13</sup> Latest statistics (2020) available from the Association of Religion Date Archives show 240,174 adherents to all spiritist religions in the United States. <https://thearda.com/world-religion/world-rankings>.
- <sup>14</sup> Ellen White wrote of spiritualism in two ways. First, she wrote of the organized religion of Spiritualism. Secondly, she often used the word “spiritualism” when discussing communication with the dead. Contact with the dead could certainly be viewed as an occult practice. However, the Spiritualist Religion has always considered itself a Christian religion, and does not enjoin the practices of witchcraft and Satanism. When White condemned spiritualism, she was condemning communication with the dead in particular, and not the occult in general. She denounced the occult under the terms of “heathenism,” “witchcraft,” and “sorcery,” but reserved the term “spiritualism” to refer to contact with the dead. Therefore, it is inaccurate to apply White’s statements about spiritualism to the occult in general.
- <sup>15</sup> The first tenet of the Spiritualists National Union is the “fatherhood of God.” This is in sharp contrast to the New Age which does not believe in a personal God. The New Age god instead is typically a variation on the Hindu concept of Brahma, an impersonal oneness beyond all distinctions, including personal and moral distinctions. Because Brahma is the impersonal force of existence itself, the entire universe is seen as being part of the indivisible Brahma. This belief, that God is all and all is God, is called pantheism.
2. The sixth tenet of Spiritualism is compensation and retribution hereafter for all the good and evil deeds done while here on earth, somewhat akin to the Christian belief in heaven and hell. The New Age has no such concept of punishment or reward in the afterlife.
- <sup>16</sup> John Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “New Age Movement,” last updated June 24, 2014. Since that number includes anyone with a belief in any New Age teaching, such as reincarnation, then it is possibly over-inflated
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 553.
- <sup>19</sup> *People Magazine*, Oct. 25, 1999, 125.

# CHAPTER 31

## *Sunday Laws*

*Great Controversy* Chapters 35-39 Examined

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In chapters 35 through 39, Ellen White lays out the SDA end-time scenario formulated first by Joseph Bates and developed further by Uriah Smith. In this scenario, a three-fold axis of evil is formed in the United States between Catholicism, Protestantism, and Spiritualism.<sup>1</sup> These groups unite in their fervent hatred of Seventh-day Adventism and their Sabbath observance. They team up to influence the United States legislature to pass a law banning work on Sunday.<sup>2</sup> Eventually, this evolves into a universal Sunday law that is enforced throughout the entire world, carrying the death penalty for disobedience:

...a decree will finally be issued against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death. Romanism in the Old World and apostate Protestantism in the New will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts.<sup>3</sup>

In the nineteenth century, this scenario may have appeared remotely plausible. During that century, millions of Catholics emigrated to the United States. Some Protestants harbored an irrational fear that Catholics would take over the United States as they had done in Western Europe during the Dark Ages.

National Sunday legislation was also very plausible at that time. One of the many reforms that Protestant churches engaged in during the 1800s was agitating for stricter

Sunday laws—also known as *blue laws*. These laws were designed to forbid activities such as labor and commerce on Sundays. Some laws were passed in individual states, and some Americans were arrested for working, doing business, or drinking alcohol on Sundays. This reform movement peaked in 1888 when Senator Blair proposed national legislation in the U.S. Congress to recognize Sunday as a day of rest and religious worship.

## Demise of Sunday Laws

While a national Sunday law appeared imminent at the time Mrs. White and her book-makers were preparing the 1888 version of *Great Controversy*, the Sunday reform movement soon lost steam. Blair's bill died and never made it to a vote in the U.S. Congress in 1888. Protestant reformers soon turned their attention to other subjects such as prohibiting the sale of alcohol, and the Sunday reform movement lost momentum and dissipated. Over the next century, most states that had enacted *blue laws* in the nineteenth century either repealed those laws or stopped enforcing them. A similar trend took place in foreign countries. In Canada, "The Lord's Day Act" of 1906 that prohibited commerce on Sundays was declared unconstitutional by the highest court in 1985. Likewise, in Denmark, Sunday laws were terminated in 2012. Thus, interest in Sunday laws has waned greatly since Mrs. White wrote her book, and her end-time scenario is becoming increasingly far-fetched.

## The Decline of the Papacy

Mrs. White wrote in *Great Controversy*:

They [Protestants] are opening the door for the papacy to regain in Protestant America the supremacy which she has lost in the Old World. ...

A day of great intellectual darkness has been shown to be favorable to the success of the papacy. It will yet be

demonstrated that a day of great intellectual light is equally favorable for its success. ...

She is silently growing into power.<sup>4</sup>

Is this true? Is the Papacy growing silently into power? Is it gaining the supremacy in the United States? To begin, the Catholic Church has been in a long period of decline worldwide. Other than in Africa, Catholicism is on a steep decline in the United States and most parts of the world. Charges of rampant sexual abuse and corruption among priests have helped to accelerate this rapid decline. The Catholic Church remains massive with 1.4 billion members, but statistics from 2021 show that they are increasing at a slower rate than the world's population.<sup>5</sup> Since the early 2000s, Muslims outnumber Catholics worldwide, and Islam is growing faster than Christianity. One example is the traditionally Catholic nation of France, France: 5.8% of the population are practicing Muslims whereas 4.4% are practicing Catholics.<sup>6</sup>

Is Catholicism *really* regaining its supremacy? Not in the United States. Christianity is on a precipitous decline in the U.S. In 1976, 91% of Americans identified as Christians, but by 2022 that had dropped to 64%.<sup>7</sup> That decline has hit Catholicism hard. A 2025 Pew survey found that only 20% of Americans are Catholic.<sup>8</sup> That is down from 26% of American adults in the 1970s.<sup>9</sup> Even more alarming, “for every 100 people who join the Catholic Church, 840 leave,” and only one out of five Catholics actively participate in the church.<sup>10</sup> Rather than Catholicism regaining the supremacy in America, it is crumbling rapidly. What about the rest of the Americas? Is Catholicism faring any better in other parts of the New World?

In Argentina, the home of former Pope Francis, the number of Catholics fell by 13% between 2008 and 2019, while the number of Evangelicals increased by 70%.<sup>11</sup> In neighboring Brazil, “the percentage of people who identify as Catholic dropped from 70% in 2010 to 57% in 2020”

while the number of “respondents who identified as evangelical went from 3% in 2000 to...22% in 2020.”<sup>12</sup> Likewise, evangelicals in Guatemala have grown from 19% in 2000 to 41% in 2020.<sup>13</sup> In Mexico, a bastion of Catholicism, the number of Catholics has decreased by 21% since 1950.<sup>14</sup> In Chile, those identifying as “Catholics fell from 73% in 2008 to 45% in 2018.”<sup>15</sup> Throughout Latin America Catholicism is hemorrhaging members to Evangelical churches and sects like Seventh-day Adventism and Mormonism.

What about in Oceania? In Australia, members identifying as Christian dropped below 44% in 2021.<sup>16</sup> In New Zealand, people identifying as Christian dropped to 37% in 2018 and are now outnumbered by the 48% identifying with “no religion.”<sup>17</sup>

What about the Old World? Is Rome regaining its supremacy there? In the Papacy’s backyard...

Catholics are also on the decline in Italy, as shown by the latest IPSOS survey published in November 2019. The number of practicing Catholics—those who attend religious services at least once a week—has dropped from 21% to 14% of the population in 10 years. In contrast, the number of those who define themselves as non-believers has almost doubled, from 14% to 27% of Italians.<sup>18</sup>

In Germany, “359,338 Catholics quit the church in 2021, 60 percent more than during the previous year.”<sup>19</sup> In Poland, less than 25% of young Poles regularly practice religion, down from 70% in the 1990s, and “only 9% of young people viewed the [Catholic] church positively.”<sup>20</sup> The Catholic Church is also participating in the general decline of Christianity in the United Kingdom.

Church membership has declined from 10.6 million in 1930 to 5.5 million in 2010, or as a percentage of the population; from about 30% to 11.2%. By 2013, this had declined further to 5.4 million (10.3%). If current



trends continue, membership will fall to 8.4% of the population by 2025.<sup>21</sup>

The evidence illustrates that for over a century, the Catholic Church has been declining in power and influence. Recent scandals have rocked the church and members are leaving in droves. If not for increases in membership due to missionary activity in Africa, the Papacy would be in dire straits. The Catholic Church is no longer in a position to dictate Sunday laws in the United States or elsewhere. What about the Protestants? Do they desire Sunday laws?

Unlike the traditional Protestant churches in the nineteenth century, many of the fast-growing evangelical and non-denominational churches that dominate modern Christianity in the New World no longer view Sunday as a day that must be observed like the Jews observed the Sabbath. Unlike most nineteenth-century Protestants, they no longer teach that the Fourth Commandment applies to Sunday. They teach that the Ten Commandments are part of the Old Covenant that was fulfilled by the death of Christ on the Cross and Christians are not required to observe any day as a sabbath of rest. They worship on Sunday in honor of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, but they have no desire to persecute anyone who does not worship on Sunday. In general, they readily engage in commerce on Sunday and do not believe there is any divine requirement to observe it as a Sabbath. Because of this theological shift on the meaning and relevance of the Sabbath law, it is improbable that these Christians will have any interest in enforcing a Sunday law on anyone.

## **Conclusion**

The passage of time has demonstrated that Ellen White's end-time scenario is totally fake. The papacy has declined tremendously in power and influence. Millions of Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Secularists have moved to the United States, and these people have no desire for any Sunday laws.

The theological landscape has also shifted. Today, Sunday-observance is viewed as a legalistic relic of the past and most modern Protestants would be uninterested or even appalled at the idea of enforcing a law requiring people to observe Sunday as a day of rest. Sabbatarian groups have also grown in size and would likely strongly resist such a law. With the continued decline of Christianity in the Western World, Mrs. White's "Sabbath persecution" scenario is looking more and more preposterous.

Worldwide, a Sunday law looks even more remote. Many European nations have slid into secularism and have no interest in such a law. Communist China, Hindu India, and the billions living in Moslem nations have no interest in such a law. Many of these nations, such as China, India, Pakistan, and North Korea, have nuclear arms and cannot easily be compelled to obey the Pope's wishes. It is inconceivable that Ellen White's scenario will come to pass in the current environment. Sadly, rather than interpreting the Bible correctly, SDAs doom their members to a fearful existence, always looking over their shoulders for the Catholics, Protestants, and Spiritualists to unite to destroy them. However, a century of mounting evidence has proven this SDA conspiracy theory to be wrong.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy* (1911), 588.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 592. "...legislators, in order to secure public favor, will yield to the popular demand for a law enforcing Sunday observance."

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 615.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 573, 572, 581.

<sup>5</sup> Carol Glatz, "Vatican Statistics Show Decline in Clergy, Religious Women, Worldwide," *Catholic News Service*, Mar. 6, 2023. <https://catholicreview.org/vatican-statistics-show-decline-in-clergy-religious-women-worldwide/>. "At the end of 2021, the number of Catholics in the world reached 1.378 billion, up 1.3 percent from 1.36 billion Catholics at the end of 2020, according to the Vatican's Central Office of Church Statistics. By contrast, the world's

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- population increased by 1.6 percent over the same period. While Catholics remained about 17.67 percent of the global population.”
- <sup>6</sup> Hélène de Lauzun, “Practising [sic] Muslims Outnumber Catholics in France,” *The European Conservative*, April 8, 2023, <https://europeanconservative.com/articles/news/practising-muslims-outnumber-catholics-in-france/>.
- <sup>7</sup> “Decline of Christianity in the Western World,” *Wikipedia*.
- <sup>8</sup> “10 Facts about U.S. Catholics,” Pew Research Center, Mar. 4, 2024, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/03/04/10-facts-about-us-catholics/>.
- <sup>9</sup> Ryan Burge, “The Catholic Church is In Trouble in Places Where it Used to Dominate,” Oct. 12, 2023, <https://www.graphsaboutreligion.com/p/the-catholic-church-is-in-trouble>.
- <sup>10</sup> Eric Sammons, “Catholics Are Rapidly Losing Ground,” *Crisis Magazine*, Mar. 4, 2025.
- <sup>11</sup> “The Catholic Church in Decline in the Western World,” FSSPX News, Jan. 2, 2020, <https://fsspx.news/en/news/catholic-church-decline-western-world-23145>.
- <sup>12</sup> Marina E. Franco, “The decline of Catholicism in Latin America,” *Axios*, Apr 28, 2022, <https://www.axios.com/2022/04/28/catholic-decline-latin-america-evangelicals>.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> “Decline of Christianity in the Western World,” *Wikipedia*.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> “The Catholic Church in Decline in the Western World,” FSSPX News, Jan. 2, 2020, <https://fsspx.news/en/news/catholic-church-decline-western-world-23145>.
- <sup>19</sup> Jonathan Luxmoore, “German Catholic Church Faces Major Decline in Membership, Revenue,” *America Magazine*, May 16, 2023, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2023/05/16/germany-catholic-church-major-decline-members-revenue-2453063>.
- <sup>20</sup> “Devastating Decline in Religious Practice Among Young Poles, Says Catholic Primate,” Jan. 3, 2022, <https://notesfrompoland.com/2022/01/03/devastating-decline-in-religious-practice-among-young-poles-says-catholic-primate/>.
- <sup>21</sup> “Decline of Christianity in the Western World,” *Wikipedia*.

# CHAPTER 32

## *Third Angel's Message*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 38 Examined

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In the late 1840s, the shut-door Adventists engaged in a fierce battle with Protestants over the day of worship, which they viewed as *the* great test of loyalty to God. With this issue paramount in their minds, they began redefining every symbol in Revelation around their worldview of a huge, end-time battle over the Sabbath. With fertile imaginations, they seized upon symbols such as the “Mark of the Beast” and “Seal of God” and interpreted them in the framework of this epic battle. They imagined that the purpose of the third angel’s message was to warn the world that each person must choose between going to church on Saturday and receiving the Seal of God or going to church on Sunday and receiving the Mark of the Beast. In *Great Controversy*, Ellen White explains the “truths of the third angel’s message”:

**The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted.** When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false Sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, **receive the seal of God.**<sup>1</sup>

Before continuing, it should be made clear that Sabbath-keeping is never mentioned as a characteristic of the 144,000 in Revelation 14. What Biblical facts are known of the 144,000? In Revelation 14 the 144,000 are virgins (14:4), they follow Jesus (14:4), their speech is pure (14:5), and they are faultless (14:5), but mysteriously enough, nothing is ever said about that one single point that is *supposedly* the great, identifying mark of this group: Sabbath-keeping!

Furthermore, the “seal of God” is mentioned by Paul three times in the New Testament, but never in reference to Sabbath-keeping.<sup>2</sup> In fact, Paul told Christians that what day a person “regardeth unto the Lord” was not anything to separate believers:

One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day [alike]. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth [it] unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard [it]. (Rom. 14:5,6)

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath [days]: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [is] of Christ. (Col. 2:16,17)

In essence, Paul was saying a Christian should not judge or “test” another’s Christianity based on whether or not that person keeps a Sabbath day. Now, if Sabbath observance was indeed the “great test of loyalty,” then Paul would have been all over this issue, encouraging people to worship on the Sabbath and warning them of the danger of ignoring the Sabbath or worshipping on another day. Did Paul ever write anything even remotely encouraging Sabbath observance? No, he did not. Why would he ignore this “great test of loyalty” that was the main point of contention in the controversy between God and Satan? Neither Paul nor any of the apostles ever made a single statement in the New Testament reinforcing the necessity of Sabbath observance.

Paul, however, did spend considerable effort warning believers against legalism. He warned believers to stop judging each other about matters such as eating meat and the keeping of holy days. In other words, the issues of eating meat and holy days are of so little consequence to the Christian that differences of opinion on these subjects are to be tolerated within the larger body of Christ. Paul makes it abundantly clear that the Sabbath was *never* meant to be a *test* of fellowship amongst Christians. Now, contrast that to what Ellen White writes in *Great Controversy*:

An angel returning from the earth announces that his work is done; the **final test** has been brought upon the world, and **all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received “the seal of the living God.”** Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above.<sup>3</sup>

*Great Controversy* teaches that it is the special mission of God's remnant church to spread the message of Saturday observance throughout the world. According to Mrs. White, this message, the third angel's message, began to sound sometime after the Disappointment of 1844.<sup>4</sup>

In the first years after 1844, the Whites had only a vague idea about the meaning of the third angel's message. They began observing the Sabbath in the autumn of 1846 but still had not connected Sunday keeping with the Mark of the Beast.<sup>5</sup> In 1847, in *A Word to the Little Flock*—a pamphlet written by James and Ellen White—James explains...

...the second angel brought us to the 7th month, 1844. The third angel's message was, and still is, a WARNING to the saints to “hold fast,” and not go back, and “receive” the **marks** which the virgin band got rid of, during the second angel's cry.<sup>6</sup>

In this passage, James identifies the third angel's message as instructing the saints not to “go back” to those “marks” (plural) that the “saints”<sup>7</sup> had given up when they left the “fallen” churches during the second angel's message. Since

Sunday-keeping was **not** one of the things “which the virgin band got rid of, during the second angel’s cry,” then it could not have been understood as being the third angel’s message at that time. Sabbath-keeping was not adopted by many Adventists until 1847-1849.

### Third Angel's Message Only for Adventists

In the early years after the Disappointment, the Whites held to the shut-door teaching that only the Adventists could be saved. In the same pamphlet quoted above, Mrs. White described non-Adventists as being, “the wicked world which God had rejected.” Consistent with their shut-door view, SDAs only delivered the third message to the “saints” and not to the world. Even as late as April of 1850, James White described the third angel’s message as “the last message of mercy to the **scattered flock**...”<sup>8</sup> The phrases “scattered flock” and “little flock” were key words used by the shut-door Adventists to describe themselves—those Advent believers who had left the churches of “Babylon.”

In the 1850s, as the shut-door doctrine began to fade away, the shut-door Adventists started to interpret the third angel’s message as a message that was for the entire world. Eventually, the message even became associated with the gospel. Mrs. White penned in one of her testimonies, “The third angel’s message is the gospel message for these last days.”<sup>9</sup> One might wonder, what exactly is the gospel or “good news” to be found in the third angel’s message? Reading the passage, one can find nothing but bad news—one of the most fearful denunciations found in the Bible.

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive [his] mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the

presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. (Rev. 14:9-11)

What exactly is the “good news” in this passage?

