

“*Watchman,
what of the night?*”

“The hour has come, the hour is striking and striking at you,
the hour and the end!”
Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)



“The Redemption

. . . that is in Christ Jesus”

Romans 3:24

Editor' Preface

The Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14 is the basis of Adventism. I know of no other religious body or Movement proclaiming them. These messages are found in the book which God gave to Jesus Christ to show to His followers what must take place. One of those “musts” will be 144,000 people who will be keeping “the commandments of God” (14:12). They are declared to be “holy ones” (ἁγίων). Not since Jesus Christ lived a man among men has such been seen. He realized such an experience clothed in the garb of fallen humanity. Can He reproduce such a life in those who come by faith to Him? Can He “save to the uttermost”? (Heb. 7:25). This is what His “unchangeable priesthood” is all about (ver. 24). This is why the sanctuary and all prophecies pertaining to it are important to Adventism. None can be set aside as of little consequence. We may not as yet understand all the light and truth that God has for us. We may have many things yet to learn, as well as things to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Let us not try to crawl up on the infallible Throne and pronounce judgment against that which God has entrusted to us. Let us proclaim the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. To do so will require the faith of Jesus.

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“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”
Jude 24-25

"The Redemption

----- that is in Christ Jesus"

Romans 3: 24

After declaring that "all - both Jew and Gentile - have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," Paul sets forth "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:23-24). It is the ultimate objective of God in justification by faith. It is the establishment of the law by faith (3:31).

In the book of Revelation we are told that there is to be that final display of this justification. The "third angel" declares, "Here they are!" -- those who "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." How will it be accomplished? Paul answers that question in Romans 4, because in Romans 5, he declares - "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through" the redemption that is in "our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:1). That accomplishment was illustrated in the experience of Abraham and Sarah in the conception and birth of Isaac.

It needs to be kept in mind that it was not Abraham who was sterile, but Sarah. He had fathered Ishmael (Gen. 16:16). Six more sons would be born to him after the death of Sarah (Gen. 25:1-2). Sarah had reached the time of life wherein it was stated that it ceased to be with her "after the manner of women" (Gen. 18:11), and was still childless. Yet the Lord told Abraham within the hearing of Sarah, "I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life, and lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son" (ver. 10). To this Sarah laughed. Jehovah's response was a simple question as applicable now as then: "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Ver. 14). Justification through faith that will fulfill the prophecy of Revelation 14:12 is just as dependent

upon the creative power of God as was the birth of Isaac. It is the final display of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It should be observed and kept in mind that the Lord said - "I will certainly return unto thee *according to the time of life*" (18:10), and again - "At the time appointed I will return unto thee, *according to the time of life*, and Sarah shall have a son" (18:14). The "time of life" with Sarah required the exercise of the same re-creative power of God upon her for her to conceive and bear Isaac as the creative act of Jesus in causing the man born blind to see (John 9). Both were the "redemption that is in Christ Jesus." This is the example that Paul chose to use to illustrate the realization of justification by faith. He wrote of Abraham:

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was also able to perform (Rom. 4:20-21).

What has God promised in earth's final hour?

I will make a man more precious than fine gold: even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir (Isaiah. 13:12).

Not only does God take the responsibility for the accomplishment of the objective, but He also defined the era of time when it will be accomplished:

Behold the day of the Lord cometh. ... For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in its going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine (13:9-10).

Then He will "make a man more precious than gold." This is to be followed by "the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger" (13:13; Rev. 15:1). The period of time indicated - the Dark Day in 1780 to the close of probation - parallels the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

