

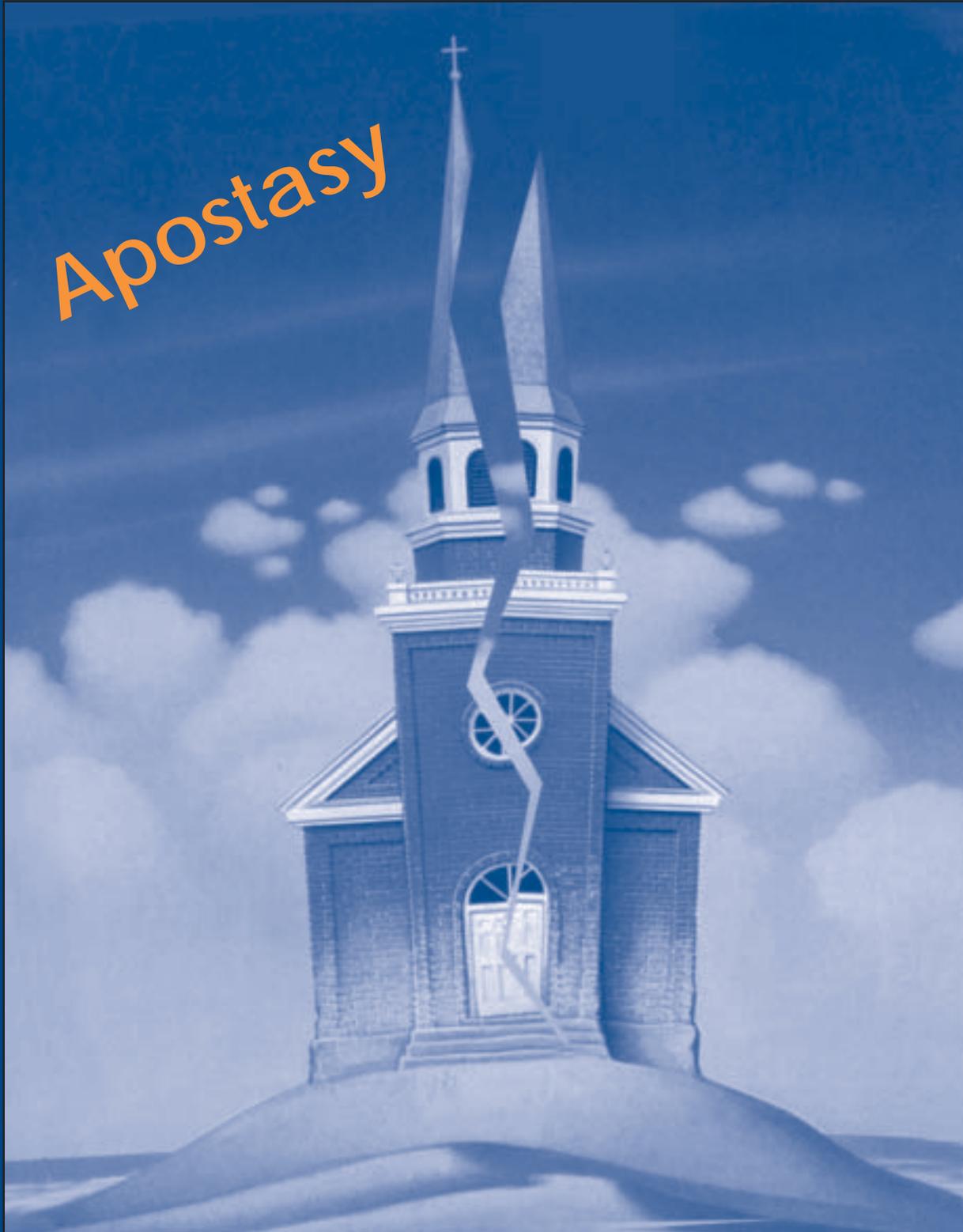
EndTime Issues...

CHRISTIAN RESOURCE – MINISTERS, TEACHERS, BIBLE STUDENTS

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Apostasy



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EndTime Issues... Magazine

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Backlash Has Begun

"This is America.... It'll never happen here!" This oft repeated mantra is a denial of a changing country. The Jewish people vocalized a similar numbing chant: "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord" (Jeremiah 7:4), when Jeremiah warned of imminent destruction. Their mantra denied reality, and over a million lost their lives.

Historically, a democratic form of government has built into its infrastructure the seeds for destruction. Alexander Tyler, a Scottish historian, wrote around 1750:

"A democracy is always temporary in nature; it simply cannot exist as a permanent form of government. A democracy will continue to exist up until the time that voters discover that they can vote themselves generous gifts from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates who promise the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result that every democracy will finally collapse due to loose fiscal policy, which is always followed by a dictatorship.

"The average age of the world's greatest civilizations from the beginning of history, has been about 200 years. During those 200 years, these nations always progressed through the following sequence:

**From Bondage to spiritual faith;
 From spiritual faith to great courage;
 From courage to liberty;
 From liberty to abundance;
 From abundance to complacency;
 From complacency to apathy;
 From apathy to dependence;
 From dependence back into bondage."**

Since the early 1960's, America has undergone a series of radical changes. Each has culturally fed upon its past and suggests that we are nearing a time of bondage.

- Civil rights movement (beginning of citizen's "rights" ideology)
- Flower children ("peace") revolution (beginning of rejection of established values, order, church, government)
- Idolization of hedonism via the entertainment industry (beginning of a sensual revolution)
- Citizen's movements toward special group "rights," which now encompasses homosexual privileges (this has evolved into the beginnings of sex education in the schools, which is now explicit) and the rights of illegal aliens
- Growing anti-Christian sentiments, often supported by the courts (beginning of cultural and political hate). Ministers are restrained from sharing some topics behind the pulpit)
- Between dependency and bondage comes blame. Everyone blames "the other "guy." We are at the last step before national ruin.