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Message is Loyalty to Ten Commandments

The early Adventists focused on the part of Rev. 14:12 which says, “Here are they that keep the commandments of God.” This teaching was derived from the Seventh Day Baptists who, prior to 1844, had already connected the “commandments” of Rev. 14:12 to Sabbath-keeping. However, it is highly questionable if the third angel even spoke the words of verse 12. Most modern translations end the third angel’s quotation *before* verse 12.

Regardless, it is a matter of debate as to whether this is a reference to the Ten Commandments of the Old Covenant. The word “commandments” appears in the King James Version of the Bible, and it would only be natural to *assume* that this referred to the Ten Commandments, but the Greek word is not so singular in its meaning.

The Greek word for “commandments” in Rev. 14:12 is *entole*, which means “an order, command, charge, precept, injunction.”<sup>10</sup> For example, John, the author of Revelation, uses *entole* repeatedly in his writings to refer to the instructions of Christ. John used an entirely different Greek word when he referred to the Ten Commandments in his writings—*nomas*. For example, when referring to the sixth commandment (Ex. 20:13), John uses *nomos*:

Did not Moses give you the law {*nomos*}, and [yet] none of you keepeth the law {*nomos*}? Why go ye about to kill me? (John 7:19).

In surveying the writings of John, the most important commandment of Jesus to the Apostles was not Sabbath-observance, but for them to love one another:



A new commandment {*entole*} I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. (John 13:34)

This is my commandment {*entole*}, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Notice how John uses the word “commandment” in these verses:

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments {*entole*}. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments {*entole*}; and His commandments {*entole*} are not burdensome. (1 John 5:2-3)

In the same letter, John clearly articulates what the “commandments” of God are:

And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments {*entole*} and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. This is His commandment {*entole*}, that we **[1] believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ**, and **[2] love one another**, just as He commanded {*entole*} us. The one who keeps His commandments {*entole*} abides in Him... (1 John 3:22-24)

To conclude, John **never** uses *entole* to refer to the Ten Commandments anywhere else in his writings. Therefore, it is highly improbable that John suddenly started using that word to refer to the Ten Commandments or the Sabbath in Rev. 14:12. John's prior use of *entole* strongly suggests he was referring to the commandments to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, and to love one another (1 John 3:22-24).

## Changes Made to Third Angel's Message

Since its inception, Seventh-day Adventism has been widely recognized as a sect focused on the Ten Commandments, and the Sabbath in particular. After all, it was the prime differentiator between them and other Protestant churches.

By the 1880s, after 40 years of fixating on the Old Covenant law, the sect was locked in the deadly clutches of legalism. That changed in 1888 when the SDA sect discovered the message of “Righteousness by Faith.” In the late 1880s, two young ministers—E.J. Waggoner and A.T. Jones—began preaching the latter part of Rev. 14:12, “the faith of Jesus.” Ellen White endorsed the young men and proclaimed, “Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel’s message, and I have answered, ‘It is the third angel’s message in verity.’”<sup>11</sup>

After 40 years of legalism, the idea of “justification by faith” was so radical that some of the leaders of the sect rejected this “new light.” However, one General Conference vice president correctly ascertained that the message was merely what Protestant reformers had been preaching for centuries:

What was this teaching of righteousness by faith which became the mainspring of the great 1888 Adventist revival, as taught and emphasized by Mrs. White and others? It was the same doctrine that Luther, Wesley, and many other servants of God had been teaching.<sup>12</sup>

While some insisted the message was somehow distinctive, SDA historian LeRoy Froom notes that “men outside the Advent Movement—[had] the same general burden and emphasis, and arising at about the same time.”<sup>13</sup> SDAs pride themselves on being the one and only true *remnant* that is carrying forward the Protestant Reformation, but it appears they lost sight of the primary tenet of the Reformation for over 40 years! When it was brought to the sect’s attention by the young ministers, it was accepted begrudgingly by many of the senior brethren in the sect, and there continues to be debate in the sect as to whether it was ever entirely accepted.<sup>14</sup>

Whether or not the SDA sect ever fully accepted the 1888 reform is questionable. In 1901, Mrs. White seems to have

reverted back to a pre-1888 law-oriented understanding of the third message. She informs her flock that it is all about SDAs proclaiming the law of God:

The Lord has sent to our world a message of warning, even the Third Angel's Message. **All heaven is waiting to hear us vindicate God's law**, declaring it to be holy, just, and good.<sup>15</sup>

## More Changes to the Third Angel's Message

A decade after the 1888 message arrived, just when it appeared the SDA sect was finally back on the right track towards understanding the gospel message, Ellen White added another twist to the third angel's message: "[T]he health reform and medical missionary work is connected with the third angel's message."<sup>16</sup> It is difficult, if not impossible, to explain from the Bible where "health reform" can be found in the third angel's message, so one must trust this interpretation to the *inspiration* of Mrs. White.

## Why SDB Doesn't Fit the SDA Jigsaw Puzzle

For the sake of argument, if one were to believe that the third angel's message is all about the Sabbath, a problem remains for the Seventh-day Adventists: What to do with the Seventh Day Baptists? Mrs. White omits any reference to the Seventh Day Baptists in *Great Controversy*, although she mentions far less worthy groups, such as the Albigenses, as followers of *truth*. Why not mention Seventh Day Baptist efforts to proclaim the Sabbath *truth*? Because it throws a kink into the fake idea that the third angel's message started around 1844.

The Seventh Day Baptist Church was started in the mid-1600s in England and was planted in the American colonies in 1664 by Stephen Mumford.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the church had expanded into the United States (and Australia) before Ellen White was even born. While early Adventists were fighting over whether or not the door of salvation was shut, the Seventh Day Baptists were sending missionaries out to

China.<sup>18</sup> In the mid-1800s Seventh Day Baptists outnumbered Adventists “by several to one.”<sup>19</sup> A Seventh Day Baptist lady—Rachel Oaks—was instrumental in initiating Sabbath-keeping amongst the Adventists in 1845.<sup>20</sup> The problem for SDAs is this: If the third angel's message is indeed all about the Sabbath *truth*, then that message started sounding in the mid-1600s when various Sabbath reformers arose in England. By the mid-1800s, Seventh Day Baptists had many thousands of members and their churches had spread to many countries in Europe, North America, Oceania, and elsewhere. Their message about the Sabbath was essentially the same as that of the Seventh-day Adventists, even connecting the passage “keep the commandments of God” of Rev. 14:12 to the Sabbath.<sup>21</sup>

SDAs teach that the third angel's message—the proclamation to keep the Sabbath—began around 1845. This is convenient, because it ties the proclamation of this *truth* to Adventists, and it makes them appear to be the *true remnant* church that is restoring the honor of God's law. However, such a position is far from the truth because the Seventh Day Baptists had been preaching the Sabbath *truth* and spreading it around the world for nearly 200 years. If teaching the Sabbath was indeed the third angel's message, then it is the Seventh Day Baptists, not the Seventh-day Adventists, who deserve the credit for it.

In addition to the Seventh Day Baptists, other Christian groups kept the Sabbath before 1844. Among the Anabaptists, some Mennonite communities adopted the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath in the 16th and 17th centuries. The Dunkards, also known as the German Baptist Brethren or Church of the Brethren, were another Anabaptist group that included Sabbatarian communities. Gilbert Cranmer, founder of the Church of God (seventh day) first learned of the Sabbath in 1843.<sup>22</sup> He went on to raise up Sabbath-keeping churches in Michigan in the late 1850s, even before the SDA church was officially organized in 1863. Today, there are over four hundred Christian groups

and denominations that teach Sabbath observance, so SDAs can hardly consider themselves as either the originator or sole proprietor of this message.

## Conclusion

The third angel's message has gone through many mutations in SDA history. At first, it was a vague warning not to go back to the churches of Babylon. Then Adventists promulgated the view that the message was all about the Sabbath, based upon their self-serving hermeneutical understanding of Rev. 14:12. After some 40 years of existence, this sect, which supposedly was the *true remnant*, which supposedly was being guided by a prophet of God, finally discovered the truth of justification by faith—a doctrine that was being taught by the churches of “Babylon” while God's *true remnant* was teaching a brand of legalism. Whether or not the SDA sect ever fully accepted the doctrine of justification by faith is debatable, but in 1899, Mrs. White added “health reform” to the third angel's message. With all this confusing and contradictory teaching regarding the third angel's message, does this sound like a sect that has the *truth* for our time?

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Great Controversy*, 605.

<sup>2</sup> See 2 Cor. 1:22, Eph. 1:13, and Eph. 4:30.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 614.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen White acknowledged that shortly after the disappointment of 1844, they understood, “that the first and second messages had gone forth, and that the third was to be given.” *Testimonies For The Church*, vol. 1 (1855-1868), 78.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. White writes in *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 75: “In the autumn of 1846 we began to observe the Bible Sabbath, and to teach and defend it.”

<sup>6</sup> James White, *Word to the Little Flock*, (1847), 11.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen White, *A Word to the Little Flock* (1847), 14.

<sup>8</sup> James White, *Present Truth*, April, 1850.

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- <sup>9</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 241.
- <sup>10</sup> *Strong's*.
- <sup>11</sup> Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890.
- <sup>12</sup> L.H. Christian, *The Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1947), 239.
- <sup>13</sup> L.E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1971), 319.
- <sup>14</sup> See the book, *1888 Re-examined*, by Robert Wieland and Donald Short (Adventist Forum Association, 1990).
- <sup>15</sup> Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, April 16, 1901.
- <sup>16</sup> Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, June 20, 1899.
- <sup>17</sup> "Seventh Day Baptist Origins", extracted on Oct. 22, 2006, <http://www.one-eternal-day.com/2006/10/seventh-day-baptist-history-i.html>, adapted from Don Sanford, *A Choosing People: The History of Seventh Day Baptists*, 1992.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>19</sup> Marvin Moore, "The Adventist Prophetic Scenario" (Pacific Press), 6,
- <sup>20</sup> According to Mervyn Maxwell in "Moving Out", Rachel Oaks passed the Sabbath teaching on to Frederick Wheeler, who passed it along to T.M. Preble, who wrote about it in *The Hope of Israel*, Feb. 28, 1845. He concluded his article by writing, "Daniel 7:25 fulfilled, the little horn changing times and laws with the result that all who keep the first day of the week for the Sabbath are the Pope's Sunday keepers and God's Sabbath breakers!!" Joseph Bates read Preble's paper and accepted the Sabbath. Bates later wrote a booklet on the Sabbath and shared it with James and Ellen White. The Whites, although reluctant at first, eventually accepted the Sabbath.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., "Revelation 14:12 clearly teaches that the saints 'keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.'"
- <sup>22</sup> John Kiesz, *History of the Church of God (Seventh Day)* (1965).

# CHAPTER 33

## *Bible Contradictions*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 40 Examined

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Ellen White paints a frightening end-time scenario in *Great Controversy*. According to Mrs. White, a terrible persecution will ensue just before Christ returns. However, it is not Christians in general who are being persecuted. On the contrary, the Christians are the ones *doing* the persecuting. In this scenario, Catholics and *apostate* Protestants will join together to pass a law enforcing Sunday observance, and a death penalty will be imposed upon all those who worship upon the seventh day.<sup>1</sup> Who is the intended target of this ungodly persecution? Seventh-day Adventists, of course.

By chapter 40 of *Great Controversy*, it should be obvious to the reader that the entire book of Revelation revolves around Seventh-day Adventism and their struggle against Sunday-keepers. Mrs. White describes in vivid detail what happens when a “universal” Sunday law is passed enforcing Sunday observance:

As the time appointed in the decree draws near, the people will conspire to root out the hated sect [Seventh-day Adventists]. It will be determined to strike in one night a decisive blow, which shall utterly silence the voice of dissent and reproof. The people of God—**some in prison cells, some hidden in solitary retreats in the forests and the mountains**—still plead for divine protection, while in every quarter companies of armed men, urged on by hosts of evil angels, are preparing for the work of death.<sup>2</sup>

Mrs. White explains that members of the “hated sect” are either in prison or hiding in the forests and mountains. Mrs.

White informs her readers that they have been driven from their homes by angry mobs:

**Houses** and lands will be of no use to the saints in the time of trouble, for they will then have to **flee before infuriated mobs**...<sup>3</sup>

## **BIBLE: Righteous Together with Unrighteous**

Contrary to Ellen White's end-time scenario where the righteous will have to leave their homes and flee to the wilderness, Jesus made it quite clear that the righteous would be living in their homes, sleeping in their bedrooms, or working in their kitchens and yards when He returns:

I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left (Luke 17:34-36).

Notice from the above verse that the righteous and unrighteous people will be boarding together in the same homes. They will be working at the same places of occupation together. Jesus said that at His second coming it would be like the "days of Noah" (Luke 17:26) and the "days of Lot" (Luke 17:28). Neither Lot nor Noah was hiding in the mountains or languishing in prison before the judgments of God fell. They were living in their homes. They were living amongst the wicked. They continued working at their jobs with the wicked until the judgments fell. Jesus teaches the same in the parable of the wheat and the tares. He spoke of a land owner who instructs his servants to "**let both grow together until the harvest**" (Matt. 13:30).

While Mrs. White says the righteous will flee their homes before infuriated mobs, Jesus says the righteous and the wicked will be sleeping and working together in their own homes and fields when He returns. Mrs. White's idea about a special end-time persecution resulting in the righteous



fleeing to the mountains contradicts the Bible. It is true that Christians have suffered persecution throughout history, and will continue to do so until the end of time. However, the Bible specifically states that the righteous and unrighteous will be together until the Second Coming.

## White Contradicts Moses

In *Great Controversy* Ellen White adds to the prophecy of Revelation by saying that just before the return of Christ, the Old Covenant law is going to be displayed in the heavens:

Then there appears against the sky a hand holding **two tables of stone folded together**. ... That holy law, God's righteousness, that amid thunder and flame was proclaimed from Sinai as the guide of life, is now revealed to men as the rule of judgment. **The hand opens the tables, and there are seen the precepts of the Decalogue**, traced as with a pen of fire. The words are so plain that all can read them. ... God's ten words, brief, comprehensive, and authoritative, are presented to the view of all the inhabitants of the earth.<sup>4</sup>

Is this fact or fiction? Mrs. White describes the law as being "two tables of stone folded together" which gives the image of a closed book. This is consistent with an earlier vision where she "saw" the Ten Commandments inside the ark of God "folded together like a book."<sup>5</sup> In *Great Controversy*, she writes, "the hand opens the tables," thus revealing the Old Covenant. The imagery she is describing suggests that the law was written *only* on the inside of the tablets, like a book, and could not be read until the two tablets were *opened*. The Bible paints a different picture:

And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were **written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written**. (Ex. 32:15)

The laws were written on *both* sides of the tablets. It is improbable they were thin and flexible enough to hinge and

open/close like a book (a codex). Since the law was written on both the front and back of the tablets, when closed, at least part of the law would still be visible on the back of the top tablet. Apparently, Mrs. White was unaware of this small but important fact, and thus her addition to the prophecy of Revelation turns out to contradict the Bible.

## White Copies from Joseph Smith

After the resurrection of the righteous, Mrs. White envisions the saints ascending to the “city of God,” “the New Jerusalem.”<sup>6</sup> Just outside the pearly gates, Mrs. White makes yet another addition to the prophecy of Revelation:

Before entering the City of God, the Saviour bestows upon His followers the emblems of victory and invests them with the insignia of their royal state. The glittering ranks are drawn up **in the form of a hollow square** about their King, whose form rises in majesty high above saint and angel, whose countenance beams upon them full of benignant love.

She says the saints form ranks in a very unusual formation: A “hollow square.” Where did she get this idea from? The word “square” does not appear in Revelation or anywhere in the New Testament. One possibility is from the Mormons. Unbeknownst to many, Mrs. White associated with the Mormons in her early years. Mormon prophet Joseph Smith was Ellen Harmon’s second cousin by marriage.<sup>7</sup> The hollow square formation was utilized by Joseph Smith and the Mormons on certain ceremonial occasions.<sup>8</sup> This seemingly innocuous carry-over from Mormonism potentially reveals one possible source of her “revelations.”

## Conclusion

In this chapter, as in other chapters, Mrs. White contradicts plain Biblical facts. In addition, she adds events and details to the prophecies of the book of Revelation. This is in spite of the fact that Revelation warns: “If any man shall add unto

these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18). Analysis reveals that the facts she added are not only unscriptural but in at least one case, may have originated with her second cousin, Mormon prophet Joseph Smith.

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<sup>1</sup> See Dirk Anderson, *National Sunday Law: Fact or Fiction* (2023).

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Great Controversy*, 635.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, 56.

<sup>4</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 639.

<sup>5</sup> White, *Early Writings*, 32-33. “In the holiest I saw an ark... In the ark was...the tables of stone which **folded together like a book**. Jesus opened them, and I saw the ten commandments written on them with the finger of God. On one table were four, and on the other six.”

<sup>6</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 645.

<sup>7</sup> Phyllis Watson, unpublished manuscript, “Mormon Temple Endowments in Ellen G. White’s Writings.” Joseph Smith was related to Ellen “through her cousin Agnes Coolbrith Smith.”

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. See for example, Joseph Smith quoted in *Latter Day Saints’ Millennial Star*, vol. 21, 635: “The company...formed a procession and walked up to my office, where **formed a hollow square**... My brother Hyrum and I went into **the hollow square** and directed them not to allow their **ranks** to be broken . . .” Also, *Christian Mirror*, Thursday, October 10, 1844, vol. XXXIII, no II, 1155, “During the time of prayer there appeared over our head, a ray of light forming **a hollow square inside of which stood a company of heavenly messengers**...”

# CHAPTER 34

## *The 144,000*

*Great Controversy* Chapter 40 Examined

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Who is the luckiest lady in Adventism? No, it is not Ellen White! To discover who this person is, it is first necessary to understand the specific characteristics of the 144,000 as outlined by Ellen White in *Great Controversy*:

Upon the crystal sea before the throne, that sea of glass as it were mingled with fire, —so resplendent is it with the glory of God, —are gathered the company [1] **that have “gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.”** ... These, having been [2] **translated from the earth, from among the living,** are counted as ‘the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.’ Revelation 15:2, 3; 14:1-5. [3] **‘These are they which came out of great tribulation;’ they have passed through the time of trouble** such as never was since there was a nation; [4] **they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob's trouble;** [5] **they have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God's judgments.** ... -[6] **They have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence,** the sun having power to scorch men with great heat, and they themselves have endured suffering, hunger, and thirst.<sup>1</sup>

The above passage explains that the 144,000—those who have received the Seal of God—can be identified by the following attributes:

1. Obtained the victory over the “Mark of the Beast.”
2. Were alive and “translated” at Jesus’ return.

3. Went through the great “time of trouble.”
4. Went through “Jacob’s time of trouble.”
5. “Stood without an intercessor.”
6. Lived through the final judgments upon the earth.

