"BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH"

THE SIGNS

The signs of the times reveal to us that the end is near. Fire, flood, earthquake, and calamity on every side speak the time. The crisis hour is at hand: prophecy is fast fulfilling (wars and rumors of wars, nation rising against nation). The weak nations are claiming to be strong, or are strengthening themselves through the aid of the stronger nations. Space-missiles and the talk of rockets to the moon and an outer space station are all beacon-lights of prophecy, declaring the very last days and the hour of temptation all are soon to meet. The elect of God are soon, very soon, to face the most severe trial of their faith. The church has little idea of what is coming upon it. Jesus says: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. Matt. 10:22.

To the weak He says be strong and to the discouraged, have courage; for the Lord your God dwelleth in Zion. "Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain." Zech. 8:3.

"And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." Isa. 12.

To know that God is with His people is certainly strength for the feeble knees. Jesus says: "...and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28:20.

"Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." Dan. 12:10.

The signs of the times are fulfilling all around us and yet the unbelieving today, like the Pharisees and Sadducees of Christ's time, ask us to show them a sign. Our answer to the doubters of today is the same that Jesus gave to those without faith in His day. "...When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.

"And in the morning, it will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can you not discern the signs of the times"
"A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas, and he left them, and departed." Matt. 16:2-4.

In these Scriptures Jesus says in effect that in this adulterous generation, about all the wicked can do is to read a barometer, and observe the face of the sky. They pride themselves in being able to predict the weather; but the signs of the times they know nothing about. He was talking to His professed people when He made these statements. Jesus did not mean that no sign would be given His people, but rather, Inspiration states that "Those who walk in the light will see signs of the approaching peril". 5T209:2.

Friends, how is your eye of faith; are you a weather prophet, or do you have divine faith as faith to read the signs of the times?

The sign of the prophet Jonah is given for "A wicked and adulterous generation." Inspiration says that in the days of the coming of the Son of Man it would be like it was in Noah's day. They were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage. They are marrying one another's wives today, even among professed Christians, as they were then -- an adulterous generation.

We know that the Spirit of Prophecy teaches that the antitypical Assyria is to fall: Inspiration tells us when God's people turn unto the Lord and cast away their idols of silver and gold, the Assyrian shall fall by "the sword,... not of a mean man." Isa. 31:6-8. ".... and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem". Verse 9.

Inspiration also tells us that the fire that burned continuously day and night was burning on the fat of the peace offering. (Lev. 6:9-13).

The fire is never to go out once it is lighted. Fire is the symbol of the purification of the church by the Holy Spirit and since the land is to become like Eden (Eze. 36:35) then the sword that devours the Assyrian and the fire that is in Zion, evidently is the Sword of the Spirit. Just as the ancient pair were afraid of the flaming sword at the entrance of Eden; so likewise, the Assyrian will be afraid of the fiery sword in our time, once it is lighted in Zion and His furnace is in Jerusalem.

Gideon had three hundred men who lapped the water (Judges 7:5) and who also had clay pitchers with a fire in them. At the proper time the pitchers were broken and the Midianite army was routed. Likewise, the Lord has a few earthen vessels today who are being filled with the extra oil (Holy Spirit) and when they fall on the Rock and are broken their light will frighten the Assyrian. "...and his young men shall be discomfited." Isa. 31:8.

To get a proper understanding of the work of God and our relation to it, we must first understand where we are in the stream of time and must also reach an understanding on that which we heretofore have had no light -- that the S.D.A. movement is divided into 3 divisions.

These three prophetic divisions (in order to give proper strength to the upbuilding of His Kingdom) must be linked together in prophecy as an unbreakable chain. In this fact alone we are told where we are today, so says the Spirit of Prophecy.
"The history which the great I AM has marked out in His word, uniting link after link in the prophetic chain, from eternity in the past to eternity in the future tells us where we are to-day in the procession of the ages, and what may be expected in the time to come. All that prophecy has foretold as coming to pass, until the present time, has been traced on the pages of history, and we may be assured that all which is yet to come will be fulfilled in its order." Education 178:3.

".... Shall we not search the Scriptures, that we may know where we are in this world's history." C.O.R. 150:3 (1926 Edition).

In order that we may better understand our position and place, let us first consider four links in the prophetic chain -- later the three. These prophetic links we will liken to the three angels' messages and the angels' (messages) that join them. Many, if not all, from the time of the proclamation of the First angel's message down to our present times have been somewhat confused, from one cause or another, in regard to when these messages began to be proclaimed and who was instrumental in starting the work. Let it be known unto you, Brethren, unless self is crucified, you will continue to be confused until the recording angel writes against your record that irrevocable decree -- found wanting. God is a merciful God, patient and long suffering; but His Spirit will not always strive with the hearts of men.

That we may clear all doubts and erase indecision, let us consult the Testimony of the Spirit of Prophecy and the Testimony of the Bible that makes our subject as a shining light from the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness upon our pathway. Mind you, only the little (humble) ones go in there at. To begin, we shall quote from some of the former publications of the S.D.A. church.

"The truth and work of God in this (advent) movement, commencing with the labors of William Miller, and reaching to the close of probation, is illustrated by these three angels (of Revelation 14:6-11). The first was a time message, and related to the Judgment. The second described the condition of corrupted Christianity. The Third is a solemn warning relative to what men may not do, and what they must do, in order to be saved at the coming of Christ. These angels illustrate the three great divisions of the genuine movement .... (of 1844).

"Seventh-day Adventists hold fast the great advent movement, hence have use for the messages .... They cannot spare these links in the golden chain of truth that connect the past with the present and future, and show a beautiful harmony in the great whole...

"I repeat it. The three angels' messages symbolize the three parts of the genuine movement." Life Incidents pp. 306, 307.

