

The Remnant Church

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Introduction

In Revelation 14:6-13 there is a depiction of three heavenly messages being proclaimed to the whole world just before the Second Coming of Jesus (pictured in 14:14-20). These messages particularly apply to the “time of the end” because one of them is a warning against Babylon, who has *made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication* (v. 8). In other words, it points to the time when end-time Babylon will have illicit relations with *the kings of the earth* (Revelation 17:2; 18:3, 9). Moreover, the third message is a warning against receiving the mark of the beast (vv. 9-11), which concerns the final crisis in world history (13:11-18).

Who gives these heavenly messages? Although the word for *angels* is used here to describe those with these messages, it is also said that they preach the *everlasting gospel* (v. 6). Of course, it is literally God’s faithful Christians who preach the gospel. Remember that the Greek word for *angel* means *messenger* and can refer to angelic beings, the Lord Himself (Malachi 3:1), and to human beings. Here, then, the three angels refer to Christian people in the end-time.

The First Angel’s Message (14:6-7)

The first angel’s message centers on the *everlasting gospel* (v. 6). The word *gospel* means *good news* and in the strictest sense refers to the good news of salvation by grace through faith alone in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 1:16-17; 3:28; 4:2-3; I Corinthians 15:1-4). It also includes the kingdom of Christ, for it is sometimes called the *gospel of the kingdom* in the New Testament (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 24:14). This kingdom is both a present-day spiritual kingdom (Matthew 4:17; 10:7; 12:28; Luke 17:21) and the future literal kingdom that will arrive with the Second Coming of Jesus (Matthew 6:10; 7:21-22; 8:11; 16:28; 25:34; 26:29; Mark 9:1; 14:25; Luke 9:27; 11:2; 13:28-29; 14:15; 22:16, 18; 22:30; 23:42; John 18:36). This would mean that the gospel includes the good news about Christ’s work as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary and His soon Second Coming. It is *everlasting* in the sense that it was preached in Abraham’s day (Galatians 3:6-8) and its basis is Christ’s death who *was slain from the foundation of the world* (Revelation 13:8; cf. I Peter 1:19-20). Of course, it is also everlasting in the sense that the fruits of the gospel will last for an eternity in those who are saved in Christ’s literal kingdom.

The gospel is to be globally proclaimed to *every nation, tribe, tongue, and people* (v. 6). No one is to be ignored, indicating that God desires to save all peoples regardless of nationality, race, or gender. This leaves no appropriate room for excessive nationalism, xenophobia, racism, or gender discrimination among God's people.

The first angel's message commands people everywhere to do three specific things: (1) *Fear God* (v. 7); (2) *give glory to Him* (v. 7), and (3) *worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water* (v. 7). To fear God is to recognize His authority and submit to it. It describes a person in a right relationship to Him. To give Him the glory is the result of fearing God and is reflected in a life of praise (Matthew 5:16; 9:8; 15:31; Mark 2:12; Luke 2:20; 5:26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15, 18; 23:47; Acts 3:13; 4:21; 11:18; 13:48; 21:20; Romans 15:4, 6, 9; Galatians 1:24) and obedience, or good works (Matthew 5:16; I Corinthians 6:18-20), even including our eating and drinking (I Corinthians 10:31). In other words, all that we do (I Corinthians 10:31) should glorify God, not only for our own spiritual health, but to allow others to see our good works and glorify God (Matthew 5:16).

Worship of God (v. 7) involves listening to His Word and praising Him in prayer, song, and spirit. Note that worship is emphasized here in the context of avoiding the mark of the beast (vv. 9-11), which constitutes a specific form of false worship. As we have seen before, this final crisis will concern the enforcement of Sunday observance as the substitute for the seventh-day Sabbath. Therefore, it is significant that the first angel commands true worship of the Creator, especially during a time in world history when the theory of evolution is so popular, and in terms of the Sabbath Commandment. The command to worship the Creator in verse 7 is a paraphrase of part of the Fourth Commandment, *who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water* (cf. Exodus 20:11). This also demonstrates that both the act of worship and the special day of worship are both important to God and are a part of His first angel's message.

There is a special urgency to the command to fear God, give Him glory, and worship the Creator. Verse 7 states that it is *for [because] the hour of His judgment has come*. Some have noted that it is always an hour of judgment when the gospel is proclaimed, for people who hear the gospel must make a decision to either keep or ignore it. However true that is, it is not the intended meaning here. First, it is called *the hour of His [God's] judgment* and not the hour of *people's* judgment. Second, the judgment hour does not come because the everlasting gospel is being preached but rather that the everlasting gospel is proclaimed with new emphasis *for [because] the hour of His judgment has come*.

Other scholars view this judgment as equivalent to God's wrath (as an executive judgment), whose hour has come, that is, God's wrath is almost ready to be poured out on the wicked. We cannot accept this understanding for at least two reasons. First, the Greek word for *judgment* here indicates a process of judgment rather than the execution of the sentence of a judgment. Although

the two Greek words for *judgment* can be used interchangeably, the primary meaning of this particular word for *judgment* does not immediately point to an executive judgment as in wrath. Second, in the book of Revelation, when a particular *hour* is said to arrive, the events associated with it have come as well (3:3, 10; 9:15; 11:13; 14:15, where the same Greek word is rendered *time*; 17:12; 18:10, 17, 19). It is not used in an anticipatory sense.

Because the judgment has begun during the time the gospel is still being preached and the peoples of the world are being exhorted to fear God, glorify Him, and worship Him, it cannot be a reference to God's future, albeit imminent, judgment. Instead, it must refer to a process of judgment that is going on in heaven while people can still be saved on the earth. While that judgment is not specified in this chapter, this section's heavenly sanctuary scene hints at its identity. There the Ark of the Covenant is seen in the temple in heaven (11:19), an ark that was located in the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary (Exodus 26:33-34). A judgment in the context of the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary, the compartment that was only utilized on the Day of Atonement each year, points us to the judgment symbolized by the Day of Atonement.