The past 40 years have seen the erosion of many Constitutional Amendment guarantees:

1. The First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech and religion.

- Political speech in a worship setting could lead to loss of tax exempt status by a church.
 - Anti-gay preaching is frowned upon and is now illegal in Canada.
 - Politically incorrect words or phrases are seen as “insensitive” or “intolerant.”
2. The Second Amendment guarantee of property rights is essentially dead. Land is being seized through eminent domain laws – with limited judicial recourse. The Supreme Court has upheld the government’s right to do this.
 3. The Fifth Amendment, guaranteeing a citizen against double-jeopardy, is fragmenting. A person can be punished for the *same crime* at the federal level *and* the state level. Plus, local municipalities can seize assets through “civil” proceedings.
 4. The Tenth Amendment designates all power to the states except those specifically designated to the federal government. The latter has entered every domain down to home and child care. The states get funds from the Feds by “complying with federal mandates” – from education to environmental project.” States are manipulated by federal power.

Other areas are affecting the liberties of this nation. This includes (1) international treaties (many oppressive ones are pending within the United Nations), (2) regulations (administrative law) by governmental agencies and (3) executive orders (the latter could split families, relocate citizens, seize anything and control everything).

Things seem to be going well. The stock market is soaring, people have freedom to move about, almost everyone has a cell phone and computers are in the majority of homes. Food is abundant and fashion beckons frequent change of wardrobes.

Yet, morally, deceit is rampant in society and politics. An era of “it’s your fault” or “he’s to blame” has come into America. Babies not yet born continue to be murdered. New York City alone has more recorded crimes annually than England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Switzerland, Spain Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway and Denmark *combined*.

With this, the elementary and secondary education achievement scores are now near the bottom in the world. There is a growing coarseness, callousness, cynicism and vulgarity that signals the decivilization of this country.¹

There are no major marches, rallies or flag-waving from concerned Americans, but a backlash is developing. A growing movement in the “Christian Right” envisions transforming America back to a Christian nation.

One example is Dr. James Kennedy’s Coral Ridge Ministry in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. He conducts annual *political training* conferences called Reclaiming America for Christ. A growing number of voices are speaking out against the separation of church and state. They perceive that that was never implicated in the Constitution. Dr. Kennedy calls that *wall of separation* a “great deception [that] has been used to destroy much of the religious freedom and liberty this country has enjoyed.”²

Though blinded to the consequences of their own spiritual leadership, much of the blame for societal corruption must be laid at their feet.

“The doctrine that men are released from obedience to the divine precepts, has weakened the force of moral obligation and opened the floodgates of iniquity upon the world. Lawlessness, dissipation, and corruption are sweeping in like an overwhelming flood. Everywhere are seen envy, evil surmising, hypocrisy, estrangement, emulation, strife, betrayal of sacred trusts, indulgence of lust. The whole system of religious principles and doctrines, which should form the foundation and framework of social life, seems to be a tottering mass, ready to fall in ruins.”³

There was recently (May 7, 2006) an attempt to re-energize the moral principles of the Decalogue by declaring a National Ten

Commandment Day. Jewish, Catholic and Protestant leaders signed onto a coalition to make this day a revitalized moral stimulus to America. All evidence at this writing suggests that it failed. But it will return.

Law and order will be deemed contained if there are moral restraints set up based on that Decalogue. Though the last six precepts govern man's interpersonal behavior, the zeal of ministers and governments to influence society through the government will step into the realm of the first four.⁴

Christian political activism is following a fascinating path:

1. Moral outcry
2. Large conventions where "moral" political leaders are invited to speak
3. Training Christians to be politically involved

4. Influencing moral legislation, such as the ability to speak out politically in church
5. Finally – the only remaining step – pressuring legislators to legislate moral behavior, especially by honoring a worship day. That falls on the left "table" of the Decalogue! The solution then will be worse than the problem.

The intensity for action builds. Elections of 2006 and 2008 will likely be morally pivotal.

References:

¹www.khouse.org/articles/2000/293

²Crusader for a Christian nation, Bill Berkowitz, www.workingforchange.com

³*Prophets and Kings*, p. 624.

⁴*The Great Controversy*, p. 592.

APOSTASY

MEANS

REBELLION

By Franklin S. Fowler Jr., M.D.

New Testament prophecy describes two distinct streams of Christianity that operate side by side as in the end of time. Jesus, in that informative Olivet end-time discourse, stated in His opening comment: "Take heed that no man deceive you ... many false prophets shall arise, and deceive many ... insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:4, 11, 24).

Paul, God's replacement apostle, noted:

"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" (I Timothy 4:1-2).

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Timothy 3:13).

God's people are faced with three types of deceptions as these two distinct "Christian" movements mature:

- Decent of wicked men who shamelessly try to lead others to sin (Ephesians 5:6): "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."
- Leaders who appeal to a sensory religious experience (II Timothy 4:3-4): "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching

ears; And they shall turn away [their] ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

- Those who subvert the gospel of Jesus and the depth of our friendship with Him (Colossians 2:8; II Corinthians 11:4, 13; II Peter 2:1): "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

"For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or [if] ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with [him].... For such [are] false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ."

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

In Christ's warning to the inquiring disciples He said that "many" would be deceived, suggesting multitudes would accept spurious ideas and ideals. The admonition was directed at the professing church. There is a turning away from truth, God's high standards and a saving relationship with Jesus.

It is interesting that the possibility of apostasy is denied by its lack of discussion and even more, a failure to scrutinize what this rebellion means by churches today! In the Old Testament a Hebrew word, *pasha*, is used to define such rebellion. It is against God's authority, law and covenant. Daniel reveals that that end-time apostasy will lead to desolation (8:13, 17, 19).

Jesus solemnly cautioned against such a denial: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23).

Individual responsibility is called into action. The Bible warns against leaning even on church leaders for understanding of truth: "Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart" (Jeremiah 14:14 NIV).

Apostasy is a sign of the end. It transcends the fantasy of many that it is the "other" church or it is only those in "Babylon." The Biblical injunctions are so numerous that the "enemy" might really be *me*. That's why Jesus was adamant that the elect, those who think and should know, are at risk of deception.