The statement above, as far as we now know, originated with Elder James White. It is not our contention that Elder White was a prophet; but rather a minister in the Seventh-day Adventist movement and not the author of either one of the three angels' messages. He was, nevertheless, the husband of the prophetess, Mrs. E. G. White, author of the Third Angel's Message and movement. However, if the statement has a meaning for us today, we are compelled to admit that it was inspired.
God has many ways of revealing truth, and we cannot say that it is always through one man's mind that all of the truth is revealed. For instance, a Seventh-day Baptist sister called to the attention of the early believers that the Seventh-day was the true Sabbath, instead of the first day of the week; and they were keeping holy the wrong day of the week. There were prayers offered and God confirmed an important fact in the Third Angel's Message to Sr. White in vision.

"After Jesus opened the door of the most holy, the light of the Sabbath was seen, and the people of God were tested, as the children of Israel were tested anciently, to see if they would keep God's Law. I saw the third angel pointing upward, showing the disappointed ones the way to the holiest of the heavenly sanctuary. As they by faith enter the most holy, they find Jesus, and hope and joy spring up anew. I saw them looking back, reviewing the past, from the proclamation of the second advent of Jesus, down through their experience to the passing of the time in 1844. They see their disappointment explained, and joy and certainty again animate them. The third angel has lighted up the past, the present, and the future, and they know that God has indeed led them by His mysterious providence.

"It was represented to me that the remnant followed Jesus into the most holy place, and beheld the ark and the mercy seat, and were captivated with their glory. Jesus then raised the cover of the ark, and low the tables of stone, with the ten commandments written upon them. They trace down the lively oracles, but start back with trembling when they see the fourth commandment among the ten holy precepts, with a brighter light shining upon it than upon the other nine, and a halo of glory all around it. They find nothing there informing them that the Sabbath has been abolished, or changed to the first day of the week. The commandment reads as when spoken by the voice of God in solemn and awful grandeur upon the mount, while the lightnings flashed and the thunders rolled; it is the same as when written with His own finger on the tables of stone: Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."

Early Writings 254:2, 255:0, 1.

We learn from this statement that after the disappointment in 1844, Sr. White was shown the third angel pointing the way into the most holy place. We could not say that she was the angel (message) - not Early Writings, anymore than we could say she was either the first, second, or third angel of Revelation 14:6-9; hers was the message of the Third Angel. The angels are heavenly beings, and Sr. White was just a person whom God endowed with the Spirit of Prophecy. The angels are messages which develop into a movement. We know this for in Revelation 3:14 it is written: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write;" The Seventh-day Adventist church is the seventh, the last with the wheat and the tares, the saints and sinners commingled; and the angel (singular), the ministry feel no need for any more truth or prophets. You may at your leisure read the rest of the story regarding the angel of Laodicea in Rev. 3:14-19; 1T 141-3, 181-190; 3T 42, 252-59; 4T 87-9; 6 T 77; 8T 301- ; EW 270.

God gave Sr. White many visions pertaining to the plan of redemption. She also had many dreams and wrote thousands of pages of instructions in the Third Angel's Message during her more than sixty years of service to the church as an Inspired one. With all of this and much more, yet some are so bold as to try to tell us she did not have the Third Angel's Message. We do not contend that she had all the light that was to be revealed to God's people. She did not say so herself; but rather, she made many statements that there was to be much, much more light
revealed to the people of God. Sr. .White did not limit the hand of God; why should we? Brother Houteff did not claim to have all the light there was to carry us through to the "Pearly Gates". r1TG 11-10:2.

Our dear Saviour gave much instruction for the church through the Testimonies and Timely Greetings, but nothing more is heard of that dear Baptist sister that pointed out the Seventh-day Sabbath to the Adventists. Balaam could, no doubt, have been greatly benefited by his donkey (Numbers 22) had he listened to it. Likewise, the Laodicean angel could have been benefited by the donkey movement (DSDA) of today, the foal of an ass." Zech. 9:9. Those who do not hear the admonition of the message of the kingdom and of Christ the Branch (their king) will be worse off than Balaam, since his donkey was not a prophet. (Read Isa. 21:5-9).

Just because one finds a statement from the Spirit of Prophecy or the Bible that has a present truth meaning, is no ground to believe that he is a prophet. We are admonished that all office seekers and self promoters will come to a worse end than did Balaam when the earth opens her mouth. (G.C.S. 36)

Only those that are converted and become as little children shall enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:3). If the beast of the forest became subject to a little child (Isa. 11:6), brethren; we must quit acting like wild beasts of today, and start acting like the converted beasts of tomorrow. Those who humble themselves, no doubt, will symbolically ride into Jerusalem on the figurative backs of the ass and her foal. A message inspired by the Spirit does not necessarily consist of a collection of statements taken from Inspiration. On the other hand it is based on one's inspired knowledge of the angels' messages. "In the Revelation all the books of the Bible meet an end." A.A. 585

Therefore, this brings us back to our original statement found in Life Incidents and re-quoted by Elder Francis D. Nichol in the Midnight Cry, page 484. This statement, as you recall, is in regard to the three angels' messages and the Adventist movements.

Education, p. 178:3, shows us that history, which is marked out in His word is linked together as a prophetic chain. Elder White says: "....They cannot spare these links in the golden chain of truth, that connect the mast with the present and future." MC 4.84:2.