On that day near the end of the Hebrew year, God's professed people experienced this judgment day in which the sins of the people were finally disposed of in the cleansing of the sanctuary. Then those who had humbled themselves before God would pass the judgment and be allowed to remain with the covenant community of God, and those who refused to do so were cut off from that covenant community (Leviticus 16; 23).

Therefore, the judgment referred to in Revelation 14:7 is a process of judgment restricted to the professed people of God to determine which are faithful and which are false. At the end of this judgment, the wicked will be destroyed, the living wicked at the Second Coming and all of the wicked at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:11-14), and the saved will joyfully meet Jesus at His Second Coming. See the section entitled "The Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment" for a more complete explanation of this truth.

It is significant, in light of the urgent commands to fear God, glorify Him, and worship Him in the context of this end-time Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment, that the first angel is proclaiming the everlasting gospel. None of these things will save anyone, no matter how pious the person or how frequent and intense is his praise of God or how often he worships God (even if it is especially on the Sabbath). Without the gospel, these things are of no avail. In addition, to view the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment outside the context of the gospel will lead one to turn the judgment into something to fear and think that one cannot be saved unless the quality and quantity of his good works are sufficient to pass that judgment. But the gospel reminds us that the judgment is not about measuring up to some very high standard of good works, for if it were, no one would be saved. Thus, this judgment must always be understood and proclaimed in the context of the gospel.

The Second Angel's Message (14:8)

The second angel's message is an announcement that Babylon has fallen because it has entered into illicit relationships with the nations. In other words, this false religious power, along with her daughter churches (Revelation 17:5) will unite with the nations or *kings of the earth* (17:2; 18:3, 9) to enforce her religious decree to honor Sunday at the expense of the Sabbath. In so doing, the nations or peoples of the world will become drunk on Babylon's *wine*. This metaphor suggests that this *wine* is her false teachings that have a spiritually intoxicating effect on people who follow Babylon. In this context of the announcing of Babylon's fall, the second angel's message implies what is explicitly stated in Revelation 18:4, a call for God's people to come out of Babylon before it is too late.

It is always difficult to call people out of false churches because one must be careful not to regard the true end-time church as intrinsically superior to the other churches or as impervious to serious problems. In other words, such a message must be given in humility that for the grace of God we could also be under a false church's influence. Christ died for the sins of the whole world (Romans 5:6-8; II Corinthians 5:14; I John 2:2; 4:14) and not just for those that will ultimately be saved. For this reason, care must be taken to preach this message to come out of Babylon in humility and love. Nevertheless, no matter how difficult, it is an urgent message that God's people need to preach. It is, or at least should be, an act of love and mercy to tell someone his precarious position if he is about to fall off a cliff.

The Third Angel's Message (14:9-11)

The third angel's message is warning to not receive the mark of the beast. Because that was explained earlier as enforced Sunday observance at the expense of the Sabbath, the positive side of this message is to urge people to keep the Sabbath holy (cf. 14:7's paraphrase of part of the Sabbath Commandment). While the Sabbath truth is always important, it will be of much more importance when the issues involved will be brought to the whole world by Papal Rome and its political and religious allies at the very end of the age.

Just as Babylon has wine, so God has His *wine* which represents His wrath (v. 10). In the Old Testament, receiving God's judgments are often spoken of metaphorically as drinking wine from God's cup (Job 21:20; Psalms 60:3; 75:8; Isaiah 51:17-23; Jeremiah 25:15-29; 49:12; Ezekiel 23:32-34; Obadiah 16). God's wrath at the end-time will be *poured out full strength* (v. 10), which refers to the Seven Last Plagues (Revelation 15:1), described in Revelation 16.

The result of those who receive God's undiluted wrath in the Seven Last Plagues is that the *smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night* (v. 11). This imagery is taken from Isaiah 34:8-10, where in a context that includes the destruction of Edom, the final

destruction against *all nations* (v. 2) is meant. The fire involved in this destruction will *not be quenched night or day* (v. 10), and its *smoke shall ascend forever* (v. 10). But these facts do not mean that the wicked will burn endlessly, for the prophecy says that various kinds of animals will live there and thorns will grow there (vv. 11-15). This means that the fire will *literally* and eventually go out and the smoke will fade away. Therefore, given also that this prophecy is given in poetic form, which does not require a literal interpretation of the details, we must understand that this is a word picture of utter destruction. However, while the fire is burning, no one can quench it. This, then, is how we should also understand Revelation 14:11's references to smoke ascending forever and the wicked having no rest day or night. Compare Revelation 20:10, which uses similar language depicting the event that literally *devoured* the wicked (v. 9).

In Revelation 14:12, the saints are portrayed as having *patience*, from a Greek word better translated as *perseverance* or *steadfastness*. Thus, it refers to the perseverance of God's people who are proclaiming the Three Angels' Messages in the context of opposition they face. They are also characterized by the fact that they *keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus* (v. 12). As we have shown before, in the context of the Ark of the Covenant as the focal point of the heavenly sanctuary scene (11:19) for this section of the book, *the commandments of God* particularly refers to the Ten Commandments.

Finally, God's people *keep...the faith of Jesus* (v. 12). This phrase in Greek can either mean *faith of Jesus* (as in keep Jesus' faith or teachings) or *faith in Jesus*. In the context, keeping the commandments and keeping the faith are the two ways that the saints demonstrate their patient endurance. For this reason, it is better to understand the phrase as *keep...the faith in Jesus*. In the same way, in our modern culture, sometimes people exhort others to "keep the faith," by which they mean keep on keeping (show perseverance) their faith in whatever they believe. There is a kind of parallel between 14:12 and 12:17, both of which are located in the same major section of the book and form bookends around the mark of the beast controversy. In 12:17, God's people are described as those who *keep the commandments of God and have [possess] the testimony of Jesus Christ*. That is a way to suggest that the latter phrase in 14:12 indicates to keep something that they possess, in this context to keep their faith in Jesus rather than to keep what Jesus believed (which of course the true believer will also do).