No one living in the 1800s went through any of these experiences. In fact, no one yet has gone through the time of trouble, stood without an intercessor, lived through the final judgments, or been translated at the return of Jesus. Even the Mark of the Beast has not yet been implemented according to Ellen White, who wrote in 1899:

**No one has yet received the mark of the beast.** The testing time has not yet come. There are true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion. None are condemned until they have had the light and have seen the obligation of the fourth commandment. But **when the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit sabbath**, and the loud cry of the third angel shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, the line will be clearly drawn between the false and the true. **Then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast.**<sup>2</sup>

Because there has not yet been a decree “enforcing the counterfeit Sabbath,” Ellen White assures her readers that the Mark of the Beast has not yet arrived. Thus, it is evident that no one in the 1800s, or even today, could possibly be a part of the 144,000. The 144,000 are an exceptional group of people who go through a very singular experience in the future.

## The Luckiest Adventist Lady

Mrs. Hastings was an early Adventist believer who died around 1850. Mrs. White had a *vision* about Mrs. Hastings and she wrote to the late lady’s husband describing what she saw in that *vision*:

The news of your wife's death was to me overwhelming. I could hardly believe it and can hardly believe it now. God gave me a view last Sabbath night which I will write... **I saw that she was sealed** and would come up at the voice of God and stand upon the earth, and would be **with the 144,000**. I saw we need not mourn for her; **she would rest in the time of trouble**, and all that we could mourn for was our loss in being deprived of her company. I saw her death would result in good.<sup>3</sup>

Notice two startling revelations from this *vision*:

1. Mrs. Hastings was part of the 144,000.
2. Mrs. Hastings would *rest* during the time of trouble.

How could this be true in light of the quotes above from *Great Controversy*? Ellen White said the 144,000 are those who have been “translated from the earth, from among the living.” Both statements cannot possibly be true.

Ellen White developed this idea further into a pre-return-of-Christ resurrection when she published her first *Great Controversy* book in 1858:

The graves were shaken open, and **those who had died in faith under the third angel's message, keeping the Sabbath, came forth** from their dusty beds, glorified, to hear the covenant of peace that God was to make with those who had kept his law.<sup>4</sup>

The timing of this pre-resurrection of Sabbath-keepers is described by Mrs. White as taking place amidst the seventh plague of Revelation.<sup>5</sup> Then, three pages later she describes the main resurrection of the righteous at the return of Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup> Thus, even before the official formation of the SDA sect, the doctrine of a *special* pre-resurrection had been encoded in Mrs. White's writings.

At the time of the Hastings *vision*, Mrs. White no doubt thought the return of Christ was imminent, but as the years passed by, it became increasingly awkward explaining how Mrs. Hastings could be one of the 144,000. Later SDA

leaders no doubt wished Mrs. White never published this *vision* because it presented a whole host of problems for them. Ten years later, SDA leader Uriah Smith struggled to explain the *vision* in a book he wrote attempting to defend Ellen White from her vocal critics.<sup>7</sup> Smith took Mrs. White's quote and married it to a couple of Bible passages and published his defense. The attention thus given to the *vision* by Smith no doubt helped propel the doctrine into the mainstream of SDA eschatology, where it stands today as a tenant of the SDA sect.<sup>8</sup> He would later publish the doctrine in more detail in his 1885 book, *Daniel and the Revelation*.<sup>9</sup> Smith's use of certain Bible passages to support the doctrine of a *special* pre-resurrection was later replicated into Mrs. White's 1888 and 1911 versions of *Great Controversy*.

In 1911, she wrote of this *special* resurrection:

All who have died in the faith of the third angel's message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God's covenant of peace with those who have kept His law.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, SDAs have an entire doctrine—a *special* resurrection of those who accepted the SDA message and died—that was added solely to explain away Mrs. White's *vision* of Mrs. Hastings. Yet, SDAs assure other Christians—those they are trying to recruit into the SDA sect—that their doctrines are based entirely on the Bible, not the *visions* of Ellen White!

Interestingly, this doctrine is never mentioned in the SDA 392-page doctrinal book prepared to explain their doctrines to the public. The book says there are two “general” resurrections, but never mentions Ellen White's *special* resurrection.<sup>11</sup> SDA leaders have wisely buried the doctrine of a *special* resurrection because it opens up a host of problems:

1. Mrs. White and Revelation both say the 144,000 had “gotten the victory” over the Mark of the Beast, and yet in 1899, she said the Mark of the Beast had not yet arrived. Therefore, how could Mrs. Hastings be a

part of a group that got the victory of the Mark when it was not yet active in her day?

2. Mrs. White and Revelation both say the 144,000 see the final judgments fall. However, in *Great Controversy* the *special* resurrection takes place chronologically *after* the final judgments have fallen. Therefore, Mrs. Hastings will never witness firsthand the final judgments falling on the earth.
3. Mrs. White and Revelation both say the 144,000 go through the time of trouble—both Jacob’s time of trouble, and the general time of trouble. However, in her letter to Mr. Hastings, Mrs. White said that Mrs. Hastings “would rest in the time of trouble.” Again, *Great Controversy* places the special resurrection *after* the time of trouble. So, how could she be part of a group that goes through the time of trouble?

Mrs. Hastings is the luckiest Adventist lady because she gets to experience all the rewards of the 144,000 without having to go through any of their trials. Furthermore, any SDA who dies believing in the SDA interpretation of the “third angel’s message” will share the same privileges. These special privileges are in direct contradiction to the book of Revelation. Nowhere in Revelation does it describe members of the 144,000 escaping the tribulation. The Bible teaches in Revelation 7 that the 144,000 are alive during the tribulation period.

Considering all the SDAs who have passed away over the last 180+ years, it is likely this *special* group will far exceed in numbers those who are alive when Christ returns! That being the case, it would seem to seriously detract from the honor of being a member of the 144,000, because the *majority* will never have experienced those things that Ellen White said are to make the experience of the 144,000 so special: Gaining the victory over the Mark, suffering through



the times of trouble, and achieving that perfection of character necessary to live “without an intercessor.”

In reality, Mrs. White’s *vision* of Mrs. Hastings among the 144,000 was a delusion. It put SDA leaders in the unenviable position of trying to figure out how to get Mrs. Hastings into the 144,000 who are “translated...from among the living” at Christ’s return. Thus, to make the false vision work, they invented the false doctrine of a *special* pre-resurrection in order to get her into the 144,000. Then, to be consistent, they had to extend that same privilege to any other SDA believer who—like Mrs. Hastings—passed away before the Second Coming.

The doctrinal invention of a *special* resurrection only solved part of the problem. SDAs are still left with the dilemma that this greatly dilutes the special honor and dignity attributed to the 144,000. Most of the 144,000 will have done nothing special other than living a mundane and legalistic SDA life! The greatest tribulation they will ever face is saying “no” to a cold beer, watching movies on TV instead of at a theater, and resisting McDonald’s hamburgers. Are they *really* deserving of being honored among the 144,000? Furthermore, the doctrine directly contradicts what both Ellen White (in the quote at the start of the chapter) and Revelation teach about the 144,000. This is an example of how a ridiculous and unbelievable SDA doctrine was concocted just to accommodate the fake visions of Ellen White.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 648-649.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen White, *Evangelism* (1946), 234-235. Also, in 1899, in the *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 977, Mrs. White writes: “Sundaykeeping is **not yet the mark of the beast**, and will not be until the decree goes forth causing men to worship this idol sabbath. The time will come when this day will be the test, but **that time has not come yet.**”

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<sup>3</sup> Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, book 2 (1850), 263.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, 205.

<sup>5</sup> Revelation 16:17-21.

<sup>6</sup> White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, 208.

<sup>7</sup> Uriah Smith, *The Visions of Mrs. E.G. White: A Manifestation of Spiritual Gifts According to the Scriptures* (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assoc., 1868), 56.

<sup>8</sup> See *SDA Bible Commentary* on Daniel 12:2: “A special resurrection precedes Christ’s second advent. ‘All who have died in the faith of the third angel’s message’ will arise at that time. In addition, those who beheld with mockery Christ’s crucifixion, and those who have most violently opposed the people of God, will be brought forth from their graves to see the fulfillment of the divine promise and the triumph of truth (see GC 637).”

<sup>9</sup> Uriah Smith, *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Books of Daniel and Revelation, Being an Exposition, Text by Text, of These Important Portions of the Holy Scriptures* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald Pub. Assoc., 1885), 303.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 637.

<sup>11</sup> *Seventh-day Adventists Believe ... A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines*, (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1988), 358. The doctrine is mentioned in the *SDA Bible Commentary*, per footnote #8 above. It is also mentioned in the SDA Adult Sabbath School Lessons, Jul/Aug/Sep 1989, 66, 97.

# CHAPTER 35

## *The Millennium*

*Great Controversy* Chapters 40, 41, and 42 Examined

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Seventh-day Adventism has some very unusual ideas about the Millennium—different from nearly all other Christian denominations. According to their end-time scenario described in *Great Controversy*, at the Second Coming of Christ, the wicked are slain and the righteous are whisked away to heaven:

Angels “gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Little children are borne by holy angels to their mothers' arms. Friends long separated by death are united, nevermore to part, and with songs of gladness **ascend together to the City of God.**<sup>1</sup>

The wicked on the earth are killed and the earth is left empty and desolate for a period of 1,000 years:

At the coming of Christ the wicked are blotted from the face of the whole earth—consumed with the spirit of His mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His glory. **Christ takes His people to the City of God, and the earth is emptied of its inhabitants.**<sup>2</sup>

Satan is left alone on the earth to wander around for 1,000 years during the Millennium, pondering his fate:

And as the scapegoat was sent away into a land not inhabited, so Satan will be banished to the desolate earth, an **uninhabited** and dreary wilderness.<sup>3</sup>

Mrs. White teaches that at the close of the 1,000 years, “Christ again returns to the earth”<sup>4</sup> in a *Third Coming*.

Is this the picture of the Millennium portrayed in the Bible? Are the saints in heaven during the Millennium? Is the earth entirely desolate during the Millennium, inhabited only by Satan? Is there a *Third Coming*? The Biblical evidence will be examined regarding the Millennium to determine if Mrs. White's teaching is accurate.

## Do Saints Go to Heaven at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming?

The Bible teaches that at the Second Coming, many of the wicked are slain.<sup>5</sup> The righteous dead are raised to life and "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thes. 4:17). The question is, after the saints meet the Lord in the air, do they return down with Him to the earth? Or do they continue up to heaven and stay there for the entire duration of the Millennium?

The Book of Revelation states that the resurrected righteous will rule with Jesus for 1,000 years:

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall **reign with him a thousand years** (Rev. 20:6; also Isa. 26:9, Dan. 12:2, John 5:28,29, 1 Thes. 4:16,17).

The question is this: What are the righteous "reigning" over for 1,000 years? What is the domain of their kingdom? Are they reigning over heaven? Or earth? The Bible clearly states that the righteous shall reign "upon the earth":

And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and **we shall reign on the earth** (Rev. 5:10; also Isa. 32:1).

Does it make any sense for the righteous to be ruling over some section of heaven? No, because the Bible teaches that humans were created to "have dominion" over "the earth" (Gen. 1:26-28), not heaven!

## Saints Are on Earth When Satan Is Loosed

The presence of the righteous living on the earth during the Millennium is proven by the events happening at the end of the Millennium. At the end of the thousand years, when Satan is released for a season, the Bible explicitly states that righteous people are living on the earth at that time. Notice carefully in the text below that the righteous ones are living in “the beloved city.” Remember, this city could not possibly be the *New Jerusalem* because that city does not descend to earth until *after* the first earth passes away, (Rev. 21:1, 2). John explains:

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed **the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city** (Rev. 20:7-9; see Ezek. 38,39).

Revelation speaks of the “beloved city”—a term used by the Hebrews to denote earthly Zion or Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup> Thus, while the saints are living in or around the city of Jerusalem upon the earth, Satan is loosed at the end of the Millennium.

## Daniel: God's Kingdom Established on Earth!

The true prophet Daniel teaches that Christ’s Millennial Kingdom is established upon the earth and is described by Daniel as a “mountain” that occupies the earth:

...and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and **filled the whole earth**... And **in the days of these kings** 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 for ever. (Dan. 2:35,44; see also Micah 4:1, Isa. 11:9)

Daniel states that God will destroy the kingdoms of this earth and “in those days” will establish a kingdom that fills “the whole earth”—not heaven—and would “stand for ever.” This kingdom is not “left to other people” nor is it left to Satan for 1,000 years. Why would God establish a kingdom to fill the earth if the saints are up in heaven and the only person on Earth is Satan? Is Satan the king of God’s kingdom upon the earth during the Millennium? Daniel says nothing about God’s kingdom being “in heaven” or being absent from the earth for 1,000 years. Daniel says the kingdom will be established in the earth and that kingdom will stand forever.

### Jesus: “In Like Manner”

After the ascension of Jesus, the angels explained to the disciples how Christ would return to earth:

...Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, **shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go** into heaven (Acts 1:11).

If Jesus is going to return “in like manner” as he departed, then one can discover how He will return by studying the manner of His departure. Notice carefully the sequence and events of His departure:

1. **Mountain** – He was standing upon a “mountain” (Matt. 28:16).
2. **Air** – He ascended into the “air” [atmosphere] (Acts 1:9).
3. **Clouds** – He went up into the “clouds” (Acts 1:9).
4. **Heaven** – He disappeared from sight and ascended into “heaven” (Acts 1:11).

This is the pattern: Mountain→Air→Clouds→Heaven. If Jesus is going to return “in like manner,” then what is the reverse of this process? Heaven→Clouds→Air→Mountain:

- (1) **Heaven** – He descends from “heaven” (1 Thes. 4:16).
- (2) **Clouds** – He appears in the “clouds” (1 Thes. 4:17).
- (3) **Air** – He descends through the “air” [atmosphere] (1 Thes. 4:17).
- (4) **Mountain** – He will stand upon a “mountain.” In the “day of the Lord...his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives...” (Zech. 14:1,4).

### **Job: God to Stand Upon This Earth**

Further evidence that the Lord will return to establish His kingdom on this earth during the Millennium is found in the Book of Job. Job’s idea of the Second Coming of Christ contrasts sharply with Ellen White’s. Instead of God whisking away the saints to somewhere in heaven without ever touching the earth, Job says that he will meet his redeemer upon the earth:

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that **he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth**: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God (Job 19:25,26).

This passage says that Job will see his Redeemer when He stands upon the earth. This can be understood from a New Testament perspective as a direct reference to the Second Coming of Christ when the righteous dead are resurrected.

### **Jesus: Heaven Is *Not* Our Home**

Jesus and Solomon both taught that the reward for the righteous was to inherit the earth, not heaven:

Blessed are the meek, **for they shall inherit the earth** (Matt. 5:5).

The **righteous shall never be removed**: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth (Prov. 10:30).

Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed **in the earth...** (Prov. 11:31).

Jesus taught that heaven is not intended to be the habitation of humans:

**No one has ever gone into heaven** except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man (John 3:13; see also Acts 2:29).

Jesus taught his disciples that they could **not** go where He was going:

My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: **where I am going, you cannot come** (John 13:33).

So where did Jesus go after the resurrection that his disciples could not follow?

**I ascend unto my Father**, and your Father; and to my God, and your God (John 20:17).

A high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty **in the heavens** (Heb. 8:1).

Jesus went to heaven to sit at the right hand of God. He explicitly stated that where He was going, his human disciples could not come! Instead, Jesus told his disciples He was going away to “My Father’s house” where there are “many mansions” to “prepare a place” for them (John 14:2). The mansions that Jesus is preparing are presumably inside the beautiful city, the New Jerusalem, that will descend upon the new earth at the end of the Millennium. As the New Jerusalem descends to the new earth, John hears a voice say:

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and **God himself shall be with them**, and be their God (Rev. 21:2-3).



John describes the New Jerusalem as a “bride adorned for her husband.” This beautiful wording paints a visual picture of a pristine and “virgin” city, not one that the saints are about to re-occupy after having already lived there for the past 1,000 years! Think carefully, if the saints had already been living up in heaven in their mansions in the New Jerusalem for 1,000 years, then how could this possibly be the special marriage event that John is describing?

This verse announces a *new* era for mankind. God will be physically present with them. They will live together in the same city. **This announcement, that God will *now* be dwelling with men, would not make any sense if the righteous had already been dwelling with God in heaven for the past 1,000 years!**

## Is the Earth Void in the Millennium?

Ellen White saw the earth as an “uninhabited wilderness” during the Millennium. However, earlier it was mentioned that the saints are occupying the city of Jerusalem on Earth at the end of the Millennium. What about the rest of the earth? Is it desolate?

Birds are found on Earth during the Millennium:

And I saw an angel...saying to all the **fowls** that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God...and all the **fowls** were filled with their flesh (Rev. 19:17,21).

Plants and animals will inhabit the destroyed cities of the wicked during the Millennium:

For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter...But the **cormorant and the bittern shall possess it**; the **owl also and the raven** shall dwell in it... And **thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses** thereof: and it shall be an habitation of **dragons**, and a court for **owls**. The

wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the **wild beasts of the island**, and the **satyr** shall cry to his fellow; the **screech owl** also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. There shall the **great owl** make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the **vultures** also be gathered, every one with her mate (Isa. 34:2,11,13-15).

In additions to plants, birds, and animals, humans also occupy the millennial Earth. Isaiah 24 is used by Ellen White and other SDA writers to describe the condition of the earth during the Millennium.<sup>7</sup> The chapter proves that there are inhabitants on the earth during that period:

Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and **scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof** (Isa. 24:1).

This verse explains that there are inhabitants of the earth and that they are “scattered abroad.” The Hebrew word for “scattered abroad” is frequently used in the Old Testament to describe the dispersion of the Hebrews among the nations. It is never used to describe a total annihilation. Isaiah continues:

Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and **they that dwell therein** are desolate; therefore the **inhabitants of the earth** are burned, and **few men left** (Isa. 24:6).