In order to know when each of these angels' messages came, we must be able to establish when the first angel's message was given. To do this, we shall first consult the Midnight Cry. "....But though these early leaders turned their eyes to the future, they did not turn their backs on the movement from which they had sprung. On the contrary, they found in their connection with it the primary proof that they were carrying on to completion a work divinely foretold in prophecy. This was because they believed that God's special message for men in the last days of earth's history is symbolically set forth by the messages of the three angels, (see Revelations 14:6-11, foot-note) that the first two of these messages began to be preached in a most definite way during the Millerite movement, and that the third was to follow immediately. Seventh-day Adventists from the days of the pioneers of the movement, have believed that they were the bearers of this three-fold message to the world." The Midnight Cry 483:2.
Angels' (messages) produce movements. The Millerite movement (first-day Adventists) was the result of preaching the First Angel's Message and Babylon fell because she rejected that message. Now to establish the starting point of the Millerite movement (First Angel's Message) we read in the Spirit of Prophecy: 'In 1833, two years after Miller began to present in public the evidences of Christ's soon coming, (First Angel's Message) the last of the signs appeared which were promised by the Saviour as tokens of His second advent.' 2 SR177:2.

This statement shows that the First Angel's Message began to be proclaimed in 1831 by the prophet Miller. "...For nine years he waited, the burden still pressing upon his soul, until in 1831 he for the first time publicly gave the reason of his faith." GC 331:0.

To be certain that we know what Miller's message is, we shall consult the Spirit of Prophecy by Mrs. E.G. White. First however, we will read in the Midnight Cry, by F.D. Nichol, "Ellen G. White offers a similar testimony regarding the connection between Seventh-day Adventists and the Millerite movement." M.C. 484:2. The "similar connections" spoken of here by Elder Nichol, is the connection that Elder White wrote of in Life Incidents in regard to the three angels' messages. To be sure just what Miller's message was, that there be no mistakes, we shall re-quote from the pen of the Lord's Servant as found in The Midnight Cry 484:5, 6. Miller and his associates fulfilled prophecy, and gave a message which Inspiration had foretold should be given to the world, but which they could not have given had they fully understood the prophecies pointing out their disappointment, and presenting another message to be preached to all nations before the Lord should come. The first and second angels' messages (of Revelation 14:6-8) were given at the right time, and accomplished the work which God designed to accomplish by them'. G. C. 405:2.

We shall begin the first link (First Angel's Message) of "the golden chain of truth" with "the labors of William Miller". The Spirit of prophecy shows that Miller's labors ended at 1844 and then came the presentation of the next message. (Third Angel's).

"The passing of the time in 1844 was followed by a period of great trial to those who still held the advent faith. Their only relief, so far as ascertaining their true position was concerned, was the light which directed their minds to the sanctuary above .... They had a clearer understanding of the first and second Angels' messages, and were prepared to receive and give to the world the solemn warning of the third angel of Revelation 14." G.C. 431, 432. M.C. 434:6.

Although the Millerite movement fulfilled its mission in 1844, proclaiming the First and Second Angels' Messages; yet, we see that the truth of them lived on and to those who continued to study, light was given, "directing their minds to the sanctuary above", giving them a clearer understanding of the first two angels' messages. What was it that gave them a better understanding of the messages? It was the third angel that pointed them to the sanctuary above.

After Jesus opened the door (in 1844) of the most holy the light of the Sabbath was seen, and the people of God were tested, as the children of Israel were tested anciently, to see if they would keep God's law. I saw the third angel (says the Lord's servant, Mrs. E. G. White) pointing upward, showing the disappointed ones the way to the holiest of the heavenly sanctuary." Ed. 254:2.
William Miller was not the first or second angel. Neither was Sr. White the first, second or third angel; but she saw the third angel pointing the way into the most holy place. The third angel had a message for Sr. White; therefore, her message to the disappointed ones was the Third Angel's Message. The third angel gave the message to Sr. White and she in turn gave it to the people. Inspiration makes this very clear.

"…. in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah ... saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, ... Then said I, O my lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what these be." Zech. 1:7-9. Zechariah was not the angel, but the angel had a message for Zechariah of the night vision. Again in Zechariah three, the angel of the Lord stood, before Joshua and Satan was standing at his right hand. Evidently, the Lord had a message for Joshua and Satan stood at his right hand to hinder Joshua's work. Satan knows which hand to hold to, in order to be the most effective. The point is, that Joshua is neither of those that are standing by. No matter how much Satan resists, the Lord declares that He will bring forth His servant the BRANCH. (Zech. 3:8).

By the Angels' messages we see that prophecy is like a great chain, for the angels' messages overlap each other. The prophets die, but the word of the Lord lives on. Says Inspiration: "Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever? Zech. 1:5. ... but my words shall not pass away." Mark 13:31.

Since the First and Second Angels' Messages were preached prior to 1844, and the First Angel's Message started in 1831, the question may be asked; when did the Second Angel's Message commence? For the answer we again turn to Inspiration. "The second angel's message of Revelation 14: was first preached in the summer of 1844." G.C. 389.

It was generally believed by Miller and his co-laborers that the 2300 days (years) prophecy of Daniel 8:14 would end in 1843, (EW 247:1) and as that time drew near there was a cry at midnight of the First Angel's Message, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh". Says the Spirit of Prophecy:

"The coming of Christ, as announced by the first angel's message, was understood to be represented by the coming of the bridegroom. The widespread reformation under the proclamation of His soon coming, answered to the going forth of the virgins ... These had gone forth to meet the Lord, full of hope in the prospect of immediate reward; but they were not prepared for delay and disappointment. When trials came, their faith failed, and their lights burned dim. 'While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept!' By the tarrying of the bridegroom is represented the passing of the time when the Lord was expected, the disappointment, and the seeming delay .... 'They all slumbered and slept!' one class in unconcern and abandonment of their faith, the other class patiently waiting till clearer light should be given. Yet in the night of trial the latter seemed to lose, to some extent, their zeal and devotion. The halfhearted and superficial could no longer lean upon the faith of their brethren. Each must stand or fall for himself."
"About this time, fanaticism began to appear. Some who had professed to be zealous believers in the message rejected the word of God as the one infallible guide, and claiming to be led by the Spirit gave themselves up to the control of their own feelings, impressions, and imaginations. There were some who manifested a blind and bigoted zeal, denouncing all who would not sanction their course... (This History is being repeated now.)