Verse 13 declares a blessing on those who *die in the Lord from now on*, which means on those who are part of God's end-time movement proclaiming the Three Angels' Messages. This is the second blessing pronounced on people out of a total of seven blessings in the book of Revelation (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14). The blessing seems to be that by their deaths they will escape the worst of the end-time persecutions brought by Babylon. In verse 14, John is told that *their works follow them*. In other words, their salvation is assured because their works will be remembered in the judgment as valid evidence that they indeed belong to Jesus.

The Three Angels' Messages are the warning messages that God's end-time Church will proclaim. This either implies or states nine specific things concerning that end-time movement. First, it must be a global Church in order to be sufficiently organized to proclaim these heavenly messages globally to *every nation, tribe, tongue, and people* (Revelation 14:6). Second, it will proclaim the everlasting gospel of salvation by grace through faith alone (14:6). Third, it will teach that all that we do should glorify God in the context of being awed by His presence. Fourth, it will teach the necessity and privilege of observing the seventh-day Sabbath. Fifth, by its emphasis on worshiping God as the Creator, it will uphold the fiat creation by God *ex nihilo (out of nothing)* in specific contradistinction to the world's view of evolution. Sixth, it will proclaim the truth of God's Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment going on in heaven while people still have an opportunity to be saved. Seventh, it will teach that spiritual Babylon is apostate Christianity and call people out of Babylon and into the Lord's true church. Eighth, it will warn against the receiving of the mark of the beast by observing the seventh-day Sabbath in contradistinction of honoring Sunday. Finally, it will persevere in keeping the Ten Commandments and their faith in Jesus regardless of what is threatened against them by the wicked forces who will be controlling the entire world at the very end-time. These nine identifying marks will enable us to identify this church before the end of this paper.

The Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment

In Revelation 10 the apostle John in vision sees a heavenly Being with a little book open in His hand. We believe that this Being is Jesus (cf. v. 1 with Revelation 1:13-15; 4:3). In any case, He is from heaven and therefore represents God's message. From the description of what happens in this vision, we learn that this prophecy refers to God's end-time church.

What is the *little book* in this Messenger's hand? We should first note that it is a book of prophecy, for when John eats it in vision and has a bitter experience, he is told to *prophesy again* (vv. 10-11). Oddly enough, perhaps, the identity of this prophetic book is discovered in the explanation for the word *delay* (or *time* in KJV) in Revelation 10:6. In that verse, John is told that there will come a point when *there should be delay [or "time"] no longer*. Virtually all modern translations of the Bible translate the Greek word there as *delay* because they interpret the end of the *delay* as the beginning of the seventh trumpet being sounded (v. 7).

But there is good evidence that the word should be translated as *time* instead. First, the Greek word for *delay* is the normal word that means *time*. There is another Greek word that denotes *delay* in the New Testament, and this word in Revelation 10 is never used elsewhere in the New Testament with the meaning of delay. Second, *if* it did mean *delay* here, and if it referred to the sounding of the seventh trumpet, that would imply that God had previously postponed the very end-time, including His Second Coming, for then the end of the delay would immediately result in the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The proposition that God would delay the Second Coming

seems untenable. Moreover, it directly contradicts the statement in Hebrews 10:37 that *He who is coming will come, and will not tarry*. Therefore, the correct translation of the Greek word in Revelation 10:6 is *time*.

We should also note that verse 7 does not say that the end of *time* is at the point of the sounding of the seventh trumpet, but simply that when the seventh trumpet sounds, *the mystery of God would be finished* (v. 7). In other words, the focus is not on when the seventh trumpet sounds but on what happens when it is sounded. That there is a period of time between the end of *time* and the beginning of the seventh trumpet is shown by the fact that John begins to write down what the *seven thunders* speak but is told to stop that and seal up those words (v. 4). Evidently, the seven thunders are speaking about the contents of the little book, for that book is pictured as *open* (v. 2). Then John in vision eats the book and has a bitter experience which results in his being told to *prophesy again* (vv. 10-11). This suggests that John then represented God's end-time people who will initially misunderstand the meaning of the prophecy in that book and then eventually discovers and proclaims its correct meaning. If they go on to proclaim the meaning of this little book, then there must be time between when that book is sealed and when it is opened again and its contents proclaimed.

Therefore, we conclude that the *time* referred to in verse 6 refers to *prophetic* time. In other words, it is reached when the time prophecy that extends the furthest into the Christian Era has ended. A search of the prophetic books of the Bible reveals that this time prophecy is the 2,300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14, which is fulfilled in *the time of the end* (8:17). Interestingly, Daniel is told to *seal up the vision, For it refers to many days in the future* (8:26), a parallel to John being told to seal up the little book in Revelation. For this reason, we conclude that the *little book* in Revelation 10 is the prophetic book of Daniel, which will be opened in *the time of the end*. Some scholars conclude that the link between the *mighty angel* in this chapter with the *strong angel* in chapter 5, both of whom possess a book, suggests that Daniel is a smaller portion of the larger book in chapter 5. But whether or not that is the case, it does not refute our conclusion that the *little book* in Revelation 10 is the book of Daniel.