Paul noted that "in the last days perilous times shall come." After listing the evil that would infiltrate the world, he describes these individuals as having "corrupt minds," reprobate or nefarious spirits "concerning the faith" (II Timothy 3:1, 8). The last part of his "list" refers to those "in-house" – within the church. They "resist truth" (3:8) ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of truth (3:7). What were they doing? Studying the wrong things.

Jude states that "certain men crept in unawares," "ungodly men" (Jude 4). He exhorted, "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3) for "men [shall]

arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30). The deceptions within the church will be rampant.

It eventually reaches a point where "whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 16:2). This specifically refers to "loyalists" in "God's work." It is not a Pol Pol, Mao, Stalin, Hussein or Hitler. It represents what the Catholic Church did during the Dark Ages and what we see now in the Muslim reaction to Christians. But soon it will be even worse. Those within our own sphere will rebel. Then the great image to the beast will epitomize the final life and death apostasy with its mark.

Under a myriad of guises, the apostasy has begun – from doctrinal error to supernatural signs. Benny Hinn (with support from Paul and Jan Crouch) on TBN has "performed" spiritualistic miracles (power he claims pick up at the graves of Kathryn Kuhlman and Aime Semple McPherson). In many charismatic "spirit" filled services people roar like lions, bark like dogs, display contortions of their body, experience violent shaking or become dumb.

John said of apostate Protestantism after describing their doing "great wonders," he "deceiveth them that dwell on the earth" because of "those miracles which he had power to do (Revelation 13:13-14).

Again and again the Scriptures reveal the foundational issue at the end: "They receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.... For this cause God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believe not the truth (II Thessalonians 2:10-12). This later statement is most interesting. A point is reached when God backs away (Romans 1:25-26). His longsuffering and pleading Spirit ceases. Mercy's last call ends. Justice lies ahead.

End-Time Focus

Paul was made aware that some in the Thessalonian church believed that Jesus had already come (II Thessalonians 3:6-15). This brought unrest, misguided excitement and confusion. To quiet this, he tendered a second letter and noted

two things that must come before the *parousia* (II Thessalonians 2:3).

1. Rebellion (“*the* apostasy”)
2. Man of sin was to be revealed

Though apostasy existed then (Hebrews 6:6; I John 2:19, 18), it was not the final climatic manifestation. Though a Scriptural picture of Christian apostasy is painted through Babylonian imagery at the end, another rebellion is of paramount concern to Seventh-day Adventists. It represents one of the two streams of end-time Christianity.

In the late 1800’s and early 1900’s this church went through a crisis of almost crippling proportions. E. G. White called that the “alpha” of apostasy. But she was directed to know that a similar experience would strike again shortly before Jesus would return. That, she called, the “omega” apostasy.

“Be not deceived; many will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. We have now before us the alpha of this danger. The omega will be of a most startling nature.”¹

What does that mean? What are we to look for? Why isn’t it depicted in clear terms Biblically? What is seen as the apostasy Biblically tied to Babylon is a partial portrayal of what happens within the Adventist Church. Here’s why we must come to attention:

1. The seven churches of Revelation have several applications:
 - a. In John’s day as literal messages of literal churches
 - b. Historical periods of the Christian Church – a difficult exercise to be precise
 - c. Typologically representative of all Christian bodies at the end (their full and most important expression)

2. The seven churches are represented in Revelation 1 as candlesticks that Christ, in pastoral imagery, is walking among.
3. By Revelation 11 there are only two candlesticks remaining. They are Smyrna and Philadelphia (a separate study). Where are the rest? They apostasized and all have become Babylon – not symbolized by a candlestick but a harlot woman (Thyatira was its introduction in Revelation).
4. Laodicea, often seen as being the seventh, final church simply does not go through to the end! Remember, the churches are not numbered like the Seals, Trumpets or Vials – thus, not necessarily in sequence.

The church victorious, the 144,000 imagery, is seen beautifully described in Philadelphia. It is a remnant. In the study of the key characteristics of the churches and the prophetic messages in Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation, it is clear that apostasy comes to this church and a terrible shaking occurs. The remnant, the body of believers who represent the white horse (first Seal), who go out conquering and to conquer, are those who remain. They are the remnant of a generalized apostasy that infiltrates all Christian institutions and churches. They are the prophetic children of Daniel 8:14, when Jesus said (and it was His words) that after 2300 evenings and mornings holiness would be vindicated or adjudicated. How? By God’s review of the books and choosing forever witnesses to His character – His final church.

Do we have more information regarding the omega apostasy that hits Adventism?

“The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? – The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has

¹ *Testimonies for the Church Containing Letters to Physicians and Ministers Instruction to Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 16 (1904).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40 (1906).

given to the remnant church would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath, of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement."²

What are the characteristics?

1. Doctrinal pillars would be given up – which would include Sabbath sacredness.

2. Books to justify these new views would be introduced.
3. The church structure would be redefined.
4. There would be intellectual/philosophical concepts brought forward.
5. The movement would be powerful and unyielding.

In the next article we will begin to explore how God defines rebellion. It was an issue with Israel, it is an issue with the Protestant world and is a growing reason Adventism is fracturing.



Prophecy Unfolds

The Seven Trumpets of Revelation

CHAPTER 12

An Interlude with Jesus – The Bible’s Most Amazing Oath

“And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven” (Revelation 10:5).

When the Bible repeats a message, as it does here (from verses 1 and 2), God is making a statement that must be linked closely to what follows. In this case what follows each “earth–sea” message is the seven thunders (vss 3-4) and that time is no longer delayed (vs 6).

Let’s see how this plays out. First, there is emphasis on the sovereign power of Jesus. God “put all things under his feet” (Ephesians 1:19-23; cf. I Corinthians 15:23-25; Psalm 110:1-7; Isaiah 66:1; Matthew 5:31-35; Hebrews 10:12-13). In this prodigious and commanding position He lifts up His hand to heaven. Jesus is about to take an oath. He does it in a position of dominion and jurisdiction over the earth. We must anticipate that something stunningly important is about to be said.