"Satan was seeking by this means to oppose and destroy the work of God .... Then his agents stood ready to seize upon every error, every failure, every unbecoming act, and hold it up before the people in the most exaggerated light, to render Adventists and their faith odious ....

"Satan is 'the accuser of the brethren', and it is his spirit that inspires men to watch for the errors and defects of the Lord's people, and to hold them up to notice, while their good deeds are passed by without a mention. He is always active when God is at work for the salvation of souls. When the sons of God come to present themselves before the Lord, Satan comes also among them. In every revival he is ready to bring in those who are unsanctified in heart and unbalanced in mind. ... Satan is frequently there upon the most solemn occasions, in the form of those whom he can use as his agents.

"The prince of evil contests every inch of ground over which God's people advance in the journey toward the heavenly city." G.C. 393:4; 394:0, 1; 395:0-3; 396:0, 1.

The same conditions that prevailed just prior to the end of the 2300 day prophecy are prevalent today - fanaticism, those leaping from one fanatical idea to another, claiming to be led by the Spirit, giving "themselves up to the control of their own feelings, impressions, and imaginations, denying the Spirit of Prophecy and the plain teaching of God's word.

"There were some who manifested a blind and bigoted zeal, denouncing all who would not sanction their course'. G.C. 395:1. Every wind of doctrine is blowing upon the church. "The enemy is preparing for his last campaign against the church.' 5 T 294:1. "Their doctrines will not bear the test of God's word, yet souls will be deceived.' 5T 295:3.

"All manner of false doctrines, heresies, and Satanic deceptions; are misleading the minds of men. Without the Spirit and Power of God, it will be in vain that we labor to present the truth. 5T 158:1.

The Spirit of God pleads for those that are inclined to be unstable, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Eph. 4:14. ".... But an angel marked every insult, every slight, every wrong, which the children of God received from their professed brethren." EW 249:1. .

There is safety only in a message that links the angels' messages together as one prophetic chain and places them at the right time, and in their proper setting. Any other will lead men in a path of darkness, and they will lose sight of the mark, and of Jesus; their feet will stumble, and they will plunge into the abyss below. ".... These messages, (pens Inspiration) were represented to me as an anchor to the people of God." EW 256:2.
"... The same evidence which led them to look for their Lord in 1843, led them to expect Him in 1844, yet I saw that the majority did not possess that energy which marked their faith in 1843. Their disappointment had dampened their faith. As the people of God united in the cry of the second angel, the heavenly host marked with the deepest interest the effect of the message. (History again repeats today.)

"... I saw these angels receive great power and light from Jesus and fly quickly to earth to fulfill their commission to aid the second angel in his work. A great light shone upon the people of God as the angels cried, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him!' Then I saw those disappointed ones rise, and in harmony with the second angel proclaim, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, 'go ye out to meet Him!'

"Those who rejected and opposed the light of the first angel's message, lost the light of the second, and could not be benefited by the power and glory which attended the message, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!'. Jesus turned from them with a frown; for they had slighted and rejected Him. Those who received the message were wrapped in a cloud of glory. They greatly feared to offend God and waited and watched and prayed to know His will. "...The message given 'from heaven enraged Satan and his angels, and led those who professed to love Jesus, but despised His coming, to scorn and deride the faithful, trusting ones. But an angel marked every insult, every slight, every wrong, which the children of God received from their professed brethren.

"Very many raised their voices to cry, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!' and left their brethren who did not love the appearing of Jesus, and who would not suffer them to dwell upon His second coming. I saw Jesus turn His face from those who rejected and despised His coming, and then He bade angels lead His people out from among the unclean, lest they should be defiled. Those who were obedient to the message stood out free and united. A holy light shone upon them. They renounced the world, sacrificed their earthly interests, gave up their earthly treasures, (some held onto their treasures until it is too late to be used in the work) and directed their anxious gaze to heaven, expecting to see their beloved Deliverer. A holy light beamed upon their countenances, telling of the peace and joy (Kingdom) which reigned within. Jesus bade His angels go and strengthen them, for the hour of their trial drew on. I saw that these waiting ones were not yet tried as they must be. They were not free from errors. And I saw the mercy and goodness of God in sending a warning to the people of the earth, and repeated messages to lead them to a diligent searching of heart, and study of the Scriptures, that they might divest themselves of errors which have been handed down from the heathen and papists. Through these messages God has been bringing out His people where He can work for them in greater power, and where they can keep all His commandments." E.W. 247:1, 2; 248:1; 249:1, 2; 250:0.

"The second angel's message of Revelation 14 was first preached in the summer of 1844." G.C. 389:2. "Of this coming of the Lord (for the dead) William Miller was the messenger, and the message of Elijah the prophet - the messenger of the covenant -- is the fore runner for His coming with the living saints, both of the same event -- the judgment." 2 S.R. 241:1. This gives us a clear understanding of the work under the first and second angels' messages. - And it places both messages in their proper time setting.
To make this plain, that a child may understand, let us restate the time of these messages according to the Spirit of Prophecy:

(1) The First Angel's Message started in 1831. The ardent preaching by Miller and his associates was climaxed in the "Midnight Cry" in 1843. (E.W. 236:1; 232:2; 247:1; G.C. 398:2) the time it was first thought the Lord would come. There was a let down in the work, some were discouraged because "they were not prepared for delay and disappointment." ... 'They all slumbered and slept' ... the other class patiently waiting till clearer light should come." G.C. 394:0, 1.

(2) "The second angel's message of Revelation 14 was first preached in the summer of 1844." G.C. 389:2. "Those who rejected and opposed the light of the first angel's message, lost the light of the second, and could not be benefited by the power and glory which attended the message." 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!' E.W. 249:1.