Again, this verse indicates there are a “few” inhabitants on the earth during the Millennium. Isaiah does not teach there are “none” left. He says there are “few” left. The Hebrew word used here for “few” means “a remnant, a very few.”<sup>8</sup> SDAs may wish people to believe that “few” means “none” but this is not the case. Isaiah used an entirely different Hebrew word for none.<sup>9</sup>

Oddly enough, Ellen White quotes the above passage from Isaiah in *Great Controversy* as proof the earth is “emptied of its inhabitants”:

Christ takes His people to the City of God, and **the earth is emptied of its inhabitants.** “Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.” “The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word.” “Because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. **Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned.**” Isaiah 24:1, 3, 5, 6.<sup>10</sup>

In the above quote, Isaiah 24:6 has been highlighted in bold letters. Notice how Ellen White covertly removed the key final portion of the text without even using ellipses to indicate that there was more to the verse in the original. Here is how it originally reads in the KJV Bible:

Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, **and few men left.**

Ellen White apparently omitted the last words, “and few men left” because it contradicts SDA teachings on the Millennium. On the very same page of *Great Controversy*, Mrs. White makes another omission. She quotes Zechariah 14:12,13:

‘And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold everyone on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor.’ Zechariah 14:12, 13.<sup>11</sup>

Mrs. White is using these verses as proof that the earth is totally depopulated upon the Second Coming of Christ, and

yet three verses later, in Zechariah 14:16, the passage says that the nations of the earth are **not** totally obliterated. Verse 16 is a continuation of the events described in verses 12 and 13, and it indicates that people are living on the earth during the Millennium:

And it shall come to pass, [that] **every one that is left** of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles (Zech. 14:16).<sup>12</sup>

Interestingly enough, Mrs. White never quotes Zechariah 14:16 anywhere in her “25 million words”<sup>13</sup> of writings. Why not? Because it does not jive with her *visions*.

## Does Satan Roam Earth During Millennium?

Revelation teaches that Satan is bound for 1,000 years in the “bottomless pit”:

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled. (Rev. 20:2,3)

The term “bottomless pit” comes from the Greek word *abussos* which *Strong's* defines as “a very deep gulf or chasm in the lowest parts of the earth used as the common receptacle of the dead and especially as the abode of demons.” It is used nine times in the Bible and never refers to the inhabitable regions of the earth. Satan was cast down to this earth after he was expelled from heaven (Rev. 12:9). Revelation 20:1-3 depicts the movement of Satan from his current abode, the earth, to a prison abode, possibly within the lower regions of the earth, described only as a “bottomless pit.” From this region, Satan is unable to tempt or harass those upon the earth for 1,000 years.

## Who Attacks the New Jerusalem?

According to the scenario outlined in *Great Controversy*, at the end of the Millennium Christ “bids the wicked dead arise” and leaves them unattended on the earth for an unspecified period of time.<sup>14</sup> With Satan as their general, Mrs. White says the wicked army prepares for battle:

Skillful artisans construct implements of war. Military leaders, famed for their success, marshal the throngs of warlike men into companies and divisions.<sup>15</sup>

Eventually, this wicked army moves up and surrounds the New Jerusalem. As they surround the city, Jesus appears on the Great White Throne and pronounces judgment against them. At this point fire comes down from heaven and destroys the wicked, along with the earth. Afterwards, a new heaven and earth are created.

While this is certainly an fascinating tale, it does not fit the Biblical sequence of events at all. Revelation 20:7-15 explains the events occurring at the end of the Millennium in precise chronological detail:

1. Satan is loosed from the abyss (v. 7).
2. Satan goes out to deceive those living on the earth during the Millennium (v. 8).
3. Satan gathers an army and surrounds the “beloved city,” presumably the city of old Jerusalem (v. 9).
4. God sends fire from heaven to wipe out the army (v. 9).
5. The devil is cast into the lake of fire (v. 10).
6. The dead are resurrected and all stand judgment before the white throne of God (v. 11-13).
7. The wicked dead are cast into the lake of fire and suffer the second death (v. 14-15).

It is obvious from the Biblical chronology that the wicked dead are raised *after* the Satanic army has already been destroyed and *after* Satan was thrown into the lake of fire.

The wicked dead are not rewarded with a “second chance” to attack and torment God’s people yet again. Nowhere does Scripture say they are transported from the Great White Throne in heaven to the earth to join Satan’s army. They are raised to appear before the Judge and then they are immediately cast into the lake of fire to suffer the second death. It is completely fictional to imagine they are placed back on the earth to assault the righteous.

SDAs are forced to twist the chronology of events in Revelation 20 because they erroneously teach the earth is empty of humans during the Millennium. Since there are no humans alive to attack Jerusalem, the only way to get wicked humans on the earth at the end of the Millennium is to conclude that God, for some unknown reason, decides to place the wicked dead back on the earth after raising them to be judged at the white throne judgment. However, such a contrived view does not fit the chronology of Revelation 20, nor does it make any sense for God to permit the wicked dead one last pleasure of attacking the righteous.

SDAs are forced to twist the chronology even further because they teach there is no occupied city of Jerusalem upon the earth during the Millennium for Satan to attack. So, to supply an occupied city of “Jerusalem” for the wicked throng to attack, SDAs are forced to make the New Jerusalem descend upon the earth *before* the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. The Bible, on the contrary, teaches the New Jerusalem does not descend until *after* the new earth has been created (Rev. 21:1-2).

Notice below how the Bible chronology flows in perfect, logical order, while SDAs must twist the events around and invent events not described in the Bible to make their theory work:

| Bible Chronology | SDA Chronology  |
|------------------|---|
|                  | 20:11 - The dead are resurrected (SDAs must move this event up <i>before</i> Satan is |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | loosed in order to get people upon the earth when Satan is loosed).  |
| 20:7 - Satan is loosed from the Abyss and returns to the earth.   | 20:7 – Satan is not <i>loosed</i> from prison. Rather, Satan is now free to tempt people again because God put the wicked back on the earth. |
| 20:8 - Satan goes out to deceive those living on the earth during the Millennium.                                       | 20:8 - Satan goes out to deceive the wicked from all the ages, now on the earth.   |
| 20:9 - Satan gathers an army and surrounds the “beloved city,” which is presumably the old city of Jerusalem.           | 21:2 - The New Jerusalem comes down (out of sequence). This is necessary so that Satan can have a populated city to attack.                  |
|   | 21:11 – The White Throne judgment takes place upon the earth (out of sequence).  |
| 20:9 - God sends fire from heaven to wipe out the army.   | 20:9 - God sends fire to destroy the army (Mrs. White combines this event with 21:14, saying this is the same as the lake of fire).          |
| 20:10 - The devil is cast into the lake of fire.  | 20:10 - The devil is cast into the lake of fire.   |
| 20:11 - The dead are resurrected and stand before the white throne in heaven.   | (The dead were resurrected earlier in order to get an army on the earth).  |
| 20:14 - The wicked dead are cast into the lake of fire and suffer the second death                                      | (The wicked were already burned up. SDAs combined verses 9 and 14 to make the army on earth and the wicked of all ages a single group.)      |
| 21:1 - A “new heaven and earth” are created   | 21:1 - A “new heaven and earth” are created  |
| 21:2 - New Jerusalem descends from heaven to the <i>new earth</i> as a virgin bride to be populated for the first time. | (New Jerusalem has already descended to the <i>old earth</i> , and it is already populated with the saints)                                  |

After comparing the Biblical sequence of events with Ellen White's sequence, it should be apparent that the entire Biblical chronology has been massacred to make Mrs. White's scenario work.

## What the Saints Do During the Millennium?

What does Mrs. White say that the saints are doing up in heaven for a Millennium?

It is at this time that, as foretold by Paul, "the saints shall judge the world." 1 Corinthians 6:2. In union with Christ they judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body.<sup>16</sup>

Mrs. White explains the saints will be judging the lost during the Millennium. However, Revelation 20:6 says the saints will "reign" during the Millennium. Paul adds, "we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim. 2:12). If the saints are up in heaven, what exactly are they supposed to be reigning over? Angels?

No, according to Mrs. White, the *reign* consists entirely of judging the dead. However, earlier in *Great Controversy*, she claimed that the saints will not actually be judging the dead in the sense of deciding cases because that work was completed during the pre-advent Investigative Judgment. So then, what exactly does the *judging* consist of? It consists of reviewing the cases of the dead to make sure God got it right! The SDA saints must fact-check the omniscient and omnipotent Ruler of the universe to make sure He did not make a blunder. Furthermore, they have some input into the penalty phase, because they help to determine "the portion which the wicked must suffer."<sup>17</sup>

Thus, Ellen White describes a scenario where the saints will be *auditors*, not kings. Apparently, Mrs. White did not have much faith in God's ability to judge, since she envisioned her and James and the other saints spending 1,000 years going over the records so that they can assure themselves and the rest of the watching universe that God's



judgments were fair and accurate. That does not sound like much of a reign! Rather, this 1,000-year audit sounds like a redundant waste of time and effort!

The word “reign” used in Rev. 20:6 is from the Greek word *basileuo* which means: “to be king, to exercise kingly power, to reign.”<sup>18</sup> Reigning may indeed include the aspect of judging (not reviewing, nor auditing), but it also means exercising kingly power and authority. There is a vast difference between *reigning* and *reviewing* the cases of the dead! If the only reigning the saints are going to do during the Millennium is reviewing cases, then why did John not use the word “judge” (Greek *krin*) instead of “reign”? John was certainly familiar with the word “judge” (*krin*), since he used the word 24 times in his writings, including in Rev. 20:12 (a mere 6 verses after Rev. 20:6). If John had wanted to convey the message that the saints would be judging, not reigning, during the Millennium, he certainly could have chosen to use the word “judge” (*krin*). However, he did not. He said the saints would “reign” with Christ.

## God’s Kingdom Set Up on Earth!

SDAs have no explanation for Zechariah 14 because it does not correspond to their theology of a Millennium with the saints in heaven. Zechariah teaches that when the Lord returns, He will set up his kingdom upon the earth:

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh ... Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations... And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which [is] before Jerusalem ... And it shall be in that day, [that] living waters shall go out from Jerusalem... And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one. ... (Zec 14:1,3,8,9)

During this time “we shall also reign with him” and “we shall reign on the earth.” (1 Ti. 2:12, Rev. 5:10). Who are the righteous reigning over? Zechariah gives indisputable proof

that a remnant of unsaved people who were not destroyed at Christ's Second Coming will inhabit the earth. Notice from Zechariah 14:

- Every year the people of the earth will go to Jerusalem to worship the Lord and keep the feast of Tabernacles (v. 16).
- Those people who do not come to worship the king shall receive no rain (v. 17).
- Heathen nations live on the earth, and if they do not come to worship, they will suffer a plague (v. 18, 19)

SDAs claim that since the Father's throne is in heaven, the saints will be occupying the throne in heaven, not upon earth (Rev. 15:2). However, Rev. 20:6 says the saints will be reigning *with Christ*. Christ's throne is not in heaven, for in heaven He currently sits on the right hand of the throne of God, taking the position of a prince. The Bible teaches that Christ's throne is upon this earth:

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and **the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David** and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end (Luke 1:32, 33).

Jesus is coming back to inherit David's throne, as king over the Jews and all the gentiles who have been grafted in during the Christian era. That is an earthly throne. Notice how God promises a king will reign on the earth:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch [a descendent from David], and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth (Jer. 23:5).

Isaiah 11 describes the coming king who will slay the wicked and reign over the earth during an era of peace when even the animals will be at peace:

But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek **of the earth** and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked ... The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them... (Isa. 11:4,6).

Various Old Testament prophets testify that the Lord will rule the earth from Jerusalem:

...in the last days, that the mountain of the Eternal's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it! And many people shall go and say, "come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:2-3).

... and the LORD shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even forever (Micah 4:7)!

The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies (Ps. 110:1,2).

Other parallel passages in the Psalms refer to the Millennium, describing it as a time when the kingdoms of this earth will serve the Lord.<sup>19</sup> The Biblical evidence is heavily weighted towards the kingdom of Jesus being established upon this earth at Jerusalem during the Millennium.

## Conclusion

While humans have only a limited understanding of the Millennium, the weight of Biblical evidence presented above indicates:

- The saints will rule with Jesus upon the earth during the Millennium.
- The Millennial earth is inhabited by birds, animals, plants, and a few humans.
- The bottomless pit is not an inhabitable region of the earth.
- Satan will be loosed at the end of the Millennium and deceive those humans living on the earth, forming them into an army.
- Satan's army will march on earthly Jerusalem and be destroyed by fire from God.
- Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire.
- The wicked of all ages will be resurrected and appear before the white throne of judgment.
- The wicked will all be cast into the lake of fire to suffer the second death.
- The Millennial period will end when the new Jerusalem descends from heaven and a new heaven and earth are created.

Ellen White's teaching of a Millennium in heaven places SDAs in a very awkward position of having to try and explain away the dozens of obvious references to an earthly Millennium in the Old Testament. SDAs have never been able to adequately explain away all of these verses and the preponderance of Biblical evidence is heavily weighted against their view.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 645.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 657.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 662.

<sup>5</sup> See Rev. 19:15,17,20,21; also Isa. 34, 11:4, Jer. 25:29-33, 2 Thes. 2:8, Zech. 14:12, Micah 4:13, Isa. 66:15,16.

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 78:68. See also Ecclesiasticus 24:11.

<sup>7</sup> See Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 589, 657, 661.

<sup>8</sup> *Strong's*  $\gamma\psi\gamma$ . In Scripture, Isaiah is the only author who uses the Hebrew word  $\gamma\psi\gamma$  in his writing. Only one other time in the book of Isaiah is the word used to indicate a small number, and that is in Isaiah 16:14, "and the remnant {  $\gamma\psi\gamma$  } [shall be] very small [and] feeble."

<sup>9</sup> Hebrew  $\gamma\psi$  is used in Isaiah 41:24; 45:21.

<sup>10</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 657, emphasis supplied.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> That fact that Ellen White quotes from Zechariah 14 in this context should prove to any SDA that this is indeed a Millennial passage.

<sup>13</sup> Herbert E. Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, chapter 39, as found on the Ellen G. White Estate's web site,

<http://www.whiteestate.org/books/mol/Chapt39.html#Understanding>  
How the Books Were Written, as of Jan. 12, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 662-663.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 664.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 660.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> *Strong's*.

<sup>19</sup> "To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem; When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD." (Ps. 102:21-22) "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom [is] the LORD'S: and he [is] the governor among the nations." (Ps. 22:27-28)

# CHAPTER 36

## *The Great Tragedy*

*Great Controversy* Chapters 39 and 40 Examined

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The great tragedy of *Great Controversy* is that this book—read and adored by millions—alters the gospel message, redirecting the emphasis from the *completed* work of Christ to the works of man. In a nutshell, the gospel message is that God vindicated man through the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. *Great Controversy* turns that upside down and teaches that, in the end, it is *man* that vindicates *God* and His law! According to Ellen White, God and His law are on trial before the universe during the great controversy. Supposedly, all the unfallen beings of the universe are watching God, to determine if He and His laws are just, and it is up to man to vindicate God!

Mrs. White explains that the “deeper purpose” of Christ’s death was to vindicate God and His law:

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and **deeper purpose than the salvation of man**. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but **it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe**. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me.” John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but **before all the**

**universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan.** It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. White portrays a universe where the beings are plagued with troubling doubts about the fairness, honesty, and ethics of God's government. She says, "holy inhabitants of other worlds were watching with the deepest interest the events taking place on the earth."<sup>2</sup> So, God must prove His righteousness to a distrustful universe.

According to Mrs. White's theory, God's first step in disproving Satan was to send Jesus to Earth, as a man, to prove that a man can indeed keep the law of God perfectly:

His [Christ's] mission to the world is to vindicate the sacred claims of that law.<sup>3</sup>

**Christ came to vindicate the sacred claims of the law.** He came to live a life of obedience to its requirements and thus prove the falsity of the charge made by Satan that it is impossible for man to keep the law of God... His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God.<sup>4</sup>

But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. ... By His life and His death, **Christ proved** that God's justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and **that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. Satan's charges were refuted.**<sup>5</sup>

These quotes leave the impression that Jesus' overriding interest in coming to this earth was not to save humanity, not because "God so loved the world," but rather because Jesus came to prove Satan was wrong about God's laws so that the rest of the universe would not think poorly of God and His laws. Thus, our salvation is merely a byproduct of Jesus' struggle to prove Satan wrong about the law of God.

Keep in mind that this scenario is not presented anywhere in the Bible. It rests solely upon the *visions* of Ellen White.

She paints the picture of a God being critiqued by His creatures, wherein He's trying to prove to them how much better He is than Satan. Could anything be more absurd? Must God *prove* to Satan and the rest of the universe that His law can be kept? Must He *prove* to the beings he created that He is *fair*? Why does God have to prove anything to anyone? He is God!

So, according to Ellen White, Jesus proved God's point about being able to keep the law and vindicated God by dying without ever having sinned. However, the great controversy was not yet over. Yes, the Son of God had proven a single human could keep the law. Now that Jesus has provided mankind with an example of perfection, God now expects the rest of humanity to prove they can keep the law perfectly like Jesus did, while Satan and the rest of the universe observe these happenings like a jury. Ordinary, fallen humans must prove to the universe that they can render God perfect obedience without an intercessor in Heaven. This earthly controversy will continue until people from all different backgrounds and cultures—each with their own inherited and cultivated tendencies toward evil—can prove to the universe they can keep God's law perfectly. Mrs. White affirms, "The professed followers of Christ are on trial before the heavenly universe..."<sup>6</sup>

Humans now become pawns in the galactic battle. Their mission is to prove to the universe that *they* can keep the Old Covenant Ten Commandment law:

The warfare against God's law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time. Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. ...Then the end will come. **God will vindicate His law** and deliver His people.<sup>7</sup>

According to this scenario, God will finally be able to vindicate His Old Covenant law if He can find enough SDAs



who are willing and able to keep it.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the whole focus of the great controversy is that humans must now “vindicate His [God’s] character before the world.”<sup>9</sup> This turns the gospel upside-down and makes man and his perfect obedience the *center* of the equation, instead of Christ and His sacrifice and His grace. Ellen White writes:

Our faith is holy; **our work is to vindicate the honor of God's law.**<sup>10</sup>

With what intense interest was this controversy watched by the heavenly angels and the unfallen worlds, **as the honor of the law was being vindicated.** Not merely for this world, but for the universe of heaven, was the controversy to be forever settled.<sup>11</sup>

## Laws of Nature

How can humans vindicate God and His law? *Great Controversy* instructs SDAs to “permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God.”<sup>12</sup> This includes obedience to what Ellen White calls the “laws of nature.” According to her, believers can *violate* “the laws of God by violating the laws of nature.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, those being perfected must not only adhere perfectly to the Old Covenant law, but they must also adhere to the “laws of nature.” Mrs. White explains that even as a child, Jesus adhered to the “laws of nature.”<sup>14</sup> This was no doubt part of His perfection. Likewise, she admonishes parents to teach their children “that they must obey the laws of nature.”<sup>15</sup>

As part of the process of perfecting the SDA saints, their appetite must be controlled to exacting standards. Mrs. White writes in *Great Controversy*:

Those who do love God with all the heart will desire to give Him the best service of their life, and they will be constantly seeking to bring every power of their being **into harmony with the laws that will promote their ability to do His will.** They will not, by the indulgence

of **appetite** or passion, enfeeble or defile the offering which they present to their heavenly Father.<sup>16</sup>

On the next page, she outlines those things that would interfere with the perfecting of the saints: “Gluttony,” “wine drinking,” “forbidden pleasure,” and “tobacco.”<sup>17</sup> Regarding these four subjects, what exactly must SDAs do to attain the perfection that would not “defile” their offering to the Father? As it turns out, the answer is not found in the Bible, but in the writings of Ellen White. Therein one will find the “health message” which Mrs. White claimed was part of the third angel’s message.