The lifting of the right hand as an oath is noted elsewhere (Deuteronomy 32:40; Exodus 6:8; Ezekiel 20:5, 15, 23, 42; cf. Genesis 14:22-23). There is one place that is unique, with direct ties to this vision. Daniel records an angel above the waters, clothed totally with linen. He has both hands raised, taking an oath (Daniel 12:7). That was Jesus – dressed in a priestly garb above the waters of a river, symboliz-

ing God’s people (the Euphrates represents the wicked, the Hiddekel the righteous). The right hand was an oath of promise, the left was raised there, making an oath against His blood.

How amazing! That was a message related to that portion of Daniel’s vision that was sealed. Here, that book is open – but this time Jesus raises only one hand. He already spilt His blood! There, it was in promise to God’s people. Here, it is an oath where He is in a command and control position seen as a judge in glory ready for His second coming.

Any time God’s hand is raised, it relates to either a time when apostate people are in captivity or deliverance of His choosen is about to occur. Here, and in Daniel, it is associated with the *time* God’s people are about to be delivered. Specifically, Jesus told Daniel that their deliverance (“wonders”) would come at the end of *time, two times and a half time* or three and a half years. Daniel also said that the special resurrection would occur at that time.

In the next verse we will see that Jesus tells us that time is no longer delayed (Revelation 10:6-7), depicting the beginning of that three and a half years. Daniel shows what happens at its end. John is even more event-driven and specific. More on that shortly! To make sure we don’t mix up the times, in the next chapter John is told the period of persuection

will be 42 months (3½ years) (Revelation 11:2).

If Jesus takes an oath – legally “swares” – against the Father’s name, that is so solemn! Here and in Daniel that is seen within some of Scripture’s most amazing visions. What relates to those events and timing must be of utmost importance for us to understand. An oath, a timing message, a legal setting, divine appearances and events that bring history to its close. This must be a timing period just before Jesus comes again! And – that is exactly what it is. Scholars of many persuasions are recognizing that issue.

His hand is raised high. The other holds the unsealed book of Daniel. Now Jesus speaks. Lean forward in your seat, listen carefully. Every word He says relates to us – right now!

“And swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:” (Revelation 10:6).

The most common form of an oath in the Old Testament was the phrase, “as the Lord lives” (Numbers 14:21, Judges 8:19, I Samuel 20:3). It placed the individual under it, under the authority and judgment of God. The phrase here “swear by him that liveth for ever and ever” adds “for ever, ever.” That is a phrase used often in Revelation (1:6; 4:9, 10; 11:15, 15:7). Why? The God of *eternity* is bringing time for man to a close!

This invites us to elevate our thinking and draw on the eloquent theme that the end of sin, heartache and woe is presently anticipated. Deliverance is at hand. Jesus is about to tell us exactly how much time is left!

This introductory phrase (“and swear by him”) in this verse is taken from (and here it is again) Daniel 12:7. Daniel had asked how long would it be until redemptive history culminates (in the finale themes of Michael “standing up,” the great time of trouble, deliverance of God’s people and the special resurrection (Daniel 12:1-2). Jesus is about to complete the answer to that question.

But first, something breathtaking is noted. The Being Who lives for ever and ever is identified as

the Creator. *More than that*, the three spheres of life – heaven, earth and sea – are noted. Reference to God’s creative activity is rare outside the Old Testament (cf. Acts 14:15, 17:24; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11, 14:7). But – in this incredible imagery of an oath about time, we are reminded of the Creator of time.

It is so fascinating! Jesus, in the previous verse had His feet on the sea and earth, plus He raised His hand into the heavens. Here, the oath is made to the Creator of those three areas **and** all that they encompass. What does that all mean?

The stimulating buildup is all over a simple phrase that time wouldn’t be delayed any longer. BUT – and this is a provocative issue, when we tie these thoughts elsewhere to similar areas in the Bible, a solemn message unfolds!

The reference to God’s creative activity is noted many places in the Old Testament (Genesis 1:1; cf. Psalm 33:6, 102:25, 145:6; Isaiah 37:16, 42:5; Jeremiah 32:17, 51:15), but only **one** place is that special little phrase, “and the things that therein are.” John is repeating part of the Sabbath commandment in Exodus 20:10-11. These phrases remind us not only of Daniel’s prophecy but of the God of creation that is specially remembered on the seventh-day Sabbath!

The “time” that Daniel alludes to, the time that Jesus is about to unfold, relates to when the Sabbath issue will link all these end-time events! This is awesome. It means the Sabbath will be a great subject matter at the time of Daniel 12 and Revelation 10!

Has that ever been observed before? Amazingly, yes. A Bible expositor from the 1800’s knew all about that.

“The contest will be decided over the Sabbath question, which will agitate the whole world.”¹

“The Sabbath question is to be the issue in the great final conflict in which all the world will act a part.”²

“The fourth commandment will be a great point at issue, for in the Sabbath commandment the great Lawgiver identifies Himself as the Creator of the heavens and the earth.”³

¹*The Home Missionary*, 02/01/1890.

²*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 352 (1900).

³*Selected Messages*, bk 3, p. 392 (1891).

"The book that was sealed was not the book of Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel which related to the last days. The Scripture says, 'But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased' (Dan. 12:4). When the book was opened, the proclamation was made, 'Time shall be no longer.' (See Revelation 10:6.) The book of Daniel is now unsealed, and the revelation made by Christ to John is to come to all the inhabitants of the earth. By the increase of knowledge a people is to be prepared to stand in the latter days."⁴

"Twice Daniel inquired, *How long shall it be to the end of time?* (Daniel 12).

"The book of Daniel is *unsealed* in the revelation to John, and carries us forward to the last scenes of this earth's history."⁵

E. G. White makes a distinction in her writings between the unsealing of Daniel and Daniel "standing in his lot." That is important to grasp when studying her works. She took the issue of those two prophetic books even further.