The second angel came in just before the Lord came, to His temple in 1844. The second angel came with the message, "Babylon is fallen", in the summer of 1844 and at that time: "Very many raised their voices to cry, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh'" and left their brethren who did not love the appearing of Jesus." E.W. 249:2.

Notice that there was a disappointment in the first angel's message in 1843. Then there was a delay and hearts were tried. The second angel followed the first angel in the summer of 1844 saying, "Babylon is fallen", and many raised their voices to cry, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh". The Bridegroom came to His temple, to judge the dead, in the fall of 1844 while Babylon was falling. (Rev. 14:8). In other words, Babylon fell just prior to His coming to His temple.

After the time passed in the fall of 1844, Christ, the Bridegroom, did not come to earth as had been expected, therefore, there was a disappointment. But the faithful ones would not be discouraged. They continued to study until Ellen G. White was given a vision of the third angel. The Third Angel's Message explained the disappointment.

"After Jesus opened the door of the most holy, the light of the Sabbath was seen, and the people of God were tested, as the children of Israel were tested anciently, to see if they would keep God's law. I saw the third angel pointing upward, showing the disappointed ones the way to the holiest of the heavenly sanctuary." E.W. 254.

"It was Gabriel, the angel next in rank to the Son of God, who came with the divine message to Daniel. It was Gabriel, 'His angel', whom Christ sent to open the future to the beloved John.

"The words of the angel; 'I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God', shows that he holds a position of high honor in the heavenly courts." D.A. 98:5.

Which angel did Sr. White see The Third Angel. Which angel pointed the way to the most holy place of the Sanctuary? The Third Angel. Which angel lighted up the past, present, and future
for the disappointed ones and gave them a better understanding of why the disappointment? The Third Angel. What was the Third Angel's Message? The Sabbath and Sanctuary Truth. Who is the Third Angel? Sr. White and the Bible indicate that it is Gabriel - Christ's personal angel. If it be true that Gabriel is the Third Angel and the one Sr. White saw "pointing the way to the Most Holy Place"; it stands to reason that she was given the Third Angel's Message.

From this point of view the Angel that joins the Third Angel is symbolized by Christ joining His personal angel Gabriel in a message to be given to the world. Christ takes the reins in His own hands (TM 300). This is also symbolized by Joshua and the Angel (Zech. 6:12; P.K. 584:1; 587:2).

"The wise will not let the enemies of truth fool them. Rather they will do their level best to disillusion these pretended friends, and to encourage them to let the Recruiter anoint their eyes so they may see that "In that day shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. (God's denomination of today)." WHR 53:2.

The second angel's message was "Babylon is fallen'; Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him'. Evidently the second angel's message is of the Bridegroom. If type meets antitype, Babylon the Great is in the process of falling when the second angel's message is repeated (Rev. 18:2). At that time the earth is lightened by the message, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh". Then, suddenly, the Lord comes to His temple -- the church -- (Mal. 3:1-3) to execute judgment upon those who receive not the mark, those: who did not sigh and cry for all the abominations in the church (Eze. 9:4-9). "His church is to be a temple... and the angelic architect has brought his golden measuring rod from heaven, ...Clad in complete armor of light and righteousness, she enters upon her final conflict. The dross, and worthless material, will be consumed" T.M. 17:1. "... In the Scriptures the figure of the erection of a temple is frequently used to illustrate the building of the church. Zechariah refers to Christ as the Branch that should build the temple of the Lord. He speaks of the Gentiles as helping in the work:" A.A:595:2

In order that we may learn a present truth lesson, and know where we stand in the stream of time (how close the separation and purification) let all stand in awe of what Christ has wrought in the revelation of Himself, through His Spirit; while we parallel the work of the judgment of the living with the work of the first and second angels', just prior to the judgment of the dead.

"Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement, (Judgment of the Living). Momentous are the interests involved therein. The judgment is now passing in the Sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon - none know how soon -- it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour's admonition: "watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." Mark 13:33. 'If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.' Rev. 3:3.
"When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death." Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven." G.C. 490:1, 2.

Since the investigative judgment of the living begins at the "house of God" (1 Peter 4:17), probation closes for the church before it does for the world. The fact that God announces the day and hour of Jesus' coming in the clouds, (G.C. 640:2) tells us that His coming as a thief is at another time. We can only conclude then, that His coming as a thief is when our names come up in the investigative judgment. This the Spirit of Prophecy makes plain.

"The righteous and the wicked will still be living upon the earth in their mortal state, -- men will be planting and building, eating and drinking, all unconscious that the final irrevocable decision has been pronounced in the sanctuary above... Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of every man's destiny, the final withdrawal of mercy's offer to guilty men.

'Watch ye therefore .... lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping'. Mark 13:35, 36. Perilous is the condition of those who, growing weary of their watch, turn to the attractions of the world. While the man of business is absorbed in the pursuit of gain, while the pleasure lover is seeking indulgence, while the daughter of fashion is arranging her adornments, -- it may be in that hour the Judge of all the earth will pronounce the sentence, 'Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.' Dan. 5:27; G.C.491:1,2.

Now to make things clear that all may understand: "... Write the vision, and make it plain, upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith." Hab. 2:2-4.

To make the vision plain we shall place the starting point; (1) of the First Angel's message with the preaching of William Miller in 1831. (G.C. 368:1). (2) The Second Angel's Message coming in at the end of the first Advent movement in the summer of 1844 and fixing October 22, 1844, for the arrival of the Bridegroom. (3) The Third Angel's Message was given to Sr. White which explained to the disappointed ones 'that the Bridegroom did come to the Sanctuary (temple) above before the throne of His Father to begin the judgment of the dead, and not to earth as they had anticipated. The date was figured correctly but the event that was to take place was what they had misunderstood.