When John is told to go back to the prophecy and prophesy again (vv. 10-11), his attention is directed to *the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there* (11:1), which he is to *measure*. One of the three things John was to measure was *the temple of God*. What is meant by this temple? Four suggestions have been offered by different scholars: (1) the Jerusalem Temple; (2) an end-time rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem; (3) the Christian Church; and (4) the heavenly sanctuary. We cannot accept the Jerusalem Temple as this *temple of God* for two reasons. First, it is almost certain that the book of Revelation was written in the A.D. 90s, at least twenty years after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple by the Romans in A.D. 70. Second, after the death of Jesus, the Jerusalem Temple ceased to have any significance since Jesus as the Lamb of God was the ultimate sacrifice to which the animal sacrifices had pointed (John 1:29, 36; cf. Matthew

27:50-51; Mark 15:37-38; and Luke 23:45-46). Therefore, even before the time of Revelation, the Jerusalem Temple could not be called *the temple of God*.

We cannot accept the identification of a rebuilt Jerusalem Temple in the end-time, a concept championed by futurist scholars. Even if one were rebuilt, for the latter reason in the previous paragraph, it could not properly be called *the temple of God*.

Some have taken the position that *the temple of God* here is symbolic of the Christian Church on the basis of I Corinthians 3:16-17. We cannot adopt this position for at least two reasons. First, in the book of Revelation, the word for *temple* is never used as a symbol of the Church unless this is the one exception (Revelation 3:12; 7:15; 11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 6, 8; 16:1, 17; 21:22). Second, the Church is mentioned separately from *the temple of God* in Revelation 11:1 as *those who worship there*.

The only temple left is the temple in heaven, which Revelation portrays as a real, literal temple there (7:15; 11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 6, 8; 16:1, 17). By a process of elimination, then, *the temple of God* in our passage is the heavenly sanctuary. Modern historicists are more likely to adopt this interpretation. But some take the position that it is specifically the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary that is meant by the Greek word here (*naos*) based on the view that it almost always refers to the Most Holy Place in the book of Revelation.

However, we do not think that this is a warranted conclusion about the use of the word *naos* in Revelation. For example, in Revelation 7:15, some worshipers are said to *serve Him day and night in His temple (naos)*. There is no reason to assume that such worship is limited to the Most Holy Place and good reason to believe that the temple simply refers to the structure of the temple in heaven, which would include the Holy Place as well as the Most Holy Place. In Revelation 15:8, the temple (*naos*) is filled with smoke so that no one could enter it, thus apparently signifying that the mediation of Christ was no longer available during the Seven Last Plagues. Surely that does not mean that one can enter the Holy Place during that time while being excluded only from the Most Holy Place. Furthermore, the heavenly temple being filled with smoke echoes two occasions when this was true of God's earthly temple when the Mosaic sanctuary was filled with God's glory so that no priests could enter it (Exodus 40:34-35) and when the same thing was true of Solomon's temple (II Chronicles 5:13-14). Again, the entire sanctuary building, not merely the Most Holy Place, was filled with the glory of God on these occasions. Finally, in the very prophecy being examined here, the second word for temple (*naos*) is used in verse 2, of which John is instructed not to measure *the court which is outside the temple (naos)*. It is true that the courtyard was outside the Most Holy Place, but it was also outside the Holy Place; in fact, the nearest compartment to the courtyard was the Holy Place. Thus, the word *naos* in verse 2 more naturally includes both compartments of the temple.

Furthermore, there is a fascinating parallel of sorts to the three things to be measured here and those things to be measured in Ezekiel's vision given in Ezekiel 40-48. There the same three entities, or at least things associated with the same three entities in Revelation 11:1, were measured: (1) those things associated with the temple, which included the entire building consisting of both compartments (Ezekiel 40:1-43:12); (2) the altar of burnt offering (Ezekiel 43:13-17; cf. vv. 18-27); and (3) those things associated with the people of Judah (though not the people themselves)—see Ezekiel 44-48).

Some scholars have also noted that the same three entities were to be cleansed on the Day of Atonement each year: (1) the sanctuary itself (including both compartments—Leviticus 16:16-17); (2) the altar of burnt offering (Leviticus 16:18-19); and (3) the people (Leviticus 16:24, 30). Note that the three things to be cleansed are discussed in the same order as those entities that are to be measured in Revelation 11:1; that is also true of the same three categories to be measured in Ezekiel 40-48. Even though Leviticus 16 involves cleansing rather than measuring, there is a connection between the activities in Leviticus 16 and Ezekiel 40-48, for Ezekiel 40:1-2 reveals that Ezekiel's vision was given at *the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month*. Given that the Jewish year was reckoned on a fall-to-fall basis (rather than on a spring-to-spring basis), the *beginning* of the year was in the seventh month from the first month in the spring (*first* of the year would be in the spring as per the religious year, but the *beginning* of the year was the beginning of the civil year in the fall). The tenth day of the seventh month was the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29; 23:27-28), marking the connection between Leviticus 16 and Ezekiel 40-48. Thus, it is appropriate to connect both Ezekiel 40-48 and Leviticus 16 to the activity and items/people in Revelation 11:1. When we make that connection, it is apparent that *the temple of God* in Revelation 11:1 includes both the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.

The second thing John is told to measure is the *altar*, although the angel does not say which altar. In the sanctuary there are two altars, the altar of burnt offering and the altar of incense (cf. Revelation 8:3-5). Given the connections between this verse in Revelation and both Ezekiel 40-48 and Leviticus 16, we conclude that the altar here refers to the altar of burnt offering. The objection to that conclusion that it cannot be the altar of burnt offering because the outer court was to be excluded from the measuring (v. 2) is not valid, for that court is a reference to the outer Court of the Gentiles (note it is given to the Gentiles according to v. 2), and the altar of burnt offering was not there but in the inner court.

Finally, those who worship *in it* (literal Greek of v. 1) are to be measured. In the earthly sanctuary the people did not literally worship *in* either compartment of the sanctuary proper. Therefore, we are to see this as speaking figuratively. On this basis, Ephesians 2:6 says that God's Christian people are sitting in heavenly places, and Hebrews 12:22-23 also picture His people as figuratively residing in *heavenly Jerusalem* (v. 22).