"Daniel shall stand in his lot at the end of the days. John sees the little book unsealed. Then Daniel's prophecies have their proper place in the *first, second, and third angels' messages* to be given to the world. The unsealing of the little book was the *message in relation to time*."⁶

There it is! Though this vision is event driven (seven thunders) and spiritually discerned, it is couched (as are most end-time prophecies) within a timing framework. Would God have it any other way? Never! God always sees that man's hope is based on reasonable expectations. Timing prophecies tied to the end of time are part of His beautiful way of communicating truth to us.

What does it mean "that there should be time no longer?" The King James Version does not convey the deeper meaning. It states that "there will be no more delay" (NIV) or "there should be no more delay" (RSV).

What delay comes to an end? A tarrying time. Habakkuk 2:2-3 describes in language related to the eschaton that at the appointed time the tarrying time

or delay comes to an end. Daniel picks up this timing theme and states that the appointed time is at the end of time (Daniel 8:19). This is explained further by Jesus Himself in Daniel 12. There, the "time of the end" (the same Hebrew words as in Daniel 8 and Habakkuk 2) would be when the sealed portion of Daniel's scroll would be opened (12:4). Jesus further said that the great issues of that sealed vision would be three and a half years (12:7). What is Jesus meaning now here in Revelation 10:6? He is making a solemn declaration that the tarrying time has ended ("no longer a delay"). Since we've seen that amazing tie to Daniel 12 in these few verses, that announces that the beginning of the three and a half year period of Daniel 12:7 begins.

Further – and this is exciting! – that means that all of the *chazown* vision of Daniel 8–12, the sealed portion, will begin to occur! Daniel 8–12 had two visions. One, the *mareh*, which was never sealed. The second, the *chazown*, which was sealed and now is open. The Loud Cry can now begin!

What does the *chazown* vision include? Everything after the fall of Babylon ("Babylon is fallen"): the ram, he-goat, little horn (second rise of the papacy – Daniel 11:30-45), Michael standing up, the great time of trouble, deliverance of God's people and the resurrection. All of that great sequence now begins.

What did E. G. White say? All those things were in relation to time and will tie to the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 right at the end of time. That is when the Sabbath question will become a major issue. Not until all this occurs can the seventh Trumpet sound and the "mystery of God be finished."

The great question of Daniel was "How long will it be?" (Daniel 12:6). The time period just preceding the eschaton, predicted by Daniel, has now arrived. Nothing can hold it back now.

The designations for three and a half years have not appeared yet in Revelation. But during this interlude they will be presented to make certain the link with Daniel isn't lost (11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5). A three and a half year period instigates the final

⁴*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 105 (1896).

⁵*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 114-115 (emphasis added).

⁶*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 320 (emphasis added).

events of earth's history. It ends at the deliverance of God's people.

Daniel 12 gave us the events that ended that three and a half year period. Here, Jesus declares

that time begins. What follows will be those events that start the three and a half years!

CHAPTER 13

An Interlude with Jesus – The Event that Ends Time

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets” (Revelation 10:7).

Jesus is still speaking. These words continue this amazing oath between two divine Beings! This verse refers to the culmination of redemption's plan. Daniel asked, “How long will it be?” The answer: there was “time and times and half a time” (Daniel 12:5-7). But Jesus went on to tell him that this time period would not be understood (it was sealed) until the “time of the end” (Daniel 12:8-9). Here in Revelation 10:6 we just noted with that book being unsealed that time now would no longer be delayed. That three and a half year period now begins. The time for the deliverance of God's people and special resurrection will bring it to an end.

These three and a half years are the tribulation period (Revelation 11:2, 12:14, 13:5) and the final time the gospel goes to the whole world (Revelation 11:3). Now a new dimension is added. When the seventh Trumpet sounds, the “mystery of God” would be finished!

Did you observe something exciting? Verse 6 *begins* the three and a half year period and this verse *ends* something! We must find out more. Does that Trumpet blast end the three and a half years? Jesus already told Daniel what would end *that* time period. There must be something beyond the deliverance of God's people and that special resurrection (Daniel 12:1-2).

What is that “mystery of Godliness? Some see it as the eschaton (or when Jesus comes), others when God's people are delivered. Many perceive it to be when the new heavens and earth are recreated. It is

when the sin issue has come to its conclusion! That draws on Day of Atonement language when God's people are holy and sealed and Satan (the scapegoat) is given all the covenant people's sins. Then the issues of redemption are complete. As in the Day of Atonement in the ancient Jewish theocracy, when everything was atoned for and the scapegoat received all the sins, ready to be driven into the wilderness, the camp was pure. It was a signal that the end of dealing with sin had come. Rightness then filled the camp. The “mystery” of the sacrificial animals, the priest's work, the blood and sin was solved.

“And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9).

“To whom God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory ... That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ” (Colossians 1:27, 2:2).

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (I Timothy 3:16).

When analyzing these wonderful verses, we discover that the “mystery of Godliness” *is* fellowship or “knitting of hearts” between His people, Christ in us, the restoration of oneness with Jesus (what He prayed for in John 17). What does this all spell out? The finishing of the everlasting covenant! This is so

beautifully portrayed in Jeremiah 31:33 (cf. II Corinthians 6:16; Hebrews 8:10, 10:16).