You may ask, since Miller was a true prophet, why did the Lord permit him to misunderstand the prophecy? To this the Lord's Servant gives the answer.

"The proclamation, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh', in the summer of 1844, led thousands to expect the immediate advent of the Lord. At the appointed time the Bridegroom came, not to earth, as the people expected, but to the Ancient of Days in heaven." GC 427: "Had the disciples realized that Christ was going to judgment and to death, they could not have fulfilled this prophecy. (Zech. 9:9), GC 405:1.
"In like manner, Miller and his associates fulfilled prophecy, and gave a message which Inspiration had foretold should be given to the world, but which they could not have given had they fully understood the prophecies pointing out their disappointment." GC405:2.

"...Miller and his associates preached the message based on Daniel 8:14 and Revelation 14:7, and failed to see there were still other messages brought to view in Revelation 14.

"Yet God accomplished His own beneficent purpose in permitting the warning of the judgment to be given just as it was. The great day was at hand, and in His providence the people were to be brought to the test of a definite time, in order to reveal to them what was in their hearts. The message was designed for the testing and purification of the church." GC 353:1. This history is being repeated.

This plainly shows us that God controls the understanding of the prophecies and man, regardless of how pious he may be, cannot declare the true meaning of them until the Great I AM sees fit to reveal their true meaning. And then only does He give the true understanding to His chosen instrumentality. This is done in order to try men's hearts, to see if they will choose to serve man or humble themselves and worship God. Disregarding the warning, however, there are those who run ahead and attempt to declare the truth of the matter out of season.

In the preaching of the First and Second Angels' Messages by Miller and co-laborers the people kept the first day of the week for the Sabbath, The door to the most holy being closed, they had no knowledge of the binding requirements of the Seventh-Day Sabbath upon Christians. After the door to the holiest of the Sanctuary was opened by our Saviour however, Sr. White saw in vision, inside the most holy the ark of the covenant and the ten commandment law with a halo around the fourth. It was not until after 1844 that God revealed the sanctity of the Seventh-day, showing it to be still binding upon Christians.

The First and Second Angels' Messages led the people up to the door of the Most Holy in the fall of 1844 (First-day Adventist). After the disappointment, the third angel explained to the Lord's servant, Mrs. White, why the disappointment, by pointing the way into the most holy and revealing to her that the Seventh-day was the Sabbath instead of the first day of the week. Since then the gospel of the First, Second, and Third Angels' messages have been proclaimed as a three-fold message to the world by God's instrumentality, the Seventh-day Adventist denomination (the first period of proclaiming the Three Angels' Messages, prophesied by Zechariah).

"... were there red horses, speckled, and white" (Zech. 1:8), (Millerite verse 11), "they were to cry yet" (verse 17), "give their message again".

Those who move the beginning of the First Angel's message from it's starting point in 1831 by Miller are moving a block or stirring a pin of these messages; and upon such, woe is pronounced. (EW 258:3).

Since the "Bridegroom" did not come to earth in 1844, the Second Angel's Message must be given again, "Behold, the Bridegroom Cometh". This time prophecy reveals that the Bridegroom
will come to His church to smite the first born, who has not the blood of Christ on the door post of his heart. He is coming very soon, dear friends, to smite those who are hindering the marking by the man in Linen. Those who are holding minds captive, and draw men to themselves instead of Christ also those who are trying to lead the woman away captive by their many winds of doctrine; along with the flood of unconverted in the church (GC 385:1), will be swallowed up with any who fail to warn his brethren of the soon coming thief.

O friends, this is a sad hour for God's people who do not know the time of their visitation. Soon, very, very soon, probation for the church will close and it will be forever too late to warn your brethren of the coming destruction upon the sinners in Zion. Sigh and cry, Brothers, and Sisters, let your tears run down, go ye out to meet the Bridegroom and bring others. Why be working for position and trying to deceive others by your false winds when you ought to be laboring for souls?

The Lord has plainly told us that the Branch is to bring the revival and reformation to build the temple. (GC 415:3, 416:0; r1TG 8-24:3; read pp. 22-28; Zech. 6:12; Isa. 11:1; WHR 53:2; PK 582-592; 5T 467-476).

"Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing scenes of the great day of atonement. The remnant church will then be brought into great trial and distress." P.K. 587:2.

The Angel before whom Joshua, clothed in his filthy rags, stands is "Christ Himself". (P.K. 584:1). The vision applies with peculiar force to God's people in the closing scenes of the atonement according to P.K. 587:2. This being true, then when we connect Zechariah 6:12 with the closing work of the atonement -- building the temple, the subject of the angels is quite clear.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord;" (Isa. 1:18). Since Joshua says, Behold, the "BRANCH" and the BRANCH is Christ, the Bridegroom; and since the Bridegroom has not as yet cast out those who have not on the wedding garment that the angel holds out to Joshua, (see illustration in PK 582) then there is only one conclusion and that is; the Branch is the Second Angel's Message to the living. (Rev. 18:1, 2).

Let us reason yet another step. For those who would defy the name of the BRANCH being the new name of the church after the purification, let them present their strong reasons. Let them produce the new name of the church - a six letter word (1 SR 233:3) and prove from the Bible and the Testimonies that the name they produce builds the temple, and that it is Christ's new name. Is it not a settled fact that the Bridegroom becomes the husband? Only the bride's name is changed. It is an eastern custom that the Bridegroom comes to get the bride and take her to his father's house before the wedding takes place. The wedding takes place in the kingdom, according to the Spirit of Prophecy.

"The coming of the Bridegroom, here brought to view, takes place before the marriage. The marriage represents the reception by Christ of His kingdom." GC 426:2.
Is the Shepherd's Rod message the Second Angel's message? For proof we shall establish in the mouth of at least two witnesses.