It gives meaning and significance to the message committed in sacred trust to the Seventh-day Adventist Church (See *Testimony for the Church*, Vol. 9, p. 19). Another Old Testament prophecy – Zechariah’s vision of Joshua and the Angel – “applies with *peculiar* force to the experience of God’s people in the closing up of the great day of atonement” (5T:472; emphasis supplied). Careful consideration needs to be given to this vision. Joshua, the High Priest, was the spiritual “icon” of the nation, yet he was clothed “with filthy garments” (3:3). Well had Isaiah declared that “*all* our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (64:6). “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10) was the premise upon which Paul was building his theology of justification by faith and its realization. The realization as given in the vision to Zechariah was two-fold: 1) There is not only a taking away of the “filthy garments,” but 2) there was to be a clothing with a “change of raiment” (3:14). By Whom this exchange is accomplished, is emphasized. While the instruction is given to those who stood before Him to “take the filthy garments from Joshua, the Angel of the Lord of hosts declared, “Behold *I* have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee and *I* will clothe thee with a change of raiment” (3:4). The emphasis is the same as in the birth of Isaac. God will work through a new creative act! “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation” (κτισις, II Cor. 5:17). There is a “mystery” that has been hid from ages and generations but now is made manifest to his saints, which is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). The one point in time to which the whole of the final conflict and victory points is the period of the cleansing of the sanctuary, as indicated in Isaiah 13:9-13, and to which the vision of Zechariah 3 points with “peculiar” force “in the closing up of the great day of atonement” according to the Writings.

This involves Daniel 8:14, and 1844 cannot be set aside as of no significance for it will climax in the full, and final display of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus!

Before us now are a number of factors which are central in Adventism. The display of a group of people which keep the commandments of God is connected with the faith of Jesus and the “everlasting gospel” as well as the hour of His “judgment” (Rev. 14:6-7). Further, this group is numbered as 144,000 (14:1-5). Besides keeping the “commandments of God,” they are without fault before the throne of God with no “guile” (ψευδος falsehood) in their mouths (14:5). Their doctrine is pure; it is “the truth (as it is) in Jesus” (Eph. 4:21). Could it be that those who are designated as the 144,000 in Revelation 14 are called “men of wonder” by Zechariah (3:8, Heb. Margin) and symbolized by the gold of Ophir in Isaiah? (13:12)?

We need to ask some questions about the judgment. To these, we shall now direct our attention.

Should we read Rev. 14:6 – “The hour of His judgment” as in the KJV, or “the hour of the judgment of Him (ἡ ὥρα της κρισεως αυτου) is come” as the Greek text permits?

Why were the heavenly Hosts summoned to appear before the Ancient of days and what was the purpose of the Son of man coming also? (Dan. 7:10-13; Rev. 5:11-12). It was from among the Heavenly host that rebellion first arose.

Here enters an insight from the book of Hebrews. Man was created to be but a “little while inferior to the angels” (βραχυ τι παρα αγγελος – Heb. 2:7, margin). The same Greek words are applied to Christ in regard to His incarnate experience (verse 9). Now comes the hour when

God designs to carry out His original intent. Can He do so, and "affliction" not arise a second time? The books are opened. The record of every man's failure is clearly penned. The angels have kept an accurate record (See Eccl. 5:6). Before the Throne now stands a "Lamb as it has been slain" Rev. 5:6). Has He paid sufficiently for man's digressions? It would seem that the vision of John in Rev. 5:6-13 is but an enlargement of Daniel 7:9-10;13-14 and an answer to the question, has Jesus made a sufficient sacrifice? It would seem, however, that there is a condition placed by the Heavenly Host upon the exaltation of man. Each one so elevated must accept the Lamb as Lord and Master of his life. There appears another book - "the Lamb's Book of Life" in which is recorded only names - those of the redeemed. "Deeds" and "books" are associated together as are also "names" and a single book. To these verses can be added a suggested association found in the Writings:

Says the prophet Daniel, "The judgment was set, and the books were opened." The revelator, *describing the same scene*, adds, "Another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 480).

The concept of God keeping records of names and deeds in books appears early in biblical revelation. At the time of the worship of the golden calf when Israel first camped at Mt. Sinai, we find this request of Moses as he pleaded for Israel's forgiveness -

And if thou wilt forgive their sin --; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written (Ex. 32:32).

The Old Testament closes with the revelation of "a book of remembrance" which God caused to be "written before

Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name" (Mal. 3:16).