This is described in these beautiful words:

“When we seek for appropriate language in which to describe the love of God, we find words too tame, too weak, too far beneath the theme, and we lay down our pen and say, ‘No, it cannot be described.’ We can only do as did the beloved disciple, and say, ‘Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.’ [1 John 3:1.] In attempting any description of this love, we feel that we are as infants lisping their first words. Silently we may adore; for silence in this matter is the only eloquence. This love is past all language to describe. It is the mystery of God in the flesh, God in Christ, and divinity in humanity. Christ bowed down in unparalleled humility, that in his exaltation to the throne of God, he might also exalt those who believe in him, to a seat with him upon his throne. All who look upon Jesus in faith that the wounds and bruises that sin has made will be healed in him, shall be made whole.”⁷

“I feel an intense interest that all should comprehend, as far as possible, the love of God. We cannot afford to draw away our attention from this subject, for in it is contained the mystery of God,—the plan of salvation. We may put to the stretch every power of our mind, and yet we shall not be fully able to comprehend the heights and depths of the love of God; for the human mind is not capable of understanding its full significance. It is our privilege, however, to obtain clearer and more distinct views of the plan of salvation. We should not be content with a superficial knowledge of this wonderful plan, but we should seek to behold it in all its greatness, that as far as possible we may understand the love of God.”⁸

There is a wonderful clue tucked right inside this verse. It says “when he [the seventh Trumpet angel] begins to sound.” Most feel the correct translation is: “When he is about to sound” (NASV, NIV, etc.). That helps and does make a difference. The word for “days” (*hemerais*) here is plural. In the days of “time times and half time” – in that period of time.

Just *before* the Trumpet begins to sound, “the last trump” (I Corinthians 15:52), the sin issue comes to an end. Daniel talked about that time: “Many shall

be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand” (Daniel 12:10).

So did Jesus talk about this: “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. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward [is] with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” (Revelation 22:11-13).

Isn’t that interesting? Even Jesus said that when the sin issue is finished, He would come quickly. Everywhere in the Sacred Text, again and again, by the *order* of the messages, we can discover the sequence of the great end-time events! The seventh Trumpet announces the eschaton, Daniel’s timing period and all the associated events (seven thunders) immediately precede that grand event – Jesus’ return. That will be the culmination of all gospel messages.

There is another part of this verse that is quite important. It refers us back to the Mystery of God that was previously given to God’s servants the prophets. In these “last days” we now grasp more fully what those great messages meant. But, it doesn’t end there. The Greek word for “declared” is *euengelisen*. The same word (*euengelisen*) is used by John in Revelation 14:6 when the gospel is to be preached to all the world. The prophets declared the message of Jesus and redemption to come. It is to be carried to the world by His end-time servants [144,000 (14:1-5)] under the great banner of the three angels’ messages. Then comes the harvest (Revelation 14:14-20). The “mystery of God” will then be finished.

From what we have gone over thus far, we can see links between Daniel 12, Revelation 10–11, 14 and 22. With those amazing ties we can now see that there is a very final end-time application to those three angels’ messages.

Another interesting tid bit of *when* these all apply come in the next chapter. *When* the gospel message is working its way through the world, the angel said, “the woe [final Trumpet] is coming quickly.” Jesus, in this Danielic and apocalyptic time period is expectant!

⁷Christian Education, p. 77.

⁸The Signs of the Times, 11/18/1889.

An Interlude with Jesus – The Commissioning of John (Saints)

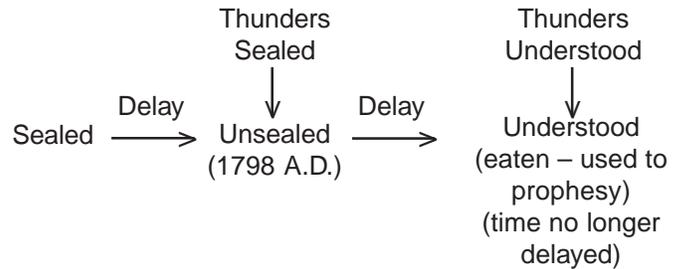
“And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey” (Revelation 10:8-9).

We now move away from that magnificent divine oath scene to return to the little book theme. John hears a voice speaking to him from heaven. He calls it *“the voice.”* This means it had spoken to him previously. The only other voice, besides angel Jesus, was *“the voice”* that told him not to write what he heard (vs 4) the thunders say. Most feel that this was God the Father’s voice!

John is now commissioned to do three things: (1) take the little book, (2) eat it, and then (3) prophesy.

Those three steps introduce powerful imagery. This is the second time we are told that the little book was open and in the angel’s hand. This underscores the importance of the book, that it is open to understanding and that it remains protected by the hand of God until it is taken and imbibed or used. That portrays a vital message. Though the book is unsealed or opened, it will *not* be understood until the time to prophecy! When is that? When Jesus declares that time is no longer delayed – at the beginning of Daniel’s *“time times and half time.”*

Daniel’s book:



“Since 1798 the book of Daniel has been unsealed.”⁹

*“Blessed are the eyes which saw the things that were seen in 1843 and 1844. The message was given. And there should be no delay in *repeating* the message, for the signs of the times are fulfilling; the closing work must be done. A great work will be done [future] in a short time. A message will soon be given by God’s appointment that will swell into a *loud cry*. Then Daniel will stand in his lot, to give his testimony.”¹⁰*

“Daniel shall stand in his lot at the end of the days. John sees the little book unsealed. Then Daniel’s prophecies have their proper place in the first, second, and third angels’ messages to be given [future] to the world. The unsealing of the little book was the message in relation to time.”¹¹ What was sealed was that part of Daniel related to time at the end (Daniel 8 and 12).

There has been progressive understanding of Daniel since it was unsealed, especially related to the judgment issues [*“the judgment was set, and the books were opened”* (Daniel 7:10)]. Daniel won’t stand fully in his place until there is a loud cry at an appointed time. That’s exactly what Daniel 8:17 and 19 say. The time of the end is the appointed time, described fully in Daniel 12.

⁹*The Great Controversy*, p. 356.

¹⁰*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 2, p. 20 (emphasis added).

¹¹*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 971 (emphasis added).

That loud cry is represented, and here it gets inspiring, by John's "prophesying again." That is described in the next chapter as *two witnesses* going out just before Jesus comes!

This whole message is an echo of a commission given to Ezekiel. He saw a hand come to him with a scroll. It was opened, and he was asked to eat it. It was as sweet as honey, but later, as he went to the house of Israel, he described bitterness. It was for God's people first (Ezekiel 2:8-3:14). We shall soon notice that John's first "stop" is at the house of God.