Reference to the Court of the Gentiles in Revelation 11:2 connects the *Gentiles* as those who *will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months*. In Revelation, the *holy city* or the *city of My God* (3:12) refers to the New Jerusalem (3:12, 14:1; 21:2) in heaven. Note that in the context of Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70, Luke identifies an unspecified time as constituting the trampling of Jerusalem by the Gentiles (Luke 21:20-24, especially v. 24). But Revelation 11:2 cannot refer to this trampling because the *holy city* in Revelation is the New Jerusalem in heaven.

Obviously, no one can enter into the New Jerusalem and trample it underfoot. Therefore, in Revelation 11:2 the *holy city* must represent the faithful Christian people of God who are persecuted. The period of forty-two months is equal to the period of three and one-half times and one thousand two hundred sixty days (Revelation 12:6, 14; 13:5; Daniel 7:25, 12:7), which found its fulfillment in the period of persecution by the Papal power for 1,260 years during the Middle Ages. See our paper entitled "The Antichrist Prophecies" for an explanation of this truth.

Now we are ready to explore what the act of measuring denotes in Scripture. In Zechariah 2:1-5 Jerusalem is measured to assure that the city would be preserved (vv. 4-5). In Ezekiel 40-43:12 and 45-48, in context, the temple and the city of Jerusalem are measured in vision in order to assure the Jews that the sanctuary and the city will be rebuilt. And in measuring the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:9-27, we are assured that it is a safe or secure city for God's people, who will be protected from all sin (vv. 24-27). The act of measuring *people* implies a process of judgment, as when people measure other people (Matthew 7:1-2; Luke 6:37-38; II Corinthians 10:12). In Amos 7:7-9, the Lord Himself measures the nation of His own people. It is implied that they do not measure up, for the result of His measuring them is that they would be destroyed. And in II Samuel 8:2, David measured a group of people to signify which ones would be saved and which ones would be killed.

In light of these acts of measuring, the measuring of the people who worship in the temple in Revelation 11:1 points to a process of judgment. This is underscored by the connection we saw earlier between the prophecy in this verse and the passages in Ezekiel 40-48 and Leviticus 16. The common denominator between the latter two passages is the Day of Atonement, as the latter describes the activities of that day and the former depicts a vision given on that day. This makes Revelation 11:1's measuring of the people the equivalent of the Day of Atonement judgment.

In order to better understand the Day of Atonement, we turn our attention toward the reason it needed to be cleansed and to its actual cleansing. The background for this sanctuary service concerns the fact that worshipers brought sacrificial animals to the sanctuary in Biblical times. The worshiper would lay his hands on the head of the animal, signifying that his sins were symbolically transferred to the animal (Leviticus 3:2, 8, 13; 4:4, 24, 29, 33), who represented Jesus as *the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world* (John 1:29; cf. Acts 8:32, I Peter 1:19). Then after the animal was sacrificed, the officiating priest would take some of its blood and

sprinkle it on the altar of burnt offering (Leviticus 1:5, 11; 3:2, 8, 13) and in the Holy Place of the sanctuary (Leviticus 4:6, 17), signifying that the sins were symbolically transferred to the sanctuary. Then on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would slay an animal and first take some of its blood and sprinkle it in the Most Holy Place (Leviticus 16:14, 15), then move into the Holy Place and sprinkle some of the blood there (Leviticus 16:15, 16), and finally sprinkle some of the same blood upon the altar of burnt offering in the courtyard (Leviticus 16:18, 19). This sprinkling of the blood in the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement represented the cleansing of the sanctuary from the symbolic sins of God's people. The Day of Atonement was a solemn day of judgment because there was a separation among those claiming to belong to God. Those who *afflicted* (*humbled*) themselves would pass the judgment and be allowed to remain part of God's covenant people for another year. Those who did not so humble themselves were *cut off* from the people of God (see Leviticus 16:29; 23:27, 29-30).

Therefore, the judgment on the Day of Atonement in Israel pointed forward to a process of judgment that the Lord Himself will convene in heaven just prior to the Second Coming of Jesus (cf. Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14, 22, 26-27). Note that it will only include those who profess to belong to God, signified by the fact only Israelites/Jews were involved in the Day of Atonement judgment. The idea seems to be that not all who profess to belong to God actually do. The judgment reveals those who are genuine and those who are not.

An objection to our analysis might be made noting that the *Gentiles* in Revelation 11:1-2 are not included in the measuring process, allegedly meaning that they do not go through this Day of Atonement judgment. Yet the fact that these are Gentiles who belonged to the outer courtyard of the temple indicates they too worshiped the God of Israel just as those Gentiles who worshiped God in the Jerusalem Temple did so in the Court of the Gentiles. However, remember that the act of measuring denotes an assurance of restoration or preservation, on the basis of Ezekiel 40-48, in addition to a process of judgment. Thus, the fact that the Gentiles in Revelation 11:1-2 are not measured reveals that they do not actually belong to God. At the same time, they do indeed go through this judgment because verse 2 literally reads in the Greek, *throw out (or "cast out") the court which is outside the temple*. The same verb is used in John 9:34 of a man who was cast out of the synagogue (cf. v. 22).

Considering this context of the judgment, why are the *temple* and the *altar* of burnt offering measured? Part of the answer is that it underscores the fact that the temple is the location of this end-time judgment. In addition, the act of measuring it serves to restore and preserve its important role in illustrating how Jesus deals with the sin problem and saves His faithful people. The measuring of the altar of burnt offering restores and preserves the truth that the underlying context of the end-time judgment is the sacrificial death of Jesus just as the literal altar of burnt offering was the place where the animals were sacrificed at the earthly sanctuary. The judgment must be understood in the light of the cross, for that is how people pass the judgment. Without the substitutionary death of Jesus, no one could be saved. Thus, the altar of burnt offering represents

the gospel and highlights the fact that the pre-advent judgment must always be understood in the context of the gospel.