## Gluttony

Since the “laws of nature” are not spelled out in the Bible, one must turn to Ellen White to provide the details. In *Great Controversy*, she warned against gluttony. All Christians would readily agree that gluttony is contrary to the Word of God. However, according to Ellen White’s “laws of nature,” gluttony includes items that are not included anywhere in the Bible. Mrs. White explains her ideas of gluttony which violate the “laws of nature”:

We are living in an age of gluttony, and the habits to which the young are educated, even by many Seventh-day Adventists, are in direct opposition to the **laws of nature**. I was seated once at the table with several children under twelve years of age. Meat was plentifully served, and then a delicate, nervous girl called for pickles. A bottle of chow-chow, fiery with mustard and pungent with spices, was handed her, from which she helped herself freely.<sup>18</sup>

Here Mrs. White condemns the use of meat, pickles, and spices, including mustard. These things are out of alignment with her concept of the “laws of nature.” This illustrates the entire problem with the so-called “laws of nature”: They vary depending upon who is defining them. Ellen White adopted various health reforms from non-SDA health

reformers and placed her divine stamp of approval on them.<sup>19</sup> Then, she expected her followers to follow these rules as assuredly as they obeyed the law of God because a violation of the laws of nature was a violation of God's law.

Interestingly, most of Ellen White's "laws of nature" either add to the Word of God or contradict it. Of the items mentioned in the quote above, pickles and spices are not forbidden by the Word of God. Neither is there any evidence they harm the health. The idea that they caused feverish blood is part of the paranoia spread by delusional health reformers in the nineteenth century. Likewise, meat-eating is never condemned in the Bible. Believers in both the Old and New Testament ate meat, including Jesus, the Apostles, and Yahweh's priests.<sup>20</sup> Part of the SDA journey to perfection will be to adopt the vegan diet long advocated by Ellen White:

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.<sup>21</sup>

## Wine Drinking

A second item in *Great Controversy* that Ellen White says the saints must avoid is wine drinking. While the Bible condemns drunkenness, it does not forbid the moderate use of alcohol. For example, Jesus contrasts His lifestyle with the austere lifestyle of John the Baptist:

For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking... (Luke 7:33-34).

In the Old Testament, the priests were forbidden to drink alcohol when serving at the Temple, but were not otherwise forbidden to do so (Lev. 10:8-11, Ezek. 44:21). Paul wrote, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink" and "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink" (Col. 2:16, Rom. 14:17). Why does Ellen White make the kingdom of God

about eating meat and drinking wine when the Bible does not?

## Passion

A third item in *Great Controversy* banished by Ellen White is “forbidden pleasure,” which denotes pleasure of a sexual nature. While Mrs. White did not spell out exactly what that meant in *Great Controversy*, one can turn to her other *inspired* writings and discover what it meant. Mrs. White was deeply concerned about sexual activities draining the “life force” from her followers. She writes extensively about it, primarily warning them against pleasures not forbidden by the Bible, such as “marital excess” and “secret vice.”<sup>22</sup>

## Tobacco

A fourth item forbidden in *Great Controversy*, but not the Bible, is tobacco. Mrs. White declares in *Great Controversy* that “slaves of tobacco” will not enter eternal life.<sup>23</sup> Once again, she affirms that the saints must follow the obscure and ill-defined “laws of health” to obtain eternal life. Thus, human works, such as stopping smoking, are required for salvation. This contrasts with the faith Paul taught, that salvation is by “grace” and not “of works, lest any man should boast” “for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Eph. 2:8-9; Gal. 2:16).

## Without an Intercessor

After they adopt the vegan diet, after they stop all alcohol use, after they control their lower passions, after they stop smoking, after their holiness has been perfected, after they keep the Old Covenant laws to perfection, then SDAs will *finally* be holy enough to be able to stand without the need of a heavenly intercessor. If they no longer need an intercessor, this would imply they are no longer sinning. Mrs. White describes these perfected people:

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.<sup>24</sup>

In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God **without an intercessor**.<sup>25</sup>

*Great Controversy* teaches that just as Christ lived a sinless life, so Christians at the end of time are to live without sin:

Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." John 14:30. Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. **This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.**<sup>26</sup>

Mrs. White continually stressed the doctrine of sinless perfection in her books, articles, and personal letters. Some SDAs have suggested such statements were made "early on" in her prophetic career, and that she later "matured" in her understanding of justification by faith. This is completely false. Character perfection through obedience to the Ten Commandments, obedience to the "laws of health" and the third angel's vegan "health message," and obedience to her

*Testimonies*, are frequent themes permeating her writings, from start to end.

*Testimonies*, vol. 1 (1855) – “We can overcome. Yes; **fully, entirely**. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that we might overcome every evil temper, **every sin, every temptation . . .**”<sup>27</sup>

*Letter 25* (1882) – “The work is before you and me, and all who win eternal life must **overcome every fault, every error, every defect in character**. ... I want that you should **perfect Christian character**. ... The glory of God, **the perfection of Christian character, is to be the aim, the purpose of our life**. ... The Pattern is given us to copy, and **no excuse will be accepted** of God as a reason for not meeting the divine standard... The conflict will be hard and wearisome, but Jesus is our helper; in Him and through Him we must conquer, however severe the process.”<sup>28</sup>

*Desire of Ages* (1898) – “Not even by a thought did He [Christ] yield to temptation. **So it may be with us**. ... The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people.”<sup>29</sup>

*Signs of the Times* (1898) – “In order to let Jesus into our hearts, we must stop sinning.”<sup>30</sup>

*Review and Herald* (1898) – “He [Jesus] came to fulfill all righteousness, and, as the head of humanity, **to show man that he can do the same work**, meeting every specification of the requirements of God. ... **Perfection of character is attainable by every one who strives for it**.”<sup>31</sup>

*Review and Herald* (1900) – “To be redeemed means **to cease from sin**.”<sup>32</sup>

*Christ Object Lessons* (1900) – “God will accept **only** those who are determined to aim high. He places every human agent under obligation to do his best. **Moral perfection is required of all**.”<sup>33</sup>

*The Youth's Instructor* (1901) – “One defect, cultivated instead of being overcome, makes the man imperfect, and closes against him the gate of the Holy City. **He who enters heaven must have a character that is without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.** Naught that defileth can ever enter there. **In all the redeemed host not one defect will be seen.**”<sup>34</sup>

*Acts of the Apostles* (1911) – “**God calls upon us to reach the standard of perfection** and places before us the example of Christ's character. In His humanity, perfected by a life of constant resistance of evil, the Saviour showed that through co-operation with Divinity, **human beings may in this life attain to perfection of character.**”<sup>35</sup>

Finally, after the SDAs have proven they can keep God's Old Covenant law perfectly, the great controversy can now end, and peace can be restored:

...when the great controversy shall be ended... The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable. ...before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law.<sup>36</sup>

## A Biblical Perspective on Perfection

The grand theme of the Bible is not about man vindicating God. It is about God vindicating man—even though man does not deserve and cannot earn that vindication. The Bible teaches, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23 NKJV). While the Greek word “sinned” is in the past tense, the Greek phrase “fall short” is in the present tense. Thus, all humans continue to fall short of the perfection of Jesus, regardless of their “diligent efforts.”

In Isaiah 53:6, God's *true* prophet talks about the coming Messiah, saying “all we like sheep have gone astray.” Then Isaiah describes the good news: “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” The good news of the Gospel is that God has vindicated mankind by sacrificing His Son for

humanity. Humans cannot earn their vindication. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). Just as the Old Covenant sacrifices symbolically imparted righteousness to the bearer, so Christ’s sacrifice has vindicated (made righteous) those who believe in Him:

Because **by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever** those who are being made holy (Heb. 10:14).

The idea that man must somehow vindicate God and God’s law by living a life of perfect sinlessness is not taught anywhere in the Bible. In fact, quite the opposite is taught:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8).

*Great Controversy* takes one of the most beautiful themes of the Bible and devastates it. Readers are led to believe that all the alien intelligences in the universe are huddled around their galactic TV sets watching humans so that they can determine whether or not God and his laws are trustworthy! It may appeal to one’s self-conceit to think one has it within their power to vindicate God before the entire universe, but such an idea is absurd. God does not need humans to vindicate Him. Paul wrote, “How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:33). Isaiah wrote, “Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?” (Isa. 45:9). God is beyond all reproach. “Therefore listen to me, you men of understanding. It is impossible for God to do wrong, and for the Almighty to act unjustly” (Job 34:10). Jesus said, “Your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). The Psalmist wrote, “As for God, his way is perfect” (Ps. 18:30). Moses wrote, “His work is perfect...just and right is he” (Deut. 32:4).



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- <sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (1890), 68-69.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid., 78. See also *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 18, 342.
- <sup>3</sup> Ellen White, *Desire of Ages* (1898), 307.
- <sup>4</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies*, vol. 8 (1904), 207.
- <sup>5</sup> White, *Desire of Ages*, 762.
- <sup>6</sup> Ellen White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (1900), 303.
- <sup>7</sup> White, *Desire of Ages*, 763.
- <sup>8</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, 435: "In order to be prepared for the judgment, it is necessary that men should keep the law of God. That law will be the standard of character in the judgment."
- <sup>9</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies*, vol. 5 (1882-1889), 746.
- <sup>10</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 592.
- <sup>11</sup> Ellen White, *Selected Messages* book 1 (1958), 255.
- <sup>12</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 488.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., 569. See also, manuscript 153, 1899, para. 19: "Any violation of the laws of nature is a violation of the law of God."
- <sup>14</sup> Ellen White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (1913), 178.
- <sup>15</sup> Ellen White, *Ministry of Healing* (1905), 386.
- <sup>16</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 473.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., 474.
- <sup>18</sup> Ellen White, *Home Education* (1894), 163.
- <sup>19</sup> For more info on this subject, see Dirk Anderson, *More than a Profit, Less than a Prophet*, (2023).
- <sup>20</sup> See <https://nonsda.org/study11.shtml>.
- <sup>21</sup> Ellen White, *Counsels on Diet*, 380-381.
- <sup>22</sup> See Gregory Hunt, *Beware This Cult* (1981), <https://www.nonsda.org/egw/btc/index.html>.
- <sup>23</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 474.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., 425.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., 614.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., 623.
- <sup>27</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 144.
- <sup>28</sup> Letter 25, 1882. Published in Ellen White, *Daughters of God* (1998), 165, 168, 169.
- <sup>29</sup> White, *Desire of Ages*, 123, 671.
- <sup>30</sup> Ellen White, *Signs of the Times*, March 3, 1898.
- <sup>31</sup> Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, April 5, 1898.
- <sup>32</sup> Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, Sept. 25, 1900.
- <sup>33</sup> White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, 330.
- <sup>34</sup> Ellen White, *The Youth's Instructor*, Jan. 17, 1901.
- <sup>35</sup> Ellen White, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 531.
- <sup>36</sup> White, *Desire of Ages*, 764.

# CHAPTER 37

## Conclusion

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In August 2021, General Conference president Ted Wilson announced a multi-year project to distribute a billion copies of *Great Controversy* throughout the world.<sup>1</sup> The SDA corporate president evidently regards the book as an effective evangelistic tool. What is the reality of this book?

*Great Controversy* is a sales tool used by SDAs to proselytize other Christians to join their sect. It does so by presenting a false and inaccurate portrayal of history. Filled with anti-Catholic and anti-Protestant vitriol, it claims the Albigenses were preserving the truth when they were not. It claims the Waldenses were keeping the Sabbath when they were not. It claims Luther was a great example to emulate when he was not. It claims the Millerite movement made people aware of great truths when it did not. It claims Miller was a great reformer like John the Baptist when he was a great deceiver. It claims Protestant Christians were not having true revivals when they were. It claims a door of salvation closed in 1844 when it did not. It claims Christ moved to the Most Holy Place in 1844 when He did not. It claims the Sabbath is the final test when it is not. It claims God's people must stand without an intercessor but that is untrue. The bottom line is that *Great Controversy* is a slick sales mechanism that distorts history, distorts the Bible, and distorts the truth for one purpose: To convince the reader to leave their church and join the SDA sect.

As this book concludes, it should now be understood that *Great Controversy* was not the product of visions and talks with angels. On the contrary, the initial “inspiration” came from H.L. Hastings’ *Great Controversy*. Further *inspiration*

was drawn from other SDA authors such as J.N. Andrews and Uriah Smith. Further *inspiration* came from the writings of a host of non-SDA authors such as D'Aubigne, Sylvester Bliss, Henry Melvill, J.A. Wylie, and Daniel March. The very people she condemned as being part of “Babylon” were the ones she copied from the most, and from whom she received the most *inspiration*.

*Great Controversy* is filled with historical inaccuracies, failed predictions, false prophecies, and doctrinal errors that contradict both the Bible and common sense. It is a confusing mixture of fiction and truth. While it is an intriguing book and makes for some entertaining reading, it is far from being the product of divine inspiration that it has been made out to be by those desiring to profit from its sale. This book would not have aroused such controversy if it had been sold to the public as a piece of religious science fiction, which it is. Instead, it is being pilfered to a billion people as a book that contains heaven-sent “truth for the last days.” As such, it is nothing less than a great tragedy that this book has been used to deceive so many unsuspecting Christians about the true meaning of the atonement, the judgment, the gospel, and end-time events. Without a doubt, it is the *Fake Controversy*.

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<sup>1</sup> The “Great Controversy Project,” extracted on Dec. 14, 2024,  
<https://www.nadadventist.org/departments/great-controversy-project>.

# APPENDIX 1

## *Who is the Little Horn of Daniel 8?*

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Seventh-day Adventists teach that the little horn of Daniel 8 is the same power as the little horn of Daniel 7. To understand why they teach this, one must first understand the symbols of Daniel 7 and their meaning. Daniel 7 describes a “little horn” power which early Protestant scholars, and later SDA scholars, interpreted as the persecuting power of papal Rome. Matthew Henry, writing in 1712, acknowledges what some Protestants of his day believed, that the little horn of Daniel 7 was papal Rome.<sup>1</sup>

According to SDA teaching, the *little horn* of Daniel 7 is also the *little horn* of Daniel 8. At face value, this seems reasonable since they are both described as “little horns.” However, it will soon be apparent that there are far more differences than similarities between these two little horns.

First, there is an important shift in emphasis that happens in the book of Daniel between chapters seven and eight:<sup>2</sup>

- In Daniel 7, world powers are represented by unclean beasts, but in Daniel 8, they are represented by the sacrificial animals of the sanctuary service.
- Daniel 7 is written Aramaic, a gentile language. This could indicate the intended audience is the gentile world. Daniel 8 is written in Hebrew, which could indicate the intended audience is Jews.
- In Daniel 7, the prophetic spotlight is on the entire world. In Daniel 8, the spotlight is on the Jewish sanctuary services.

These differences show that while chapter 7 is focused on the world in general, chapter 8 narrows the focus to future events of particular interest to Israel.

## Differences Between the Little Horns

Important differences exist between the little horn of Daniel 7 and the little horn of Daniel 8:

| Little Horn of Daniel 7  | Little Horn of Daniel 8  |
|--|--|
| Is associated with a beast representing the <b>fourth</b> empire (Rome).   | Is associated with a beast representing the <b>third</b> empire (Greece).  |
| Rises directly <b>out of the head</b> of the fourth beast.   | Rises out of an already existing horn on the third beast.  |
| Comes up <b>in the midst of 10 already existing horns</b> (according to SDA theology, this event takes place <i>after</i> the fourth empire has been divided into ten parts, i.e., after 476 A.D.) | It rises from one of the four horns.   |
| It is a fresh, <b>new power</b> , rising out of the body of the old fourth empire, becoming the predominant horn among 7 other horns.  | The imagery is of a small horn growing out from a larger horn, one of the four horns on the goat's head ( <b>third empire</b> ). |
| Uproots <b>three horns</b> in its rise.  | Uproots <b>no horns</b> in its rise.   |
| Is said to be “ <b>diverse from the other 10 horns</b> ,” conveying that this horn would be a new and different power.   | Nothing is indicating this horn is new, different, or diverse in any way other than being “little.”                              |
| The Aramaic for <i>little horn</i> in 7:8 is strictly translated, “ <b>another horn, a little one.</b> ”   | The Hebrew for <i>little horn</i> in 8:9 is strictly translated, “ <b>a horn from littleness.</b> ”                              |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Is <b>“more stout than his fellows”</b> (v. 20). In other words, despite its size it represents a power that is stronger than those symbolized by the 10 other horns.</p> | <p>Is a horn out of a horn, a <b>“horn of littleness.”</b> It is insignificant compared to the four “notable horns” and the one original Alexandrine horn of the goat.</p>  |
| <p>Its field of influence is the entire fourth empire since it arises from the head of the beast and <b>becomes the dominant horn</b> among the other 10 horns.</p>          | <p><b>It pertains to only one of the four divisions</b> of the goat power. Its attention is restricted principally to a minor province of one division of the goat's empire, namely the “pleasant land” of verse 9, which is Palestine.</p> |
| <p>Lifts himself up against “the Most High” and the “saints of the Most High.” These are the <b>saints of God throughout the entire fourth empire.</b></p>                   | <p>Malevolence is directed against the <b>Jewish people</b>, their high priest, sacrifices, and sanctuary. The atmosphere and coloring of chapter 8 indicate a local and Levitical battle.</p>  |

The evidence above shows there are many significant differences between the little horn of Daniel 7 and the little horn of Daniel 8. There are also differences in the timing of when the horns arrive on the scene of history.