John doesn't delay in obeying God. He went to the angel and asked for the little open book (scroll). Jesus said to him, take it and eat it. To "eat" that scroll means to study, understand and take to heart the message it contains. It comes from a word (*kataphage*) that is an idiomatic Hebrew word meaning to receive knowledge – digesting it. *Kata*, the prefix, emphasizes the completeness of eating it (similar to Ezekiel 3:1-3 and Jeremiah 15:16). Daniel 8–12 will be completely understood. That message was to be so much a part of him, he could then share it with others (prophecy).

John here symbolizes God's last day people who will take this message to the world. Our grasp of its details, warnings and hope are to be so deep and thorough, it is like food – it becomes part of us.

But there is something unusual about this "eating experience." The message was as sweet as honey in his mouth. It was a wonder eating experience, just like eating desert. God's Word is that way!

"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! *yea*, *sweeter* than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103; cf. Psalm 19:10, Proverbs 24:13-14, Jeremiah 15:16).

As we dig deeper and deeper into its nuances and inspired expressions, a thrill comes to us that makes us crave for even more. But, like indigestion, Jesus told John that it would become bitter when in his stomach. What could that mean? Something backlashes. Could it be God's message turns bitter? Never! In 1844 when the Great Disappointment occurred, that had been a sweet message that Jesus would come – but then He didn't. That became a

bitter experience. Even greater was the bitter opposition that followed by those who once held the same hope.¹²

That 1844 experience is a metaphor for the greater meaning here. Daniel 8–12 is an end-time message. It tells us, once certain events begin, exactly when God's people will be delivered and the special resurrection occurs. That will happen immediately before Jesus appears. Thus, the open book is a second advent message book! That is/will be sweet to know.

What turns such a sweet message into bitterness? The opposition to God's people when giving that message!¹³ But they (the wicked), in turn, will meet with bitter disappointment when they soon realize that they are lost – forever!¹⁴ In 1844 Jesus didn't come; that was a bitter disappointment. But with this open little book message, He *is* coming. The keen resistance from those who had been rejoicing in the faith will be cutting and bitter.

That opposition will lie at the root of a fascinating but sad commentary.

"Those to whom the message of truth is spoken seldom ask, 'Is it true?' but, 'By whom is it advocated?' Multitudes estimate it by the numbers who accept it; and the question is still asked, 'Have any of the learned men or religious leaders believed?'"¹⁵

With the opposition comes suffering, persecution and even martyrdom (6:9-11) to God's people. This will be developed more in the next chapter. For the saints, the end of all suffering is endless joy and peace with Jesus (I Peter 1:11; 4:1, 12-19).

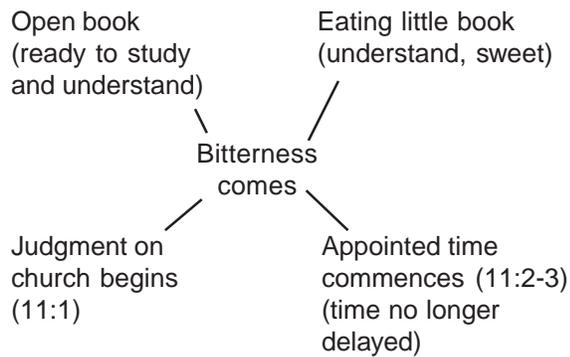
There is interesting contrast drawn in these first few verses of Revelation 10. The heavenly voice prohibited the writing of the seven thunder event-driven messages (vs 4). Now he eats, then is ready to witness – to tell what he knows. The whole scene is a progressive revelation of unfolding information until an appointed time comes. When we view the continuing sequence into the next chapter and view the vision's structural integrity, note what we discover:

¹²*Selected Messages*, bk 2, p. 26.

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 970.

¹⁵*The Desire of Ages*, p. 459.



This is such an important sequence to grasp. It introduces how careful God is in sharing truth. The understanding of Daniel 8–12 comes before the timed prophecies begin! The church rejects that understanding. It is bitter and not understood. Judgment on the church commences. This, as we shall see, is the beginning of the judgment of the living. It starts just before the appointed time as those Danielic messages are being fully understood.

“This solemn work is to be done upon the earth. Look and see how stands your measurement of character as compared with God’s standard of righteousness, his holy law. The worshipers are to pass under the measuring line of God. Who will bear the test? Christ says, ‘I know thy works.’ Nothing is hid from him of whom John says, ‘His head and his hair were white like wool, white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire.’ How many are purifying their souls by obeying the truth? How many are now in this time wholly on the Lord’s side? How many are seeking to be a blessing to those around them? Many need help, kind words, thoughtful attentions; and if you pray with such, you may be a blessing to them.”¹⁶

“And I took the little book out of the angel’s hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter” (Revelation 10:10).

John follows through with the divine instructions. Isn’t it phenomenal to see John being given the same directive from God the Father and Jesus, one right after the other? With Jesus taking the oath and then the Father and Son talking with Him, what’s in that part of Daniel’s book must be some of the most amazing information ever given to man!

There are legitimate questions as to whether the disciples really knew how far into the future Jesus’

second coming might be. Their concern was always expectancy and preparation. Though Jesus had told them that the timing details of the end of time would be found in Daniel (Matthew 24:15), there is little evidence that they studied that or understood its implications – until now. Expositor White noted: “The disciples were mistaken in regard to the kingdom to be set up at the end of the seventy weeks.”¹⁷

Their ‘kingdom at hand’ message was based upon that misunderstanding. Since that prophecy linearly ended in 34 A.D. and their mission and writings took them way beyond that period, they probably had a restricted grasp of even its beginning.

John eats the little book. It’s now part of him, totally. He now understands that part of Daniel that had been sealed and that part which Jesus referred to.

It is that understanding that sanctions Jesus and God to next command, “go prophesy.” Based on the unsealed portion of Daniel, an end-time message is to permeate the world in a final thrust just before Jesus comes (seen in the next chapter).