The Shepherd's Rod message claims to be the sealing message for the 144,000 of Rev. 7. The angel of Rev. 7 says nothing of the fall of Babylon which is the second angel's message.

(2) "... What, indeed, if she does not now accept and practice the message of very present Truth, the final phase of the First Angel's Message." WHR 37:1.

(3) The Shepherd's Rod gave, the "midnight cry" after the type of the cry in 1843 by the second Advent movement; but it was not until after the delay that the final cry was made in the summer of 1844 by the second angel.

There were two cries made prior to the autumn of 1844 for the judgment of the dead. Therefore, there would be two such warning messages before the Bridegroom comes to His temple (the church) to execute judgment upon the unbelievers in Zion. This is a sign to all the world that the Lord has taken the reins in His hands to judge the living.

The Shepherd's Rod message could not be the final cry before the Bridegroom comes because "Shepherd's Rod" is not the name of the Bridegroom. The Bridegroom sends a letter of introduction giving the time of His arrival, that all may prepare and make ready for the wedding feast. That there be no mistakes as to His identity, His name accompanies the letter and that name is The Branch. Be warned, therefore, that only the overcomer will know the name. (Rev. 2:17). When does the bridegroom know his wife? After the marriage, therefore, the remnant church receives that name when the sinners are cut off - the pure church. Isa. 62:2; 65:15.

Is not a branch the beginning of a river? Then again Jesus says: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Matt. 24:32-34.

The barren fig tree represented the Jewish nation in Christ's day (D.A. 582:4). We have a fig tree today that represents modern Israel, S.D.A. This fig tree has a tender branch (Matt. 24:32) two years old. "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." When the fig tree has a tender branch and begins to put on leaves ("And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" Rev. 22:2) then know the kingdom is even at the doors.

The fig tree that Jesus cursed represented the Jewish nation. But the tree in the parable represents modern Israel, S.D.A.; for Jesus said it was a parable. Unlike the tree that He cursed, this fig tree has a tender Branch. The generation that sees the tender Branch on the fig tree will not pass till all these things be fulfilled.

Sr. White tells that the preaching of the three angels' messages (Rev. 14:6-11) began with Miller; and Elder White wrote in Life Incidents that they symbolize the three divisions of the genuine movement down to the close of probation. (The Midnight Cry, p. 484).
Miller had an important part in the great advent movement, inasmuch as he brought about the preaching of the First and Second Angels' Messages prior to the judgment of the dead in 1844. Since Jesus did not come to earth to cleanse the earthly sanctuary - the church - these angels' (1 & 2) messages must be repeated for the living. The Millerite movement ceased in 1844. The work of the Judgment of the Dead has been proclaimed under the direction of the Third Angel by Seventh-day Adventists, and constitutes the first division of the genuine movement.

Sr. White shows in Early Writings p. 258 - "A Firm Platform", that the three angels' messages are given in three steps and that the third step was the last. Those who took another step were off the platform - no more movements after the third step which put them on the firm platform. In other words, walking up to the platform, the third step put them on it and a fourth step taken would put them off the platform. This is why the S.D.A. Church says, "no more movements after 1844." This is why the church is unable to accept any more light unless it comes through the General Conference. It is easy to see their point.

This is where the Church needs light. As far as preaching the Judgment of the Dead is concerned, they are absolutely right. This is why, after the third angel came, those who said the church was Babylon were not sent of God - off the platform E.W. 259. The three angels' messages are in three steps for the judgment of the dead. But she says that the living must be judged before the close of probation (T.M. 446:1; G.C. 486:1; 436:0;). This being true, the three angels' messages must be repeated to the world, the final phase of the First and Second Angels' Messages (that of the judgment of the living) must be preached to the church before it goes to the world.

Here is wisdom, here is where the three divisions of the genuine movement come in. Since the church is the first judged (1 Pet. 4:17), the final phases of the first two angels - join the third angel in a message to be given to the world: "... lightnings and thunderings and voices:" Rev. 4:5, for the judgment of the dead; but for the living it is in reverse: "Voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, Rev. 8:5. In the first instance the third angel follows the first two angels, but in the latter, the two follow the third.

After the "Voices, and thunderings, and lightnings" there was an earth quake - these are like the three steps, three divisions, three periods (first to the church then to the world, 2 S.R. 186) to the close of probation. (E.W. 258; L.I. 306, 307; 1 S.R. 32:2).

To illustrate:

(1) Judgment of the Dead in 1844 Rev. 14:6-11; Seventh-day Adventists.

(2) Pre-judgment of the living in 1930 - sealing of 144,000 Rev. 7:1-8; 1 S.R. 15:0, 1; final phase of the First Angel's Message. W.H.R. 37:1; Davidian Seventh-day Adventist - The announcement of the Davidian Kingdom (Eze. 37:24; Jer. 30:9; Eze. 34 - 36) and the Judgment of the Living, the tentative date of Eze. 9 - executive.

(3) The Judgment of the Living: beginning at the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17); marking of the 144,000 (Eze. 9); and sealing of the great multitude (Rev. 7:9) - the final phase of the Second Angel's Message: Babylon the great is fallen; Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; correct date of
Eze. 9. The Revival and Reformation; the great change by the Branch. (r 1 T.G. 8:24; G.C. 415:3; Isa. 11:1; Zech. 6:12).

The Third Angel's Message is not repeated under a separate movement or message before Michael stands up, because it is the Second Angel who joins the Third Angel in the message to be given to the world - The Lord takes the reins in His own hands. (T.M. 300). After the purification, the three angels will again be seen flying in the midst of heaven, but in reverse order (Rev. 8:5), proclaiming their messages with power. Both of the dead prophets, Mrs. E. G. White and Bro. V. T. Houteff, will be raised to proclaim their messages to the world. Sr. White was given the Sabbath and Sanctuary Truth by the third angel; (E.W. 255) therefore, she will be raised in the Kingdom to continue teaching the Third Angel's Message. This is according to the Testimonies. "... Your work, my work, will not cease with this life. For a little while we may rest in the grave, but, when the call comes, we shall, in the kingdom of God, take up our work once more." 7T 17:4.