The book of Daniel indicates that when the Judgment is set, "the books were opened" (7:10), but it is not until the judgment of the great white throne (Rev. 20:12) that those who are "dead" (in trespasses and sin) are judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their "works" (20:13). John, however, introduces another book - the Book of Life (20:12) of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (13:8). It is a book of names. No eulogies are recorded of man's righteousnesses. Only the redemption that is in Christ Jesus has supplied the merits of redeeming grace.

No human alive today has seen a perfect human being. There is recorded the solitary life of One only who has lived in human flesh perfectly, and that was the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet God has indicated that there will be those who will keep His commandments and reveal the faith of Jesus (Rev. 14:12). He has left on record the experience of Abraham and Sarah. Paul, in his great epistle to the Romans was inspired to pick that record as the illustration of how the realization will come about. It indicated that Abraham "staggered not at the promise; but was strong in faith" (4:20). Never mind that Abraham stumbled around for more than twenty plus years over the promises of God. We have been stumbling around for more than a century over the acceptance of the message of righteousness by faith. We have not even dared to suggest what God will have to do with and to us for His righteousness to be perfected in us. I have not either. I can do no boasting. Would that He could be able to say to each of us - "Great is thy faith: be it unto thee as thou wilt" (Matt. 15:28).

Warnings - Give Heed!

"So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures."

Great Controversy, p. 593

"Every position of truth taken by our people will bear the criticism of the greatest minds; the highest of the world's great men will be brought in contact with truth, and therefore every position we take should be critically examined and tested by the Scriptures."

Letter 6, 1886

"The track of truth lies close beside the tract of error, and both tracks may seem to be one to minds which are not worked by the Holy Spirit, and which, therefore, are not quick to discern the difference between truth and error."

R&H, Oct. 22, 1903

Well would it be for the church and the world if the principles that actuated those steadfast souls (early Christians) were revived in the hearts of God's professed people. There is an alarming indifference in regard to the doctrines which are the pillars of the Christian faith. The opinion is gaining ground that, after all, these are not of vital importance. This degeneracy is strengthening the hands of the agents of Satan, so that false theories and fatal delusions which the faithful in ages past imperiled their lives to resist and expose, are now regarded with favor by thousands who claim to be followers of Christ."

The Great Controversy, p. 46

"Satan has wrought with deceiving power, bringing in a multiplicity of errors that obscure the truth. Error cannot stand alone, and would soon become extinct if it did not fasten itself like a parasite upon the tree of truth. Error draws its life from the truth of God. The traditions of men,

like floating germs, attach themselves to the truth of God, and men regard them as a part of the truth. Through false doctrines, Satan gains a foothold, and captivates the minds of men, causing them to hold theories that have no foundation in truth. Men boldly teach for doctrines the commandments of men; and as traditions pass on from age to age, they acquire a power over the human mind. But age does not make error truth, neither does its burdensome weight cause the plant of truth to become a parasite. The tree of truth bears its own genuine fruit, showing its true origin and nature. The parasite of error also bears its own fruit, and makes manifest that its character is diverse from the plant of heavenly origin.

R&H, October 22, 1895

These quotations serve as a preface to a documented manuscript, *The Masterpiece of Deception*, written in Australia under the pen name, "Swift Messenger." It contains twelve brief chapters, and four appendices. It was written in response to a request the author had received from Robert J. Wieland. Wieland's request read:

Dear Brother: You liken the doctrine of the trinity to something like "deviltry." I do not question what you say, but I have requests from people who ask what is there in the doctrine of the trinity that is so devilish, so spiritually lethal to genuine Christian experience. Could you articulate some reasons that would help me to reply to others.

This the "Swift Messenger" has done. Copies may be obtained by writing to the ALF of Australia, 1745 Cape Outway Rd., Wurdi-Boluc, VIC 3241. The cost is \$5.00 postpaid.