Once again we draw on the parallels from Ezekiel and Jeremiah (Table 1 – next page).

From commissioning through prophetic revelation to preaching, all three prophets represent the mission of the saints at the end. Ezekiel was even asked to take the message to God’s people in Babylon. That is what happens in Revelation. The great cry to the religious apostate world is to come out of Babylon and partake not of her sins and false form of worship.

It is important to observe that in Ezekiel the throne room scene and the eating the scroll occur together. In Revelation they are separated (Revelation 4–5, 10). John is given a wonderful span of end-time prophecies that cover the end of the 2300 years to the consummation, seventh millennium and, finally, recreation. We get wonderful glimpses of the end in those Old Testament books, including from the minor prophets. They develop beautiful resumes of what follows in Daniel and then forward-moving Revelation.

As the gospel is proclaimed to the world, resistance and persecution will come (Revelation 11:7; 12:17; 13:15-17; 17:6, 14; 20:4), but God’s promise

¹⁶Youth’s Instructor, 08/25/1886.

¹⁷The Great Controversy, p. 353.

TABLE 1

	<u>Ezekiel</u>	<u>Jeremiah</u>	<u>Revelation 10</u>
Call to prophetic ministry	2:1-8	1:5; 15:11	10:11
Saw open scroll book	2:7-8	(implied)	10:2, 8-9
Ate it	3:1-3	15:16	10:10
Sweet like honey in mouth	3:3	15:16 (implied)	10:10
Preach that message	2:3-6	15:20 (implied)	10:11
Israel refused words – bitter	3:3-14	14:17, 15:20	10:10
Persecution	2:6	3:6, 15:21	11:3, 7
False prophets		14:18	

declared, “I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee” (Jeremiah 15:21).

It will soon be apparent that the great work of God’s people will be to those claiming to be His. They all believe in a divine Being. The issues are in the context of *truth* related to God!

“And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings” (Revelation 10:11).

The words here are not “he said” but plural “they said” (*legousin*). Isn’t that wonderful! The commission to preach comes from both God and Jesus. All of heaven is joined together in amazing imagery as the final work on earth commences. We got a little glimpse of that some time ago in Revelation 8:3-4 when God provided Jesus with more incense to accommodate the crescendoing prayers reaching the heavenly Altar.

The command is a directive. He is filled with truth. The link between the seven thunders and the open book is complete. He *is* to go out and preach – “Thou must” (*dei se*). It is a necessity in light of the urgency of the message. Here is the call. The next chapter will be the response.

It is interesting that the word “again” is used here. When did he prophesy before? In 1:11 and 19 he was told to “write” what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. In 4:1 John is ordered into heaven to see “what must take place after this.” Now this third command, “must prophesy again,” comes. Some expositors say that John’s call should be called a *re*commissioning.

The audience? Peoples, nations, tongues and kings. That’s the whole world! There is in this directive a thought that has been lost to a narrower view

of the great commission. The gospel of the kingdom is to go to the whole world (Matthew 24:14, 28:18-20). Revelation 10 expands our understanding of that world message. It is to *include* the unsealed timing messages of Daniel! That broadens what Jesus said, “teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20) to what God *and* Jesus said in the context of that “open little book.”

The word “before” (*epi*) is a preposition and has stirred much debate. In the Septuigent it is most often used in context of judgment. It is translated in many ways. The implication seems to be that this message from Daniel will show that a final judgment against the world is pending. What a fitting understanding! The world, in a timing warning, is informed “your time is about up!” What a setting in which to bring the final gospel message about our precious Jesus to every human heart!

There is more to this prophecy! Daniel 12 tells of the 1260-day period (12:6-7) in answer to “How long it would take for these things to end.” Then Jesus adds the timing prophecy of 1290 days. What is that tied to? The abomination (false sabbath) that leads to desolation and the daily (Sabbath rest) being removed. That is another piece of the *third* angel’s puzzle of Revelation 14:9-11! Daniel’s unsealed message is a marvelous prophecy of that third angel’s proclamation. In 1843 and 1844 the first and second angels’ messages brought hope and power to the advent movement. The third angel’s message remained mainly in waiting. Revelation 10 is an unfolding of all those Danielic themes, given in a timing setting, immediately preceding the second advent!

"There was one class who soon renounced the idea that 'the door of mercy was shut [post-1844 disappointment],' because they discovered that other messages were to be proclaimed *after* that declaring, the hour of judgment is come; and that that of the *third angel*, the last one, was to go to 'many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings [Revelation 10:11].' They learned that the judgment sits in heaven before the coming of the lord; that the judgment of the righteous is fully accomplished while Jesus is yet their advocate before the Father's throne; that eternal life is instantly given to the saints when their saviour comes, which is proof that they have been judged and acquitted [judgment of the living]. As the hopes of the disciples revived, and they were 'glad when they saw the lord,' and declared his Messiahship with yet greater confidence, so did these rejoice when they discovered the truth of the third angel's message, which, to them, was like life from the dead. With renewed zeal and strengthened confidence they began again to proclaim the soon coming of the lord."¹⁸

"The people whom God has made the depositaries of His law are not to permit their light to be hidden. The truth must be proclaimed in the dark places of the earth. Obstacles must be met and surmounted. A great work is to be done, and *this work has been entrusted to those who know the truth*. They should make mighty intercession with God for help now. The love of Christ must be diffused in their own hearts. The Spirit of Christ must be poured out upon them, and they must be making ready to stand in the judgment. While they are consecrating themselves to God, a *convincing power* will attend their efforts to present the truth to others, and its light will find access to many hearts. We must sleep no longer on Satan's enchanted ground, but call into requisition all our resources and avail ourselves of every facility with which Providence has furnished us. The last warning is to be proclaimed 'before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings;' and the promise is given, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'"¹⁹

¹⁸*Spirit of Prophecy*, p. 499 (Appendix) (1884) (emphasis added).

¹⁹*Testimonies*, p. 454.



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