It should be noted that when an Eastern writer wished to emphasize the central importance of something, he would place it at the center of his story or book. It is no coincidence, then, that in all three passages—Leviticus 16 (Day of Atonement Judgment), Ezekiel 40-48 (measuring), and Revelation 11:1 (measuring)—the three entities to be atoned for (Leviticus 16) or measured (Ezekiel 40-48; Revelation 11:1) are in the same identical order and that the Altar of Burnt Offering, representing the cross of Jesus, is the center entity. This means that in the clearest and strongest terms possible, the Scriptures are teaching us that the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment must be understood in the context of the cross—the everlasting gospel—because that is the basis for passing that judgment and being saved. A failure to keep that the central focus of this teaching is to make it quickly become in people’s minds a judgment which determines who is good enough to be saved and who is not. Such a teaching is an anathema to the Holy Scriptures. How beautiful are the Scriptures and this doctrine!

Before we end this section, we remember that in John’s vision, he ate a little book, which was sweet in his mouth but bitter in his stomach. Then he was told to prophesy again. This suggests that in this vision John represented the experience of a Christian people of God who would be bitterly disappointed when their understanding of a particular Bible prophecy did not come true. But they would reexamine that prophecy and eventually discover the reality that it refers to a different event, namely, the pre-advent investigative judgment. This view is confirmed by real historical events. A nineteenth-century American Baptist preacher named William Miller taught, on the basis of the prophecy of the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14, that Christ would return in 1844. When Christ did not return, the Millerite movement, consisting of believers representing most of the Protestant churches, suffered a crushing blow in what history records as the Great Disappointment. However, some of Miller’s followers reevaluated Daniel’s prophecy and concluded that the sanctuary there did not represent the earth but the heavenly sanctuary. Then on the basis of the Day of Atonement cleansing of the sanctuary, this group began to teach that what began in 1844 was the pre-advent investigative judgment. This forms the basis for yet another characteristic mark of God’s end-time church, which we will identify later.

The Remnant Church

Revelation 12 pictures a struggle between a red dragon (representing Satan, v. 9) and a pure woman. This woman’s clothing and her standing on the moon (v. 1) means that she is a symbolic woman. She is said to give birth to a *male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron* (v. 5), which is a reference to Jesus (cf. Psalms 2:9; Revelation 19:11-16). However, Jesus ascended to heaven and ultimately out of Satan’s reach (v. 5). Then in verse 13 the dragon *persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child*. This verse demonstrates the truth that when Satan could

not devour Jesus, he then went after His followers. It also proves that the symbolic woman in this prophecy represents the pure Church.

The woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished (v. 14). This verse is parallel to verse 6 but adds more detail. The metaphor of flying like an eagle is drawn from Exodus 19:4, where it is said that the Lord bore Israel on eagles' wings when He took them out of Egypt (cf. Deuteronomy 32:11; Isaiah 40:31). The time for her experience in the wilderness is given as *a time and times and half a time* (v. 14) or *1,260 days* (v. 6). As we saw in "The Antichrist Prophecies" this represents 1,260 years of Papal persecution during the Middle Ages.

Verse 15 declares that *the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman*. The use of a figurative flood or mighty waters is used frequently in the Old Testament to describe the military attacks and persecutions of God's people by their enemies (Psalms 69:1-2; 124:2-5; Isaiah 8:7-8; Jeremiah 47:2, 7-8). Certainly this is an apt description of the fierce persecution of the pure Church by Papal Rome during the time mentioned in this prophecy. There may be another application of this language. The mention of the serpent's *mouth* takes us back to the Garden of Eden, where Satan used the serpent's mouth to insinuate a lie about God and to deceive Eve (Genesis 3:1-6). In Revelation the mouth is used to describe the source of attack from God's enemies (9:17-19; 16:13-16). In both of those other places, the mouth is the mouth of demons. This points to a flood of deceit that flows from Satan's mouth, lies about God and about His Biblical truths. Therefore, this flood imagery actually demonstrates that Satan's tools he uses against God's people are persecution and deceit.

The good news is that *the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood* (v. 16). Whereas Satan used *his* mouth to attack God's people, the earth used its figurative mouth to *swallow up the flood*. The *earth* seems to be parallel to the *wilderness* in verses 6 and 14, where it undoubtedly refers to the more desolate regions of the world. At the same time, particularly late in this period of Papal domination, the earth probably also refers to movements that helped to decrease and eventually end Papal persecution, such as the Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the American Revolution.

In the end-time (v. 17), Satan will resurrect the power of Papal Rome and will come after God's remnant people with a vengeance. We know that verse 17 depicts the last-day church because the dragon is still angry with the woman, at this time he actually goes after the woman's *offspring*, which the literal Greek describes as *the remnant of her seed*. The offspring represents a later generation than that of the woman herself, and the word remnant represents the last portion of something, as in the last portion of a bolt of cloth. Therefore, verse 17 concerns the last-day Church of Jesus.

This church is described as those *who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*. Given that the heavenly sanctuary scene to this major section of the book is a vision of the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place, reference to *the commandments of God* are to the Ten Commandments. The same expression is repeated at the end of the fifth scene in 14:12.