The Spirit of Prophecy makes it plain that the work goes forward under the direction of the Second Angel as it is given the second time.

"The second angel's message was to go to Babylon (the churches) proclaiming her downfall and calling the people to come out of her. This same message is to be proclaimed the second time. 'And after these things I saw another angel come down (Second Angel) from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen'." T.M. 59.

"Then I saw another mighty angel (Second Angel) commissioned to descend to the earth, to unite his voice with the third angel, and give power and force to his message... The message of the fall of Babylon, as given by the second angel, is repeated. "... The work of this angel comes in at the right time to join in the last great work of the third angel's message, as it swells to a loud cry. And the people of God are thus prepared to stand in the hour of temptation, which they are soon to meet." E.W. 277:1.

"In the Revelation John says of the heavenly messenger who unites with the third angel, 'I saw another angel (Second Angel) come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice'." Rev. 18:1, 2; 6T 60:1.

These statements show conclusively that it is the message of the second angel that joins the third in the message to be given to the world and the work goes forward under the direction of this angel.

The Lord's servant calls the message of this angel the eleventh hour message - "...The eleventh hour message is none other than Revelation 18 -the loud cry of the Third Angel; quoting 'Testimonies to Ministers', p. 59: 'This same message (The Third Angel's) is to be proclaimed the second time. And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.' This message is the last that will ever be given to the world; and it will accomplish its work - 'The Great Controversy', p. 390". 2 S.R. 230-3.
Here we are told by one servant of the Lord that the Third Angel's Message becomes the Second Angel's Message; and by God's other servant that this message is the last to be given to the world.

The Third Angel's Message - (the Sabbath and Sanctuary Truth) has been with God's people since 1844 and that same message will remain until the end. Yet, there is to be a reorganization of our habits, theories, and practices, (C.O.R. 154:4, 1926 edition); and evidently, under the leadership of this other angel - the second Angel. Sr. White admonished God's people in her time to prepare to receive this other angel when He came down.

"We are to throw aside our narrow, selfish plan, remembering that we have a work of the largest magnitude and highest importance. In doing this work we are sounding the first, second, and third angels' messages, and are thus being prepared for the coming of that other angel (Second Angel Rev. 18:1, 2) from heaven who is to lighten the earth with his glory." 6T 406:5.

The Second Angel, coming down to join the Third Angel, shows heaven is now uniting with earth to finish the gospel of the kingdom, in all the world. To understand about this gospel work, it is necessary to identify the second angel in its second phase - Judgment of the Living. In order to place the "second angel" it is necessary to identify the first angel in its final phase.

Seventh-day Adventists have the Third Angel's Message which is proclaiming the Judgment of the Dead. Since the First Angel's Message is to be repeated to the Living, we would be safe in saying that the first message coming after the third angel and teaching the judgment of the living would necessarily be the First Angel's Message in its final phase. Since the 144,000 (Rev. 7:1-8) are to proclaim the message of the Judgment of the Living to the world, (but must be sealed first) and since the S.D.A. Church did not have the sealing message; then we conclude that the sealing message of Rev. 7:1-8 as the First Angel's Message, or the first message to come after the Third Angel.

We find just such a message did spring up in S.D.A.’s midst in 1930 that fulfills John's prophecy. Read The Shepherd’s Rod Vol. 1 by V.T. Houteff. This same author claims to have the First Angel’s in its final phase. "What, indeed, if she does not now accept and practice the message of very present Truth, the final phase of the First Angel’s Message." W.H.R. 37:1.

There is only one conclusion and that is since the Shepherd's Rod is the very first message that fulfills prophecy after the Third Angel's; then, the very next message prophesied after the Rod would be the final phase of the Second Angel’s Message, number one, then next, number two. The Spirit of Prophecy declares this Truth and the Bible confirms the declaration.

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem (stump, margin) of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:" Isa. 11:1. Here is symbolized a stump, a rod and a Branch. The rod is a message - "...the rod ...must mean God's Word, His Truth." 1 T.G. 31:4. Since the rod symbolizes a message; so, likewise, the stump and the Branch represent messages: ---

STUMP -Third Angel - Seventh-day Adventists.
ROD - Final phase of the First Angel - Davidian Seventh-day Adventists – Sealing of 144,000.

BRANCH - Final phase of the Second Angel - Branch Davidian Seventh-day Adventists which embraces the Third Angel's Message - Marking of 144,000. Three steps, three divisions of the Genuine S.D.A. movement since 1844 to the close of probation.

"Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go Ye out to meet Him." Matt. 25:6. This is message to the church, and all who want to get into the ark of today must 'raise their voices to our brethren - no time to lose in quibbling over who is who. The Bridegroom cometh, and those who have scrip and no sword, buy one. To those who have neither, let them sell their garment and buy a sword. (Luke 22:36). All will need a sword for Judah is preparing to fight at Jerusalem (Zech. 14:14). Now is the time to sell all and buy the field.

What is the sign? Listen to the Master’s words:

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Matt. 24:32. 33. The fig tree in Christ's time represented the Jewish nation (D.A. 584). The fig tree in the parable represents His church today. When it has a tender Branch, know that the Kingdom is at the doors. Therefore, the sign of Jonas is so plain that even an evil and adulterous generation will be able to see it.

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Wake up, wake up, lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping!

Ben L. Roden

Note: Emphasis in quotations ours.
Announcement: regarding your letters for information: Until further notice send first tithes to the Odessa Office, Box 3088. Second tithes and all transportation funds to be kept locally. Continue to send General Conference letters to S.D.A. brethren.