### When Does the Little Horn of Daniel 8 Arise?

And out of one of them [one of the goat's (Greece's) four horns] came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. (Daniel 8:9)

Daniel 8:9 says the little horn would originate from one of the divisions of Alexander's empire when these divisions were in their "latter time" (v. 23). This points toward a power originating from the Greek world sometime after the division of the Greek Empire into four parts. Alexander died in 323 B.C., and there was a struggle among his various generals for control of the empire. A series of wars took place between 322 B.C. and 301 B.C. called the *Wars of the Diadochi*. Afterward, four of his generals prevailed and established their kingdoms (Ptolemy, Cassander, Lysimachus, and Seleucus).

Rome was never part of the Alexandrian Empire, nor did it originate from one of the divisions of the Greek Empire. Rome arose from Italy and was founded in 750 B.C. Rome became a republic in 509 B.C. Rome did conquer the four divisions of the Grecian empire, but this is further proof that **Rome did not arise from any of the four divisions of Alexander's empire**. Therefore, Rome could not possibly fit the prophetic symbol of a horn arising from a horn within the Greek Empire.

The *little horn* of Daniel 7 did not have its beginning until the fourth beast was divided into 10 kingdoms, which is said by Adventists to have happened in 476 A.D. The *little horn* of Daniel 8 was to come up "**in the latter time of their kingdom**" (v. 23). "Their kingdom" refers to the four divisions of the Alexandrian Empire. The "latter time" or last days of the four kingdoms was 200 B.C. - 100 B.C. **Therefore, the little horn of Daniel 8 was to arise six centuries before SDAs say that the little horn of Daniel 7 arose!** This difference in timing is strong evidence that the two "little horn" powers are not the same. They arise at vastly different points in human history.

According to SDAs, the 2,300 years began in 457 B.C. and ended in 1844 A.D. During this time period the little horn of Daniel 8 is supposed to be "treading underfoot" the sanctuary. According to SDA teaching, this began with pagan Rome treading underfoot the earthly sanctuary, and

then later became Papal Rome treading underfoot the heavenly sanctuary. This presents a whole host of dilemmas:

1. The Roman general Pompey invaded Judea in 63 B.C. and captured Jerusalem and the temple. How could the little horn have begun its desecrating work in 457 B.C., 394 years before Rome gained control over the Temple? Rome had no part whatsoever in the activities of 457 B.C. and thus could not possibly be the “little horn” described in Daniel 8.
2. In 63 B.C., Pompey occupied Jerusalem and installed a Pharisee as High Priest. After this, the Romans lived at relative peace with the Jewish nation, allowing the temple services to continue unmolested. How could the little horn be “trampling underfoot” the Sanctuary for over 500 years when it did not interfere with the sanctuary service during that time?
3. If papal Rome is the *little horn* of Daniel 8 during the *latter part* of the 2,300 years, then what happened to papal Rome on October 22, 1844? Did the Papacy suddenly stop defiling the Sanctuary in 1844? Was it “broken without hand” (vs. 25) in 1844? Why is there no event in papal history to coincide with the end of the 2,300 days?
4. If pagan Rome neither persecuted the Jews nor stopped the sacrifices in 457 B.C. and if there is no event in papal history to coincide with the close of the 2,300 years in 1844, then how can one possibly attach Rome to this prophecy?

Consider this: The four divisions of Alexander’s empire were conquered by Rome. However, Daniel 8 does **not** give any indication the four horns were conquered by the “little horn” of Daniel 8. It is impossible to fit Rome into the events and symbols of Daniel 8.



One who reads the entire chapter cannot fail to see one event following another:

1. The rise of the *great horn* (Alexander) comes first.
2. He rules for a time and is *broken*.
3. His empire is divided into four new empires.
4. The *little horn* appears *after* this division.

One event is dependent upon another, and one can follow the course of these events through history. Now, consider the following chronology carefully:

1. Alexander died in 323 B.C.
2. The division of Alexander's empire amongst his four generals was complete by 301 B.C.
3. Thus, the little horn could not have come on the scene until *after* 301 BC!

How could the little horn be desecrating the Sanctuary in 457 B.C. when the prophecy does not even show it arising until *after* 301 BC?

### **Little Horn of Daniel 8 is a King, Not an Empire**

And in the latter time of their kingdom [4 divisions of the Greek Empire], when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up (Dan. 8:23).

There can be no doubt that Gabriel is here identifying the "little horn" of verse 9 as the "king of fierce countenance." The Hebrew word for "king" in verse 23 is *melek*, and means "a king; king, royal."<sup>3</sup> The word, *melek*, is **never** translated "kingdom," or "world power," or "empire." Gabriel uses the same Hebrew word, *melek*, to identify the goat's "great horn" in verse 21, which all Bible scholars agree refers to Alexander.

In verse 23 (see above) the word “kingdom” comes from the Hebrew word *malkuth*, meaning “a dominion, empire, kingdom, realm, reign, royal.”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, Gabriel made an obvious distinction in using these two words. Here is what Gabriel said:

Out of a *malkuth* [dominion, realm, empire, kingdom]  
a *melek* [ruler, king] shall stand up.

Proceeding from verse 23, the king is referred to in a personal manner. The words “his” and “he” appear 10 times in the subsequent verses 24 and 25. This denotes that an individual is being referenced, not an empire.

## From Whence Did It Arise?

Some SDA scholars have been astute enough to acknowledge that Rome did not arise from Greece, as the symbol of the Goat in Daniel 8 indicates. To overcome this obvious flaw in their interpretation they invented a truly bizarre theory, which is that the little horn comes from one of the “four winds” of heaven, rather than out of one of the four horns. They claim the Hebrew allows for this possible interpretation. Now Daniel 8:8,9 will be examined to determine if this is a believable explanation:

...and for it came up four notable **ones** toward the four **winds** of heaven. And out of **one** of **them** came forth a little horn...

Does the term “them” in the phrase “out of one of them” refer to the four hours or the four winds? In Hebrew, words can be either feminine, masculine, or neutral. In Dan. 8:9, the word for “them” is masculine. Since “horns” is feminine, and “winds” can be either masculine or feminine, SDA scholars have suggested the word “them” must refer to “winds.” Therefore, they contend, the little horn arose out of one of the four winds. There is a problem with that theory, however. The word “one” is feminine which would seem to link it back to the feminine “horns.” Therefore, if linguistics

alone are examined, one cannot determine for certain whether the little horn arose from the winds or the other horn.

Therefore, one must look for other evidence. The horn represents a kingly power, and it would be unusual to find a kingly power not associated with a body (a kingdom). It would seem odd for the prophet to be given a vision showing a sequence of events starting with Alexander the Great, then proceeding to the break-up of the Grecian empire into four parts, and then the arising of the little horn, if the little horn did not arise from the Grecian empire. The Grecian empire provides the background for the arising of the little horn, or else why would it even be mentioned?

The idea of a horn growing out of the wind not only seems odd, it also violates the symbol's visual unity. Note the visionary sequence:

- The goat appears with a great horn between its eyes.
- The Goat's horn is broken off.
- In its place grow four horns.
- Out of one of these four horns comes another horn.
- All horns are still linked to the body of the goat (Greece).

Nowhere in the book of Daniel (or Revelation) can one find a horn growing in the wind detached from a body! Horns do not grow out of the wind! Horns represent kings or divisions of a kingdom. The beast represents the kingdom itself. A horn detached from a body would represent a king with no kingdom!

Does the Hebrew allow for it to grow out of the wind? That is debatable. But even if it did, the Hebrew also allows for it to grow out of one of the horns. Now, one must ask themselves a question: Which interpretation makes more rational sense? A horn growing out of an existing horn? Or a horn growing out of the wind? The only interpretation that makes sense is to have the horn growing out of one of the four existing horns.

## Conclusion

The theory that the little horn of Daniel 7 is the same power as the little horn of Daniel 8 rests almost entirely on the fact that both powers are called “little horns” in the KJV Bible. However, the enormity of the evidence points to them as profoundly different powers. SDAs are forced to assume the little horn is the papal power because it is essential to their theology that the Roman power be involved in the work of desolating the sanctuary. Therefore, SDAs make the little horn of Daniel 8 to be the Roman power, not because it fits the context of the passage, and not because it aligns with historical realities, but because it fits into the prophetic jigsaw puzzle that SDAs have built.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary*, 1075.

<sup>2</sup> This list from SDA theologian Desmond Ford in *Daniel 8:14*.

<sup>3</sup> *Strong's*.

<sup>4</sup> *Strong's*.

# APPENDIX 2

## *Comparison Chart*

### ***Spiritual Gifts vs. Hastings' Great Controversy***

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The following table illustrates that both H.L. Hastings and Ellen White (in *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1) discussed many of the same points in their respective books:

| Theme      | Topic                            | Ellen White <sup>1</sup> | H.L. Hastings |
|------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Noah/Flood | Wickedness of the earth          | 66                       | 21            |
|            | God calls Noah to preach         | 69                       | 22            |
|            | People ignored/ mocked Noah      | 70                       | 22-23         |
|            | Noah and animals enter ark       | 72                       | 23            |
|            | Dark clouds fill the sky         | 73                       | 23            |
|            | Floods from above and below      | 73                       | 23            |
|            | Lightning bolts flashed          | 74                       | 24            |
|            | Cities/Buildings destroyed       | 74                       | 24            |
|            | The lost were "wailing"          | 74                       | 24            |
|            | Loftiest points covered by water | 76                       | 24            |
|            | God protected the ark            | 75                       | 24            |
|            |                                  |                          |               |
| Babel      | Wicked gather in plain of Shinar | 91                       | 25            |
|            | Tower of Babel built             | 92                       | 25            |
|            | God confuses the languages       | 92                       | 26            |
|            | Builders unable to communicate   | 92                       | 26            |
| Abraham    | Called to leave the wicked       | 93                       | 27            |
|            | Lord made promises to Abraham    | 93                       | 27            |
| Exodus     | The Israelites dwelled in Goshen | 3SG 177                  | 31            |
|            | New king enslaves Israelites     | 178                      | 31            |

|                            |                                  |         |       |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|-------|
|                            | Moses is born                    | 180     | 32    |
|                            | Hidden in bulrushes              | 180     | 32    |
|                            | Educated with pharaohs           | 183     | 32    |
|                            | Dwelt in the desert              | 187     | 32    |
|                            | Moses and Aaron visit Pharaoh    | 197     | 33    |
|                            | Pharaoh refuses request          | 198     | 33    |
|                            | Increases burden on the slaves   | 198     | 33    |
|                            | Plagues fall                     | 207-221 | 34-35 |
|                            | Passover observed                | 222-228 | 36    |
|                            | Death wail heard at midnight     | 229     | 36    |
|                            | Pharaoh releases captives        | 229     | 36    |
|                            | Camped by Red Sea                | 230     | 36    |
|                            | Pharaoh pursues Israelites       | 231     | 36-37 |
|                            | Moses parts the waters           | 234     | 37    |
|                            | Egyptian army destroyed          | 235     | 39    |
|                            | Israelites sing to the Lord      | 236-238 | 40-41 |
|                            | Other nations witness exodus     | 242     | 42    |
| Jesus                      | Angels announce Christ's birth   | 1SG 28  | 80    |
|                            | John heralds Christ, baptizes    | 29      | 81    |
|                            | Attempt to throw Jesus over hill | 36      | 82    |
|                            | Jesus abused during the trial    | 55      | 83    |
|                            | Was “delivered” to be crucified  | 57      | 83    |
|                            | Cross was laid on His shoulders  | 58      | 83    |
|                            | Nails hammered in                | 59      | 83    |
|                            | Hung between thieves             | 59      | 83    |
|                            | Given vinegar to drink           | 60      | 83    |
|                            | Guard placed at the tomb         | 65      | 83    |
|                            | Guards lied about resurrection   | 68      | 84    |
|                            | Returns to heaven with captives  | 69      | 85    |
| Jerusalem's<br>Destruction | Apostles preached to Jerusalem   | GC88 28 | 88    |
|                            | God rejected Jewish nation       | 29      | 90    |
|                            | Christians evacuate Jerusalem    | 30      | 91    |
|                            | Rome lays siege to Jerusalem     | 31      | 91    |

|                |                                 |             |         |
|----------------|---------------------------------|-------------|---------|
|                | Women ate their children        | 32          | 92      |
|                | City and temple destroyed       | 33-35       | 92      |
| Persecution    | Death/suffering of Christians   | 1SG 103     | 94      |
| Apostasy       | Christian Church corrupted      | 105         | 96      |
|                | Some remained pure              | 105         | 96      |
|                | Bible prohibited                | 108         | 97      |
|                | Commandments made void          | 110         | 97      |
| Reformation    | Revival and restoration         | 120-123     | 105-108 |
|                | Post-reformation apostasy       | 126-128     | 109-111 |
| Final judgment | Lord's controversy with nations | GC88<br>656 | 134     |
|                | Slain shall cover the earth     | 657         | 134     |
|                | Son of Man appears in clouds    | 643         | 143     |
|                | Wicked turned to stubble        | 673         | 146     |
|                | Lake of fire destroys wicked    | 672         | 165     |
| New Earth      | New Jerusalem descends          | 663         | 166     |
|                | Tree of Life                    | 675         | 166     |
|                | No light is needed              | 676         | 166     |
|                | Righteous sing songs of praise  | 678         | 167     |
|                | Sinners are no more             | 678         | 167     |

## Examples of Plagiarism

| <b>Ellen White</b><br><b><i>Spiritual Gifts, (Vol. 1), 1858</i></b>  | <b>H.L. Hastings</b><br><b><i>Great Controversy, 1858</i></b>   |
|--|---|
| “As Jesus hung upon the cross, some who passed by <b>reviled him, wagging their heads...</b> ” p. 59   | “Jews <b>derided him</b> , Pharisees and priests <b>wagged their heads contemptuously...</b> ” p. 83  |
| “ <b>They (1)cruelly scourged him</b> , and put an old purple, (2) <b>kingly robe</b> upon him, and (3) <b>bound his sacred head with a crown of thorns</b> . They put a reed in his hand, and (4) <b>mockingly</b> bowed to him, and saluted him with, (5) <b>Hail king of the Jews!</b> They then took | “ <b>They (3)bound his temples with a twisted thorn</b> . (1) <b>They beat him cruelly</b> with their hands. They arrayed him in a (2) <b>gorgeous robe</b> —(6) <b>blind-folded him</b> , and bade him prophesy unto them. They drew his blood |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| the reed from his hand, and smote him with it upon the head..." "They covered his head with an old garment; (6) <b>blindfolded him</b> , and then struck him in the face, and cried out, Prophecy unto us who it was that smote thee." pp. 50,51   | with the gory scourge. They gave him a reed for a sceptre, and cried in (4) <b>mockery</b> , (5)" <b>Hail, King of the Jews.</b> " p. 83   |
| "The <b>curse</b> of God followed them, and they were <b>a byword</b> and a derision to the heathen and to so-called Christians. They were degraded, shunned, and detested, as if the brand of Cain were upon them. ... I saw that God had forsaken the Jews as a nation; but that individuals among them will yet be converted..." <i>Early Writings (Spiritual Gifts)</i> p. 213 | "...have left their name for a <b>curse</b> to the world; have been a hissing and <b>a byword</b> among all nations... Yet if they continue not in unbelief, God is able to graft them in; and so...shall be saved." p. 93 |
| "The will of God plainly revealed in his word, was <b>covered up</b> with error and <b>tradition</b> , which have been taught as <b>the commandments of God.</b> " p. 111  | "The truths of God were <b>hidden beneath</b> countless fables. <b>The commandments of God</b> were made void through man's <b>traditions.</b> " p. 97   |

## The Same extra-Biblical points

Curiously, Mrs. White makes some of the same extra-Biblical points that H.L Hastings makes in his *Great Controversy*. There are places where H.L. Hastings provides facts or points not found in Scripture, and Mrs. White makes the same points. This indicates Mrs. White may have used Hastings' unique ideas as a source for her own *inspired* writings.

### Example 1 – The scoffers in Noah's time

Both Hastings and White describe how the entrance of the animals into the ark made no impact upon the wicked. The Bible says nothing about how impressed or unimpressed the



wicked were at the mysterious event of the animals entering the ark. So, from whence did Ellen White get the idea?

| H.L. Hastings<br><i>Great Controversy</i><br>p. 23 (1858)   | Ellen White<br><i>Spiritual Gifts</i> vol. 3<br>p. 69 (1864)  |
|---|---|
| The beasts of the earth and fowls of heaven, moved by a strange impulse, come and find refuge with the servant of the Lord. <b>But the scoffing world pass heedlessly on.</b> | Notwithstanding the solemn exhibition they had witnessed of God's power—of the unnatural occurrence of the beasts' leaving the forests and fields, and going into the ark... yet <b>they hardened their hearts, and continued to revel...</b> |

Interestingly enough, Mrs. White later parted company with Hastings on this point. In 1890, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, she contradicted her earlier account and changed the story so that the antediluvians did indeed take notice of the event.

Suddenly a **silence fell upon the mocking throng**. Beasts of every description, the fiercest as well as the most gentle, were seen coming from mountain and forest and quietly making their way toward the ark... **The world looked on in wonder, some in fear. Philosophers were called upon to account for the singular occurrence**, but in vain. It was a mystery which they could not fathom.<sup>2</sup>

This contradicts her earlier statement that says the wicked “continued to revel and sport over the signal manifestations of divine power.” One must wonder which account of the story was inspired by her *visions*!