The Testimony of Jesus

But what is meant by *the testimony of Jesus*? Greek textual evidence is that the word *Christ* was not in the original manuscript. Again, the Bible is its own best interpreter. Revelation 19:10 identifies *the testimony of Jesus* as *the spirit of prophecy*. Note that this identification allows us to see these two phrases as parallel to each other as follows:

A	The testimony
B	Jesus
B ¹	spirit
A ¹	prophecy

Many believe that the *spirit* refers to a spiritual essence, as the *heart* of prophecy. However, because B and B¹ are parallel to each other, the word *spirit* should be understood to represent a person just as Jesus is a person. This would make the word *spirit* mean the Holy Spirit. The outline above shows that the *testimony* is paralleled by the word *prophecy*. The *spirit of prophecy* refers to the Holy Spirit as the inspirer of prophecy. In other words, the phrase can be rendered as *prophecy from the Spirit* or as the *Spirit's prophecy*. Likewise, the parallel with A means that *the testimony of Jesus* is the testimony *from* Jesus or *Jesus' testimony*. Therefore, even though the Greek allows either the preposition to be translated as *about* or as *from*, the context of the parallelism requires the latter understanding. According to this same verse, the ones who have the testimony of Jesus or the spirit of prophecy are John's *brethren*. In the same context, Revelation 22:9 identifies these same *brethren* as *prophets*. Therefore, we conclude that *the testimony of Jesus* is the gift of prophecy that is possessed by prophets.

Most expositors interpret *the testimony of Jesus* as His testimony revealed in the Bible. Just as the book of Revelation is *the testimony of Jesus* (Revelation 1:1-2), so is the entirety of the Scriptures. We agree that the Scriptures are included in this phrase. However, the evidence in 19:10 should not be ignored. Therefore, our understanding of *the testimony of Jesus* in Revelation 12:17 is that it includes both the Scriptures and the gift of prophecy. Given that the book of Revelation contains a more precise definition in 19:10, the primary meaning is the gift of prophecy.

When Revelation 12:17 says the remnant Christian people of God have [possess] the gift of prophecy, it does not mean that all of its individual members are prophets because God has never had all His people as prophets. It must, then, mean that the collective remnant have the gift of prophecy (one or more prophets) in their midst at least at some time during its existence. This

interpretation of *the testimony of Jesus* as the gift of prophecy is rejected by the large majority of commentators because they assert that the gift of prophecy ended with the apostle John and the completion of the Bible. But when we examine both the Old and New Testaments, we find much evidence that the prophetic gift should continue in the Church, especially appearing in the end-time.

First, the gift of prophecy is included in all four lists of spiritual gifts in the New Testament (Romans 12:6-8; I Corinthians 12:4-10, 28-30; Ephesians 4:7-11), and the apostle Paul desires that believers should *come short in no gift* (I Corinthians 1:7). Second, the context in I Corinthians 13 is part of a discussion of spiritual gifts, and Paul includes prophecies when he declares that *when that which is in part will be done away* (v. 10). At that time we will see *face to face* (v. 12). In other words, when Jesus returns in glory, the prophetic gift will end. That implies that it should be expected in the Church until then.

Third, Ephesians 4:11-12 includes prophets among the offices, given by way of spiritual gifts to the Church. Verse 13 then says that apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers should continue in the Church until *we all come to the unity of the faith...to a perfect man*. In other words, these offices should exist until Jesus returns. Many expositors understand the word *prophets* in this passage to simply refer to believers who proclaim God's truth without implying they have the gift of prophecy. However, these offices are mentioned in the context of spiritual gifts (vv. 7-8), so we should view the *prophets* here as those who have the gift of prophecy. Besides, this is a list of offices within the Church, so they apply to specific members in the Church (and only in the *general* sense are all believers prophets).

The fact that there is so little record of post-Biblical prophets in the Church after the completion of the New Testament has confirmed the popular conclusion that this spiritual gift was designed to end at that time. We know there were numerous believers who claimed to be prophets even in the second century. However, there were so many obvious false prophets among them, making extravagant and wild prophetic views, that it became easier for Church leaders to reject anyone who claimed to be a prophet than to attempt to distinguish between true and false prophets. The development of apostolic succession, that the Church bishops were the spiritual successors to the special apostles, and were guarantees that the Church would always teach the truth, meant that prophets were unnecessary. These developments resulted in open hostility to spiritual gifts generally and to the gift of prophecy in particular by the late second century. Why would the Holy Spirit give the prophetic gift to a Church that denied the possibility of that gift existing in the Church anymore? Perhaps the genuine prophetic gift persisted among more faithful believers, but their minority status, limited organization, and vigorous opposition by the established Church would have resulted in little or no record of that gift's continuation. However, whenever Jesus has a Church that is faithful to His truth and accepts the possibility of a manifestation of the prophetic gift, we should expect to find it operating in its midst either in the form of living prophets or in the writings of (a) prophet(s) who died before Jesus returns.

The Bible also and particularly teaches that Christ's last-day people should have the gift of prophecy operating in its midst. First, Jesus warned against *false christs and false prophets* as believers approach close to His Second Coming (Matthew 24:24; Mark 13:22). Because both groups of people would be false teachers, their separate mention implies that there would be genuine prophets in the last days. Otherwise, we should have expected Him to tell us to reject anyone claiming to be a prophet.

Second, Joel 2:28-32 speaks of *the day of the Lord* and says that shortly before that day there would be multiples of people who would have visions and dreams—meaning that there will be several people who will have the prophetic gift. Although Peter applied that prophecy to the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-21), its context in *the day of the Lord* means there will be a second and primary fulfillment near the end of time.

Third, Malachi 4:5 announces that the Lord would send to His people Elijah the prophet before *the great and awesome day of the Lord*. Although Jesus identified this as John the Baptist (Matthew 11:9-14; 17:10-13; Luke 1:17), again the context of *the great and awesome day of the Lord* means it will have a final and primary fulfillment in the last days.

This interpretation is confirmed by a pattern in Scripture in which all the great time prophecies concerning some specific judgment of God and/or deliverance of His people had a prophet who predicted the event and a prophet associated with the event itself. This can be seen as follows:

The Flood Epoch—In Genesis 6:3 God told Noah that He would destroy the earth by a great flood of water in 120 years. Most scholars think that the reference to 120 years was to man's average lifespan. However, given the ages of many who lived after the Flood (see Genesis 11:10-32), the 120 years must apply to a period of probation just before the Flood. Noah and his family were saved in the ark that he had been instructed to build. Therefore, Noah was both the prophet who predicted the coming Flood and the prophet who lived at the time of the Flood.