Appendix C is addressed to "Brother S, Brother C and Brother C" He writes:

Coming down to the last generation of time (Luke 21:32) and within a whisker of the pronouncement of the Fourth Angel of Rev. 18, I am much concerned with ignorance of the finer details of truth, the avoidance of textual evidence (which rightly convinces me to avoid

the Trinity) but in the same breath does nothing to avoid forms of ecumenical MONOTHEISM. ... Your form of Monotheism has you all:-

1. Ignorantly denigrating the Eternal Deity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
2. I believe you have tried to peep behind the "wall of Eternity" when silence is golden in coming to conclusions on the origins of the Godhead.

Signing "30"

Next year - 2007 - will mark the 73rd year since I preached my first sermon. It was an early Sunday morning, and I went to visit the Jorgensens, in whose home we had met for Sabbath school and worship. Yes, the Conference recognized "home churches" at that time. Actually, we were called a "company" rather than a "church." I am sure that the Iowa Conference had more "companies" and Sabbath schools than "churches" in 1934. The Jorgenson's had retired from Petosky, Michigan, where they were pastoring. She was a credentialed Bible Worker, and had given my mother and me Bible Studies in 1932.

That particular Sunday morning, Elder Jorgenson told me to go to the pump organ, and see the picture they had received in the mail. It was of a young man they knew in Michigan who was graduating from Emanuel Missionary College. He told me that the young man had preached his first sermon when he was 14. I didn't stay long that morning, but hurried home and told my mother about the young man, stating, I could "beat" (not the best motivation in the world) that record. I would not be 14 till October of that year. Mother was delighted to hear my resolve as she had dedicated me to the Lord before I was born.

In August, I asked Elder Jorgenson if I could speak. He set the following Sabbath. The text I used was Amos 4:12 - "prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." The pulpit was the dining room table. In 15 minutes I had said all that I could say. But Elder Jorgensen asked me to prepare another sermon which I did. I have been preaching ever since except for the educational time out - four years at Union, and a year (twenty years) later at Andrews University.

Before going to Union, I was preaching every other Sabbath for the Ames Company, which met in the basement of the city band shell, and at Perry on the alternate Sabbaths. They met in a home. The 13th Sabbath I hitch-hiked on Friday to Knoxville, and spoke in their church which had a pulpit, which they prized, from which Ellen White had spoken. I enjoyed fellowship with the Reins brothers, Dale and Don, who were my age.

From Union, I accepted a call to the Texico Conference, and arrived in New Mexico to join in an evangelistic effort being conducted in an un-entered rural area near the then conference office at Clovis. The meetings were held in the high school auditorium. The other rural congregations, Baptist and Methodists, closed their Sunday services during our meetings. Sunday morning, I was assigned the "Trial by Jury" format to present the change of the Sabbath. The one in charge of the meetings spent the Sabbath rounding up a "jury" of nine.

During the years following, it was conference evangelism; pastoring, which included the First Church in Toronto, Canada, and while there a confrontation over the Lord's Day Act of Canada. (See *Bible Students' Source Book, Commentary Reference Series, Vol. 9, p. 978, 1962*)

My last official work for the Church directly, was serving as head of the Bible and History department at old Madison College just before its doors were closed. Following the year at Andrews University, I asked for and received a "leave of absence." Having served on conference committees I was aware of how ministers were "dissected" on occasion, so I requested a statement from the Union Conference from which was I credentialed. Signed by the Union President, H. H. Schmidt, it read:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to establish the fact that Wm. H. Grotheer left the employ of old Madison College and the Southern Union Conference strictly on his own, June 1, 1965. He was in good and regular standing as a denominational worker when he took this voluntary leave of absence.

Forty years have passed. During this time I have served as Editor of Publications and Research for the Adventist Laymen's Foundation. A change of pace is required. Instead of trying to continue to publish "*Watchman, What of the Night?*" as a bi-monthly publication we shall plan to place a "thought for the month" or briefly discuss an important religious news item on the two Websites. (See the next column as how to locate them.) If you cannot access either of these two sites so as to bring the message to your screen and wish a copy, you may write to the office, sending your name and postal address, and we will mail you a copy free.

"30"

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