### Example 2 – Noah a “Fanatic”

Both Hastings and White use the word “fanatic” in reference to Noah. The Bible never infers that either Noah or his preaching was regarded as fanatical by anyone. This is

simply an assumption made by Hastings in his *Great Controversy* and picked up by Ellen White in hers:

| <b>H.L. Hastings</b><br><b><i>The Church Not in Darkness</i></b><br><b>p. 12 (1859)</b>   | <b>Ellen White</b><br><b><i>Spiritual Gifts</i> vol. 3</b><br><b>p. 65 (1864)</b>                                      |
|---|--|
| The world denominate it “Noah’s folly;” the fruit of insensate and blind <b>fanaticism</b> ; ...the result...of his <b>fanatical</b> preaching... | Noah directed, he preached, he worked, while the people looked on in amazement, and regarded him as a <b>fanatic</b> . |

### Example 3 – Appearance of Earth Same After Fall

Both Hastings and White make the same extra-Biblical point that the curse did not change the appearance of the earth after the Fall. There is no Scriptural evidence that this statement is either true or false.

| <b>H.L. Hastings</b><br><b><i>The Church Not in Darkness</i></b><br><b>p. 10 (1859)</b>                             | <b>Ellen White</b><br><b><i>Spiritual Gifts</i> vol. 3</b><br><b>p. 61 (1864)</b>                                      |
|---|--|
| ...the curse has fallen, but still the earth retains its primitive form, and to a great extent, its pristine glory. | The curse did not change at once the appearance of the earth. It was still rich in the bounty God had provided for it. |

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<sup>1</sup> 1SG=*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, 3SG=*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, GC88=*Great Controversy*, 1888 edition.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (1890), 97.

# APPENDIX 3

## *Plagiarism in Great Controversy*

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The SDA sect makes four claims about Ellen White's plagiarism:

1. It was legal.
2. She only copied small amounts of material from other authors.
3. She generally gave credit to those she copied from.
4. God showed her which parts to copy from other authors.

### **1. The False Issue of Legality**

Throughout her career, Mrs. White was repeatedly charged by her opponents with “plagiarism.” To deflect attention away from the fact Mrs. White plagiarized her supposedly inspired writings from others, the White Estate hired a Catholic attorney to get them out of that difficult situation. Not surprisingly, he concluded that Mrs. White did not break any laws of her day.<sup>1</sup> However, the White Estate was answering a question that most critics were not asking. They were not asking about the *legality* of what Mrs. White did. They were asking about the *morality* of what she did. Perhaps the White Estate would have one to believe that whatever was “legal” in the U.S.A. in the nineteenth-century must also be “moral” but such is not the case. For example, cocaine use was legal in the nineteenth-century, but that does not mean it was acceptable to be a cocaine addict. Just because something is legal does not mean it is ethical. The fact that the United States later passed plagiarism laws

shows that the act of plagiarizing was not considered to be proper.

The problem with Ellen White's plagiarism is the morality of it. SDA theologian Dr. Fred Veltman spent eight years researching the plagiarism in the *Desire of Ages*. Afterwards, he commented that the most disturbing aspect about her copying and her denials of copying was that, "it strikes at the heart of her honesty, her integrity, and therefore her trustworthiness."<sup>2</sup>

The claim is often put forth that what she did was acceptable in her day, but evidence proves otherwise.

In 1891, T. DeWitt Talmage, in his book *From Manger to Throne*, gives credit to thirty-three authorities from which he drew his material; and Edersheim, in his *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, published in 1883, cites no less than 300 authorities. It was always recognized as a sin and a crime to use other people's thoughts, without credit. Some had tried to excuse Mrs. White's plagiarisms because of her youth and inexperience; but, when she wrote *Great Controversy* she was fifty-seven years old. She had already been writing nearly forty years.<sup>3</sup>

While Ellen White was still living, David Paulson asked to use some of Mrs. White's writings in his monthly magazine. Ellen's son W.C. White replied to him:

Mother instructs me to say to you that you may be free to select from her writings short articles for *The Lifeboat*. Or you may make extracts from these MSS. and from similar writings, in your articles, **in each case giving the proper credit.**<sup>4</sup>

This proves that Ellen White recognized the importance of giving proper credit—at least when it came to someone quoting from *her* writings. A 1917 issue of the SDA *Youth Instructor* magazine says:

It is just as wrong to appropriate to one's self credit for productions written by another as to steal a horse. ...

Taking another's knowledge and parading it as one's own is **a despicable thing to do**. The student who copies at examination time is dishonest; but **plagiarism is a meaner kind of thievery**... It is as much of a disgrace, to say nothing of the sin, as to break into a neighbor's house and steal his goods. ... All who profess common decency, much less Christianity, should eschew all form of dishonesty.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, even in Ellen White's era people had the common sense to understand that plagiarism is a form of theft and it is "despicable."

SDA corporate leaders, much to their chagrin, frequently had to perform damage control around Mrs. White's copying habit. In one case, the plagiarism was so extensive that Ellen White's 1883 book *Life of Paul* was beyond salvaging. Despite the claim in the preface that Mrs. White received "received especial help from the Spirit of God" in writing the book, it was soon discovered the "special help" actually came from authors W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson. Mrs. White copied heavily from their book *Life and Epistles of Saint Paul*, written 30 years earlier. After the revelation of the copying became public, the sect had little choice but to withdraw it from print.

SDA General Conference president A.G. Daniells admitted some of the familiar plagiarism problems were also found in *Great Controversy* but the book editors managed to footnote at least some of Mrs. White's copying in the 1911 version of the book:

Credits were not given to the proper authorities, and some of that crept into the *Great Controversy* – the lack of credits; and in the revision of that book those things were carefully run down and made right.<sup>6</sup>

As a so-called "prophet of God," Mrs. White was taking the ideas and inspiration of others and pawning them off as her own inspiration. This is one way to identify Mrs. White as a false prophet, for the Bible says:

Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour (Jer. 23:30).

The bottom line is that she copied extensively from others while denying she did so. A typical Ellen White denial is found below:

Although I am dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet **the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own.**<sup>7</sup>

While one could argue over whether Mrs. White would be found guilty in a court of law, the SDA sect's own writings show that what she did was considered "theft" and "despicable." In the words of Dr. Veltman, her lying to cover up her theft "strikes at the heart" of her "integrity" and "trustworthiness."

## 2. She Only Copied a Small Amount

Some SDAs adopt a very *narrow* definition of plagiarism and claim that Mrs. White only plagiarized in those cases where the words are exactly the same. Using their proprietary calculation methods, these SDAs claim that the amount copied was very small. The reality is that Mrs. White and her book-makers were not so foolish as to copy material word-for-word. The ideas of other authors were sometimes rephrased using different words, but there is no doubt that the unique ideas originated with the other authors. Dr. Fred Veltman stated, "she depended on her sources to a much greater degree than the verbal similarities of the DA text to those sources indicate."<sup>8</sup> What this means is that his team of researchers could detect that she was copying ideas and following the thought patterns of other authors even when she (or her secretaries) chose different wording. He went on in the same article to say that his team could not find any "content or catalog of ideas that is unique to her."<sup>9</sup>

Ronald Graybill, associate secretary of the White Estate noted:

...these borrowings occurred not only in the historical sections of the *Great Controversy*, but also in its prophetic sections. They appear in descriptions of the content of specific visions given to Mrs. White. It would be unwise at this point to assert that there is any particular book written by Mrs. White or any type of writing from her pen in which literary borrowing will not be found.<sup>10</sup>

Mrs. White was doing more than just copying a few select historical quotes. She was copying other authors even when writing out her *visions*. It is very possible that all of the major thoughts and ideas in her writings were derived from others.

Plagiarism researcher Walter Rea concluded:

Veltman confirmed what other studies showed, that depending upon the material used from Ellen White's writing, the copy work could be as much as 90%. In fact, Dr. Don McAdams, an Adventist scholar, had stated in the 1980 Glendale meeting that "If every paragraph in the book *Great Controversy*, written by Ellen White, was properly footnoted, then every paragraph would have to be footnoted." That statement has never been seriously challenged by any member of the Church.<sup>11</sup>

### **3. She Generally Gave Credit When Copying**

Mrs. White rarely gave credit when she used material written by others. Plagiarism is found in her books, articles, testimonies, and even her "I was shown..." statements. Many of her books containing plagiarism have few, if any, footnotes. While the publishers added over 400 footnotes to the 1911 *Great Controversy* after receiving criticism, Dr. Don McAdams noted that if it had been done "properly," then **every** paragraph would have been footnoted.

One SDA shares his personal experience with the plagiarism of Ellen White:

In the [*Watchman*] issue of May 1, is an article signed by Mrs. E. G. White, entitled RELIGIOUS LIBERTY. Not a word of this was written by Mrs. White. It was written wholly by Elder George E. Fifield, and published by him years before it appeared in the *Watchman*. Nevertheless, it is inserted in this magazine as a revelation from God.

If this is not fraud, we will let our critics name it. Here is a whole article, not a word of which Mrs. White wrote; yet she published it as a direct revelation from God. We recognize that some people will say that Mrs. White was not responsible for this blunder. This, in a certain sense, may be true. If she delegated others to send out material over her name, and they selected anything that suited their fancy, and published it to the world as divine revelation, then she was responsible for entrusting such power or privilege to any of her helpers. If they were in the habit of practicing this deception, then how may we know that anything that is put in print over her name is authentic?

At the general conference of 1909, held at Washington, D.C., the last conference Mrs. White attended, Elder W. A. Colcord was handed a batch of Testimonies supposedly from Mrs. White, to read at a special session of the Religious Liberty Association. In reading it over, previous to the session, he discovered an article that was quite familiar to him, and behold, the whole article was a product of his own pen, which he had sent to Mrs. White two or three years before, yet it was assigned to him to read as a revelation from God.<sup>12</sup>

Many more cases could be presented. For more evidence, visit: <https://www.nonsda.org/egw/plagiarism.html>



#### 4. God Showed White What to Copy

While Mrs. White typically denied copying from others, her son W.C. White was more candid. One pioneer recalls W.C.'s explanation:

I called W. C. White's attention to the flagrant plagiarisms and literary piracies in the *Great Controversy* a short time before he and his mother went to Australia. . . . Besides being wicked it was stupid and I told him that it would destroy all respect for the special authority claimed by the author as well as for the integrity of the... publishers.

I turned to the preface and called his attention to the claims made in the preface of a supernatural source for the information given in the book. His defense was as foolish as his conduct. He said in effect, "It is ideas that counts and not words. When mother finds in reading the writings of other persons statements of facts which have been revealed to her, there is no reason that she should not copy them. The fact that she uses the same words does not matter." I replied, "Of course your mother has the right to incorporate such statements into her writings. It is perfectly all right for her to do so if she wishes, but in doing so she should use quotation marks and should give credit to the persons to whom the Lord revealed the ideas before he did to her."<sup>13</sup>

Some may claim that it was okay for Mrs. White to copy others because God showed her what to copy. The problem with that is that Mrs. White copied historical errors, scientific errors, and theological errors along with everything else she copied. Even with the angels helping her, she was not able to detect the errors from the other authors' pens.

#### **Great Controversy Plagiarism**

In 1983, Walter Rea completed a 125-page study on the plagiarism in *Great Controversy*. While it is too extensive to

reproduce that study in this book, a brief synopsis is provided below. For further study, visit the following web page to view Rea's research in its entirety:

<https://www.nonsda.org/egw/rea/gcm.htm>

- **Chapter 1** – Virtually all of pages 26-36 were copied from Josephus' *The Jewish War* Books V-VI.
- **Chapter 2** – Follows J.N. Andrews' book *History of the Sabbath*.
- **Chapter 3** – Also follows *History of the Sabbath*.
- **Chapter 4** – Copied from J.N. Andrews, including his *History of the Sabbath*, and his *Review* articles. Also, material from Daniel March and J.A. Wylie.
- **Chapter 5** – Taken primarily from *The History of Protestantism*, by J. A. Wylie. Also, from D'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation*.
- **Chapter 6** – Donald McAdams, in his 1973 thesis, showed Ellen White borrowed from Wylie and other historians and that she, "was not just borrowing paragraphs here and there...but, in fact, following the historians page after page..."
- **Chapter 8** – Taken from D'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation*.
- **Chapter 14** – McAdams' study showed copying from Wylie and others.
- **Chapter 15** – Ronald Graybill, in a 1972 research paper published in *Spectrum* entitled "How Did Ellen White Choose and Use Historical Sources? The French Revolution Chapter of *Great Controversy*," showed that she copied primarily from Uriah Smith's *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation*. Material also taken from Henry Melvill's *Sermons*, volume 2.
- **Chapter 18** – Used early editions of the *Review* and also the following books: *Memoirs of William Miller* by Sylvester Bliss, *Life Incidents*, by James White,

*Sketches of William Miller* by James White, and *Life Sketches* by James White.

- **Chapter 19** – Primarily from 35 Bible texts.
- **Chapter 20** – 19 Bible texts partially or totally quoted and 14 rather lengthy quotations from the following works: *Travels and Adventures of the Rev. Joseph Wolff*, Volume 1, *Joseph Wolff, Researches and Missionary Labors*, *Journal of the Rev. Joseph Wolff*, W. H. D. Adams' *In Perils Oft*, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 9th Edition, Article "Bengel", L. Gaussen's *Daniel the Prophet*, Volume 2.
- **Chapter 21** – Used material from J.N. Andrews' early *Review* articles, and James White's *Life Incidents*.
- **Chapter 22** – Used early editions of the *Review* and also the following books: *Memoirs of William Miller* by Sylvester Bliss, *Life Incidents*, by James White, *Sketches of William Miller* by James White, and *Life Sketches* by James White.
- **Chapter 23** – Used early *Review* articles and material from J.N. Andrews' book *The Sanctuary* and James White's *Life Incidents*.
- **Chapter 24** – From James White's *Life Incidents* and *Life Sketches*.
- **Chapter 25** – Early *Review* articles from J.N. Andrews, and J.N. Andrews' *History of the Sabbath*. Also uses James White's *Life Incidents*.
- **Chapter 26** – Like chapter 25, this chapter also relies on Andrews' writings and James White's *Life Incidents*.
- **Chapter 28** – Came from articles written by J. N. Andrews in the early *Review* and later copied by Uriah Smith—his brother in law—and then taken by James White and used in his articles or books and finally ended up in *The Great Controversy*, under the name of Ellen White.

- **Chapter 29** – Originated with John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, as shown in the thesis written by Ruth Elizabeth Burgeson, August 1957, entitled "A Comparative Study of the Fall of Man as Treated by John Milton and Ellen G. White."
- **Chapter 30** – Mostly from Henry Melvill's *Sermons*, volume 1.
- **Chapter 35** – Henry Melvill's *Sermons* vol. 2, Sermon IV, "Protestantism and Popery," was used without credit. What was not taken from Melvill was taken from J. N. Andrews' *History of the Sabbath*.
- **Chapter 36** – Came from articles written by J. N. Andrews in the early *Review* and later copied by Uriah Smith, and then taken by James White and used in his articles or books and finally ended up in *Great Controversy*, under the name of Ellen White.
- **Chapter 37** – Used Henry Melvill's book of *Sermons*, Volume 1 & 2.
- **Chapter 39** – Used 74 Bible texts and liberal use of J. N. Andrews' articles from the 1851-1852 *Review and Herald*. Also, Uriah Smith's *Thoughts Critical and Practical on the Book of Revelation*" and Daniel March's, *Night Scenes in the Bible*.
- **Chapter 40** – Uses many of the same sources as chapter 39, and also Daniel March's *Walks and Homes of Jesus*.
- **Chapter 42** – Taken from James White's *Life Incidents*, and J. N. Andrews' book *The Three Messages of Revelation*. Also used Daniel March's *Home Life in the Bible*.

## Conclusion

After reviewing this research, one can understand why Rea came to the conclusion that Mrs. White did not receive this book by vision or by communication with angels. This book was put together almost entirely from the writings of other

SDA and non-SDA authors, with little or no credit given to the real authors.

For those who wish to understand the full extent of the plagiarism in *Great Controversy*, and other Ellen White writings, please reference Rea's book *White Lie* or the substantial library of online resources found at:

<https://www.nonsda.org/egw/plagiarism.html>

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<sup>1</sup> See the SDA book, *The White Truth*.

<sup>2</sup> Fred Veltman, "The Desire of Ages Project," *Ministry Magazine*, Dec. 1990.

<sup>3</sup> Edward S. Ballenger, *The Gathering Call*, January-February 1938, 16-23.

<sup>4</sup> W.C. White, letter to Dr. David Paulson, Feb. 15, 1905. Emphasis supplied. Quoted in D.M. Canright's *The Life of Mrs. E.G. White*.

<sup>5</sup> *Youth Instructor*, Dec. 25, 1917.

<sup>6</sup> A.G. Daniells, the president of the General Conference, discussing the problem of Mrs. White's plagiarism at the 1919 Conference on the Spirit of Prophecy.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, Oct. 8, 1867.

<sup>8</sup> Veltman, *Ministry*.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ronald Graybill, Associate Secretary, Ellen G. White Estate in a transcript of a tape recording of presentations made in the morning worship services at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Nov. 15-19, 1981.

<sup>11</sup> Walter T. Rea, "How the Seventh-day Adventist 'Spirit of Prophecy' was Born."

<https://www.nonsda.org/egw/rea/sop.shtml>. Walter Rea's research later confirmed McAdams' assertion that every paragraph in *Great Controversy* was derived from another source.

<sup>12</sup> Ballenger, *The Gathering Call*.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

# APPENDIX 4

## *Great Contradictory*

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Although sold to the flock as the product of visions and angelic guidance, *Great Controversy* contains some seemingly irreconcilable contradictions.

### **The Contradictory Plans of Satan**

Ellen White wrote in chapter 34 of *The Great Controversy*:

The **apostles, as personated by these lying spirits**, are made to contradict what they wrote at the dictation of the Holy Spirit when on earth. **They deny the divine origin of the Bible**, and thus tear away the foundation of the Christian's hope and put out the light that reveals the way to heaven. **Satan is making the world believe that the Bible is a mere fiction, or at least a book suited to the infancy of the race, but now to be lightly regarded, or cast aside as obsolete.** And to take the place of the word of God he holds out spiritual manifestations. Here is a channel wholly under his control; by this means he can make the world believe what he will. The Book that is to judge him and his followers he **puts in the shade**, just where he wants it; **the Saviour of the world he makes to be no more than a common man.** And as the Roman guard that watched the tomb of Jesus spread the lying report which the priests and elders put into their mouths to disprove His resurrection, so do the believers in spiritual manifestations try to make it appear that there is **nothing miraculous in the circumstances of our Saviour's life.** After thus **seeking to put Jesus in the background**, they call attention to their own miracles, declaring that these far exceed the works of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Notice from this passage the plan of Satan:

1. Apostles will appear denying the divine origin of the Bible.
2. Satan wants the world to believe the Bible is a fictional book that can be cast aside.
3. Satan is trying to make Jesus appear to be a common man with nothing miraculous about his life.