The Exodus Epoch—In Genesis 15:5-14, God's judgment on Egypt and the deliverance of the Israelites after 400 years at the time of the exodus was predicted through Abraham. Even though Abraham is not specifically called a prophet, God did speak with him directly and sometimes in dreams. Moses was the prophet at the time of the exodus.

The Exile Epoch—Jeremiah was the prophet who predicted the divine judgment of the Babylonian Captivity of the Jewish nation and that it would last for 70 years. Daniel was the prophet associated with the beginning of that deliverance (cf. Daniel 6:28 with Ezra 1:1-3).

The Messiah Epoch—Daniel was the prophet who predicted the time that the Messiah would come, after the 69 symbolic weeks of Daniel 9:25. John the Baptist was the prophet associated with the Messiah’s appearance (Matthew 3).

The Pre-Advent Judgment Epoch—Daniel was the prophet through whom the prophecy came that proclaimed the pre-advent judgment in heaven would occur at the end of the 2,300 symbolic days of Daniel 8:14, or in 1844. Given the pattern shown in this outline, we would expect that *if* God had a Christian group then that allowed for the possibility of a modern manifestation of the gift of prophecy, we should expect a prophet to be raised up around 1844. Indeed, that was the case. See Appendix J of our book *Jesus and His Teachings* for the identification of that person, a brief description of her work, and the evidence that her prophetic gift was genuine.

Of course, we recognize that Jesus implicitly taught the existence of the canon of Holy Scriptures, a body of inspired writings that constitute the rule or standard by which all things are judged. Therefore, any post-Biblical gift of prophecy cannot function on an equal level with the Scriptures even though the inspiration would still be fully operational as with the Biblical prophets.

Final Conclusion

From these prophecies we can now list ten specific criteria that describes the end-time, or remnant, church:

- First, it must be a global Church in order to be sufficiently organized to proclaim the Three Angels’ Messages globally to *every nation, tribe, tongue, and people* (Revelation 14:6). A series of more or less independent congregations would not be capable of establishing a such a global message. In order to help train others to better fulfill this work and to prepare people to accept it through meeting their basic human needs, this church will probably need to operate its own educational and medical institutions.
- Second, it will proclaim the everlasting gospel of salvation by grace through faith alone (14:6). This is the thoroughly Protestant understanding of the gospel once clearly proclaimed by the sixteenth Protestant Reformers.
- Third, it will teach that all that we do should glorify God in the context of being awed by His presence. This will include what we eat and drink, how we adorn ourselves, how we talk, and what we do and do not do.
- Fourth, it will teach the truth that the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment is going on in heaven while people still have an opportunity to accept the gospel and be saved, and that the gospel is the key to passing that judgment.

- Fifth, it will teach the necessity and privilege of observing the seventh-day Sabbath.
- Sixth, by its emphasis on worshiping God as the Creator, it will uphold the fiat creation by God *ex nihilo* (*out of nothing*) in specific contradistinction to the world's view of evolution.
- Seventh, it will teach that spiritual Babylon is apostate Christianity and call people out of Babylon and into the Lord's true church.
- Eighth, it will warn against the receiving of the mark of the beast by observing the seventh-day Sabbath in contradistinction of honoring Sunday. Therefore, not only will it teach the importance of keeping the Sabbath, but it will do so in the specific context of what will become the focal point of the world's final crisis over worship.
- Ninth, it will persevere in keeping the Ten Commandments and their faith in Jesus regardless of what is threatened against them by the wicked forces who will be controlling the entire world at the very end-time.
- Tenth, it will possess the gift of prophecy in its midst, which will be understood as a secondary authority in the church, subject to the canon of the Holy Scriptures.

There is one, and only one, church that meets all ten of these criteria for being the remnant church of end-time Bible prophecy, and that is the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Through its system of tithing and offerings and organizational structure, this church has become a global church, operating in more nations on earth than any other Protestant church. In doing so, it operates an extensive network of educational and medical institutions, as well as operating a natural disaster relief effort. It proclaims the gospel of righteousness by faith alone, despite the claims of its detractors that allege it believes in salvation by works (especially the work of keeping the Sabbath)—an allegation that is simply not true. It emphasizes a total lifestyle transformation so that all that we do gives the proper glory to God.

It is the only church that understands and preaches the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment. Furthermore, it came out of the Millerite movement of the 1830s and 1840s, and its experience of the Great Disappointment and subsequent proclamation of this truth matches the description in Revelation 10-11:1. While it is not the only church that teaches the necessity of keeping the seventh-day Sabbath, it is the only one that does so in the context of it being an issue in the final conflict over worship at the very end-time. Along with many other conservative Protestant churches, it too contradicts the theory of evolution by insisting that God created the world in six literal 24-hour days (Genesis 1) out of nothing (*ex nihilo*).

Although at one time all Protestant churches taught that the Papal Roman Church was the Antichrist, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only one that still does so. This church also remains faithful, though not unique, in viewing the Ten Commandments as a single body of Law that is still required as a standard of what is right and wrong for the Christian. Finally, unlike the vast majority of churches, it views the gift of prophecy as a valid spiritual gift and believes that this gift was present in one of its co-founding members, whose voluminous writings still guide the church in its operational principles.

Therefore, the evidence points to the Seventh-day Adventist Church as constituting the remnant church of Bible prophecy. This does not mean that only members of this church will be saved. In fact, it is assumed that many of them will be eternally lost just as many of God's true people in Israel were lost because of their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. Although it is important, church membership never guarantees salvation. In fact, on the basis of the reality that God expects more from those who have more truth (Luke 12:48), the Lord expects more from this church than He does from other churches. It is an awesome responsibility that faces the Seventh-day Adventist Church, one which requires humility in the carrying out of its Three Angels' Messages.