Now, keeping those three points in mind, in chapter 36 of *Great Controversy* Mrs. White writes:

As spiritualism more closely imitates the nominal Christianity of the day, it has greater power to deceive and ensnare. Satan himself is converted, after the modern order of things. He will appear in the character of an angel of light. Through the agency of spiritualism, miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and many undeniable wonders will be performed. And as **the Spirits will profess faith in the Bible**, and manifest respect for the institutions of the church, their work will be accepted as a manifestation of divine power.<sup>2</sup>

So, now it is the spirits professing faith in the Bible, whereas earlier, Satan was trying to make the world believe it was “fiction,” casting it aside as “obsolete,” and putting it “in the shade.” It seems like the spirits are working contrary to Satan’s plans!

In chapter 39 there is yet another odd contradiction:

As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, **Satan himself will personate Christ**. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour’s advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now **the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come**.<sup>3</sup>

Here Satan is impersonating Christ, but in chapter 34 it says that it was Satan’s plan to put Jesus “in the background,” and make Christ appear to be “a common man,” with nothing

“miraculous” about His life. If Satan were to appear as Christ and perform miracles, wouldn’t that be the exact opposite of his earlier stated plan to make Christ appear common and put Him in the background? Jesus said it best:

Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? (Matt. 12:25-26).

## Contradictory Plan of Redemption

In 1911, Ellen White wrote in *Great Controversy* that the plan of redemption was devised *after* the fall:

The kingdom of grace was instituted immediately **after the fall of man, when a plan was devised** for the redemption of the guilty race.<sup>4</sup>

When does she say the plan was devised? “*After* the fall.” This statement is consistent with a *vision* she wrote out in 1854, where she describes Jesus as pleading with the Father—*after* the fall—to allow Him to become mankind’s redeemer.<sup>5</sup> The idea that the plan of redemption was formulated *after* the fall is a contradiction to Scripture, which says:

He [Christ] was chosen **before the creation of the world**, but was revealed in these last times for your sake (1 Peter 1:20).

Mrs. White contradicted herself by writing statements that indicated the plan was made *before* the fall. For example:

Therefore redemption was **not an afterthought—a plan formulated after the fall of Adam—but an eternal purpose** to be wrought out for the blessing not only of this atom of a world but for the good of all the worlds which God has created.<sup>6</sup>



Obviously, both of her statements cannot be true, so which one is inspired?

### White Contradicts Revelation 16:17

Mrs. White seems to have difficulty in getting end-time events in correct order. In chapter 39 of *Great Controversy*, Mrs. White describes the close of probation thus:

Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts His hands and with a loud voice says, **"It is done;"** and all the angelic host lay off their crowns as He makes the solemn announcement: "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." Revelation 22:11. Every case has been decided for life or death.<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Gregory Hunt points out that Mrs. White is quoting Jesus' words from Rev. 16:17:

First read Rev. 16:17. "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the Temple of Heaven from the throne saying, 'It is done.'" **Notice that Jesus says, "It is done" at the time of the seventh plague and not as Mrs. White indicated before the onset of the first plague.**<sup>8</sup>

Mrs. White places Jesus' proclamation, "It is done" *before* the first plague falling, whereas Revelation places it *during* the seventh plague.

Furthermore, in the 1858 version of *Great Controversy*, Mrs. White describes a *vision* she had showing that Jesus evacuated the sanctuary just before the pouring out of the seven last plagues:

**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. ... **It was impossible for the plagues to be poured out while Jesus officiated in the Sanctuary;** but as his work there is finished, as 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. The saints in that fearful time, after the close of Jesus' mediation, were living in the sight of a holy God, without an intercessor.<sup>9</sup>

However, in Rev. 16:17, a voice speaks "It is done" from *inside* the "temple" in heaven! Mrs. White has already identified the speaker of these words to be Jesus. So, if Jesus evacuates the Sanctuary *before* the first plague, then why is His voice heard coming from within the temple during the seventh plague?

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Great Controversy* (1911), 557.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 588.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 624.

<sup>4</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 347. The same quote is also found in the 1888 edition.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen White, *Supplement to the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen White* (1854), 47. See also *Early Writings* (1882), 126.

<sup>6</sup> Ellen White, *Signs of the Times*, April 25, 1892.

<sup>7</sup> White, *Great Controversy*, 613.

<sup>8</sup> Gregory Hunt, M.D., *Beware This Cult*, chapter 17.

<sup>9</sup> Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1 (1858), 198.

# APPENDIX 5

## *Great Controversy Plagiarizes Millerites*

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| Ellen White  | Millerite Authors  |
|--|--|
| Like a tidal wave the movement <b>swept over the land</b> . ... There was little ecstatic joy, but rather <b>deep searching of heart</b> ...<br>( <i>Spirit of Prophecy</i> , vol. 4, 249)   | It <b>swept over the land</b> with the velocity of a tornado, and it reached the hearts in different and distant places almost simultaneously . . . It produced everywhere a most <b>deep searching of the heart</b> .<br>( <i>Advent Herald</i> , Oct. 30, 1844)                          |
| God designed to prove His people. His hand covered a mistake in the reckoning of the prophetic periods. Adventists did not discover the error, nor was it discovered by the most <b>learned of their opponents</b> .<br>( <i>Spirit of Prophecy</i> , vol. 4, 249) | While this discrepancy was not particularly noticed by us, it was also not noticed by any of our <b>learned opponents</b> .<br>( <i>Advent Herald</i> , Nov. 13, 1844)   |
| [1] <b>Dark, heavy clouds come up</b> , and clash against each other. ... There is a mighty [2] <b>earthquake</b> ... There is heard the [3] <b>shriek of the hurricane, like the voice of demons</b> ... Those who a little before were so                        | When suddenly the [1] <b>clouds roll up in darkness</b> and fire. The [2] <b>earth trembles</b> , the sunlight of heaven is shrouded in the lurid shades of gathering blackness. The [3] <b>shrikes of the muttering fiends are heard upon the blast</b> . The thunder of the last trumpet |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>reckless...are now overwhelmed with consternation, and shuddering <b>[4]in fear</b>. Their <b>[5]wails are heard above the sounds of the elements</b>. ... Soon there appears <b>[6]in the east</b> a small black <b>[7]cloud...becoming lighter and more glorious...</b> <b>[8]His [Christ's] countenance outshines the dazzling brightness of the noonday sun</b>. ... The King of kings descends <b>[9]upon the cloud, [10]wrapped in flaming fire</b>. ...the <b>[11]earth trembles</b> before him.</p> <p><i>(Great Controversy, 1888 version, 637-641)</i></p> | <p>sounds louder and louder. Creation to its center reels. Dizziness and <b>[4]terror</b> seize the children of men. They run to and fro in despair. Their faces darken with horror, and their <b>[5]cries of anguish are lost in the howlings of the elements</b>. ... <b>[6]In the East</b> the darkness is broken, and <b>[7]a cloud of glory</b> as the <b>brightness of ten thousand suns</b>, bursts forth. <b>[9]On the cloud ... His [8]countenance is like the sun shining in his strength</b>, and his voice as the sound of many waters. His <b>[10]flaming retinue</b> extends across the vaulted sky. He comes in the glory of his Father, and all the holy angels with him. He speaks, <b>[11]earth shudders</b>, and the graves are rent.</p> <p><i>(Advent Harbinger, "The Last Day", November 21, 1844)</i></p> |
| <p>No man knoweth the day and the hour, was heard from the hypocritical minister and the bold <b>scoffer</b>. ...</p> <p><b>The most devoted</b> gladly received the message.</p> <p><i>(Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 1 (1858), 135-136)</i></p>   | <p>...<b>the most pious, devoted</b> and living members of the churches do most readily embrace the views thus proclaimed: the worldling professor, the Pharisee, the bigot, the proud, and haughty and selfish, <b>scoff</b> at and ridicule the doctrine...</p> <p><i>(Views of the Prophecies of William Miller, (1841), 2)</i></p>   |

# APPENDIX 6

## *Ottoman Empire as of 1850*

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Source: [www.bahauallah.org/images/map-ottoman-empire-modern.png](http://www.bahauallah.org/images/map-ottoman-empire-modern.png)

# APPENDIX 7

## *Royalties from the Great Controversy*

*E. S. Ballenger, "The Centennial Supplement," 66-68*

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About 1898, the R&H publishing House decided to quit paying royalties. They passed the following resolutions:

That manuscripts prepared outside the office, at an author's expense, be purchased before publishing the same.

That no further investment be made in publishing or promoting books unless ownership and full control of the plates can be secured. (*The Time, the Need, the Message*, 75)

Mrs. White simply told them she would not submit to any such arrangement, and threatened to take the publication of her books into her own hands. In proof of this we quote her own words:

Then, if my brethren did not awake to the situation, I was to make no delay in taking the books into my own hands, and the Lord would prepare the way before me. (*Special Instruction Regarding Royalties* (Mar. 1899), 7)

To meet this situation, she gave some very peculiar advice. On page 11 of the same pamphlet, we read:

I wish to say to authors, that I can not see that they have any liberty to either give away or sell their right to books they have written.

Mrs. White had an eye for business. She was receiving from \$8,000 to \$12,000 a year on the books she wrote while in the employ of the Gen. Conf. [\$295,953 to \$ 443,929 in

2023 dollars]<sup>1</sup> Her son, Willie, was also being paid by the General Conference; and he was giving his whole time to the work of his mother. How many other helpers were paid by the General Conference, we are not prepared to say. However, she forced the publishing house to continue to pay her 10 per cent on the retail price of her books.

These royalties evidently had some influence on her attitude toward some other books. We quote again from the same document, page 9:

No one can have been hurt financially more than I was hurt when *The Great Controversy* lay for nearly two years dead in the office. Just work was not done in this matter. The book *Bible Readings* was crowded in before *The Great Controversy*, which was already printed, and which should have been placed in the canvasser's hands first... This was a dishonest transaction toward me, and it was unfaithful stewardship toward God.

When *Bible Readings* was put on the market, it was sold by the tens of thousands; but she did not get 10 per cent on these sales, whereas she did get 10 per cent on *The Great Controversy*. She was very pronounced in recommending her own books. However, she did share her recommendation with Uriah Smith, as follows:

The light given was that *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation*, *Great Controversy*, and *Patriarchs and Prophets*, would make their way. They contained the very message the people must have. The angels of God would prepare the way for these books in the hearts of the people. (Ibid., 7)

It may be of interest to know in connection with these statements that something like a year ago, the Southern Publishing Association at Nashville, Tenn., made a somewhat slight revision on *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation*, and published 3000 or 5000 copies; but the General Conference put a veto on their selling them. I was unable to get a copy.

The Gen. Con. appointed a committee to revise *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation*; but their revision was not ready to go to press. However, just recently, they have published a revised edition of this book. The denomination put out a book, *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation*. If it “contained the very message the people must have,” “the special light God had given his people,” why should it be necessary to revise this book that contained just what God wanted the people to have; and why should they forbid Southern Publishing House to sell this book? It looks as if they did not believe the “Testimonies.”

Had the very book God appointed to stand in its lot and place been handled as earnestly as *Bible Readings*, men would have cooperated with the angels of God, to make the very impression essential for that time. (*Special Instruction Regarding Royalties*, 4-5)

*Bible Readings* were studies from the Word of God; while her book was stolen from other writers without credit. If this isn't putting her own writings above the Bible, then my intelligence needs some “kindergarten” training. Her defenders deny that they put her writings on equality with the Bible, but in this instance she places them above the Bible.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation/>.



# APPENDIX 8

## *Miller's "Great Light" on Revelation?*

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Mrs. White claimed God gave William Miller “great light” on the book of Revelation.<sup>1</sup> Where is that “great light” to be found? Miller wrote out his theories on Bible prophecy in his book *Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ, about the Year 1843*.<sup>2</sup> The title itself should lead one to question if this book contains “light” or “darkness” since Jesus did not come on or about the year 1843. Following is a brief overview of some of the points Miller made from Revelation that are questionable or have been rejected by the SDA sect as evidenced in *Great Controversy* and the *SDA Bible Commentary*.<sup>3</sup>

| Passage    | Miller's View   | SDA View  |
|------------|---|---|
| Rev. 2-3   | The seven churches align with seven arbitrary time periods from the resurrection to the return of Christ (pp. 127-160). | Adopted Miller's arbitrary approach but they often selected different dates than Miller did. Modern SDA scholars heavily criticize this approach. |
| Rev. 6     | Miller assigned the seven seal to various arbitrary events and time periods throughout Christian history (pp. 176-189). | Adopted Miller's subjective approach but they sometimes select different events and dates than Miller.  |
| Rev. 9:2   | “Air” means the doctrines of men (p. 4).  | Rejected Miller's explanation.  |
| Rev. 9:5-6 | Miller's 11th proof of Christ's return in 1843  | Since Ellen White adopted Litch's “fake   |

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|                 | was worked out with the assistance of Josiah Litch. It linked together two events in the Ottoman empire that culminated in 1840 (p. 121).  | date” (see chapter 21), SDAs are stuck with this false prophecy even though their scholars admitted in 1919 that it was based upon fake dates.   |
| Rev. 11:3, 12:6 | The period of papal supremacy began in 538 and ended in 1798 when the French conquered the Papal States and the pope was taken captive. The two witnesses represent the two testaments of the Bible suppressed by Rome during this 1260-year period (pp. 78, 190-203). | Ellen White also adopted these teachings. However, as noted in chapter eleven of this book, these arbitrary dates do not mark the most significant events in the rise and fall of papal power, nor did the papacy suppress the Scripture to the degree that Miller and Mrs. White claim. |
| Rev. 12:14      | The two wings on the “eagle” refer to the “Arian” controversy and pope Justinian’s controversy with the Eastern Church in 538 A.D. (p. 211).   | Abandoned Miller’s teaching. The sect now teaches the wings represent haste.   |
| Rev. 12:16      | The “earth” represents the wars against the papacy waged by Protestant countries, and the “waters” spewed forth by the dragon was Deism (p. 212).  | Rejected Miller’s interpretations, saying instead that the “earth” was the “new world,” and the “waters” were merely “false doctrines.”  |
| Rev. 13:3       | Miller made some convoluted math to add the 1,260 days of this verse (ending in  | Rejected Miller’s calculation. Even more importantly, time has proven it to be false.  |

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|             | 1798) with 45 years (from Daniel 12:11-12 where he subtracts the 1,290 days from the 1,335 days to get 45 days) to arrive at the date of Christ's return in 1843 (pp. 111-112).   |   |
| Rev. 13:8   | Miller's 15th proof of Christ's return in 1843 involves converting 666 into 666 <i>years</i> . Then, with 158 B.C. as the commencement date of pagan Roman supremacy, adding 666 years brings one to 508 A.D. The 1,335 days of Daniel 12:12 are arbitrarily tacked on to 508 to arrive at the date of Christ's return in 1843 (pp. 84-85). | The SDA sect rejects this theory. Nothing of great significance happened in the Roman Empire in 158. The end of the Punic Wars in 146 B.C. would be a far more likely date for the rise of Roman power, but the reality is that Rome's rise took place over centuries. Thus, 158 B.C. appears to be an arbitrary choice. The ending date of 508 A.D. is equally dubious, as no significant event occurred on that date. The Western Roman Empire fell in 476 A.D. Paganism was already in steep decline, with Christianity becoming the dominant religion nearly two centuries earlier. |
| Rev. 13:5-6 | Babylon is the papacy (p. 98).  | Babylon is not only the papacy, but includes Apostate Protestantism (after 1844).   |

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|------------------|---|--|
| Rev.<br>14:6-11  | The first angel's message was fulfilled in the sending out of missionaries into the world after 1798. The second angel was fulfilled in calling people out of Catholicism. The third angel "had already sounded" in Miller's announcement of the return of Christ in 1843/1844 (p. 137). <sup>4</sup> | The first angel's message was Miller's announcement of the return of Christ in 1843/1844. The second angel's message was first preached in the summer of 1844 and pointed to the fall of the Protestant churches. The third message was the Sabbath <i>truth</i> which sounded after the Whites adopted the Sabbath (around 1847). |
| Rev. 16          | The seven plagues are various arbitrary and highly speculative events and time periods during recent Christian history (pp. 219-232).   | Adopted a similar arbitrary approach but they often select different events and dates than Miller. For example, Miller starts the first plague in 1529 A.D. with the preaching of Martin Luther, but the SDAs place it in after 1844, in the preaching of the third angel's message.   |
| Rev.<br>17:12,13 | The ten horns are ten kings who all accepted Christianity by 508 A.D. (pp. 95-98).  | The ten horns were ten tribes that conquered Rome by 538 A.D.  |
| Rev.<br>19:7-9   | The testimony of Jesus and the Spirit of Prophecy equates to the prophetic testimony that Jesus gave while on this earth (pp. 154-155).   | The "testimony of Jesus" and "Spirit of Prophecy" refer to Ellen White's writings. Note: Miller rejected Ellen White as a prophet.   |

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| Rev.<br>20:1 | The angel that threw the devil in the bottomless pit was “Jesus” (p. 30). | Abandoned Miller’s view.   |
| Rev.<br>20:1 | The “bottomless pit” into which Satan was cast is “hell.” (p. 30).        | Rejected Millers’ view, claiming that Satan is shut up on the earth. |

This brief analysis has revealed that the SDA sect rejected many of Miller’s views about Revelation, or significantly altered them, thereby exposing their perception that Miller’s views were incorrect. If Miller’s writings on Revelation were indeed “great light,” then why did the sect reject so much of it?

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts* vol. 1 (1858), 131.

<sup>2</sup> William Miller, *Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ, about the Year 1843; in a Course of Lectures* (Boston: Moses A. Dow, 1841).

<sup>3</sup> F.D. Nichol, editor, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Reference Series*, vol. SdaBc-7 (Revelation) (1978).

<sup>4</sup> Joshua Himes, *Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology, Selected from the Manuscripts of William Miller, with a Memoir of His Life* (Boston: Moses A. Dow, 1841).

# CONTINUE LEARNING

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For more information on Ellen White and the SDA sect, visit [www.nonsda.org](http://www.nonsda.org). Also, the following books are available from Brother Anderson:



Brother Anderson's book, *More than a Profit, Less than a Prophet*, is a must-read for every Seventh-day Adventist.

This hard-hitting book shatters the myths about Ellen White and her "inspired" health teachings, exposing the true spirit and motivation behind Seventh-day Adventism.



A serious investigation into SDA teachings regarding a National Sunday Law. Learn the surprising origin of this teaching and how it contradicts both the Bible and common sense.