

Adventism

Introduction

The year 1844 is familiar to Seventh-day Adventists as the year that a group of Millerites mistakenly expected the Second Advent of Jesus Christ.

On October 22, 1844, these men, women, and children longingly expected to see their Saviour and their loved ones that had passed away. They waited for the signs of Christ's appearing. But as they watched the sun slowly slide below the horizon after a long day of waiting and watching, their hope slipped from them.

As night fell, they faced their dashed expectations with bitter disappointment. Many turned their backs on God when He didn't deliver on their understanding of Scripture. But some did not give up.

Little did those people realize the momentous times in which they lived. Four years later, in 1848, a group of people started coming together in what was known as the "Sabbath Conferences." They studied the Bible to correct the errors in their thinking and to discover what the prophecies were really all about.

Adventist Pillars

Out of those Sabbath Conferences came a theology that was not new but resurrected—many of these doctrines had been discovered during the Reformation and forgotten.

Here are the five key discoveries they made:

The Sanctuary doctrine—the whole plan of salvation laid out in type. The ceremonial law God gave to ancient Israel symbolizes Jesus' work throughout history. As the people started unraveling this plan, they began to understand the ministry of Jesus and what had happened on the day of their disappointment.

Out of the sanctuary doctrine and the Great Disappointment, the great message of **the Second Advent** was formed, the truth about **the Sabbath** was recovered, A Biblical understanding of **the state of the dead** was unraveled, and **the Spirit of Prophecy** was established.

These are the five pillars of Adventism, which make this denomination unique.

These doctrines inspired the pioneers to recognize the Three Angels' Messages, and thereafter the Adventist Church movement was born.

Satan's Counter-Strategies

Back in 1844, as all these events were happening, and the Second Advent message was spreading across the globe, was Satan sitting idly? No, “the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed” (Revelation 12:17).

Satan devised a plan to confuse every kind of individual—from the one who doesn't want anything to do with God to the one who tries to follow God devoutly.

His first strategy was a **counter-theology**. But he knew that a counter-theology would only offer two opposing theologies. Anyone could use the Bible to decide which theology was correct. So, he decided to **pervert truth and present lies as truth**:

Counter-Theology

The Sabbath Conferences were Bible-based, so Satan initiated strategies that were not Bible-based:

Marxism

In August of 1844, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels met in Paris and started a lifelong association. On November 19, 1844, Engels wrote to Marx, “We are at present holding public meetings all over the place to set up societies for the advancement of the workers...By a huge majority everything Christian was banned from the rules.”ⁱ

Marx had already written the book *The Essence of Christianity*, where he called religion “the opium of the people,” so Engels and Marx were very pleased with the ban.

This strategy still operational today. The trade unions of the world run on Marxist strategies. The sickle and hammer are their symbols, and they have kept the same old rhetoric since the beginning. The strategy of Marxism satisfied the underdog. The next strategy—atheism—targeted the intellectual.

Atheism

In the same year, 1844, Charles Darwin wrote the first draft of *The Origin of Species* and sent it out to all his colleagues for evaluation. Satan was very successful with that ideology. We see it everywhere now—in universities and textbooks and even on buses.

The great professors of the world—such as Dawkins—sit in the chairs of Cambridge and Oxford and belong to a society that calls themselves “the Brights.”ⁱⁱ Dawkins writes, “God almost certainly does not exist.”

These counter-strategies negate God and soothe the mind in the belief that we can be happy without God. But not everyone will fall for such a strategy, so Satan had to also begin a campaign of perversion of truth.

Perversion of Truth

Dispensationalism

In 1844, John Nelson Darby came up with a doctrine called dispensationalism—a method of interpreting the Bible that divides history into distinct eras or “dispensations” in which God deals with people in a distinctive way and, in some cases, in which God’s ethical standards change. The dispensationalist doctrine spread through the world like wildfire. Ninety-five percent of the Christian world today is dispensationalist.

Dispensationalism is a Jesuit doctrine. Roman Catholic sources say that the founder of dispensationalism was the Jesuit priest Manuel Lacunza (1731-1801). Born in Chile and posing as a converted Jew under the pseudonym Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, he wrote a large apocalyptic work in Spanish entitled *The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty*. It remained virtually unknown for many years. Then an enterprising man named Edward Irving translated it into English. Is it just coincidental that modern speaking in tongues started in Irving's church.

Darby took this doctrine and modernized it, after which Roman Catholic cardinals added a touch or two about the Antichrist coming from the tribe of Dan.

Not only did Satan bring in dispensationalism, he also brought in antinomianism—going so far as to say that it is sinful to keep God’s law. That’s really turning the Gospel on its head.

Satan also added a few extra twists in his perversion of truth:

Quakerism

Satan wanted counterfeit religion to flourish, so in 1844, the Society of Friends, or Quakers, formed. The Society denied the bodily resurrection of Christ and communicated with the spirit world.

Rapping

In 1844, the rapping also started in a certain house, which a few years later, would be occupied by the famously occult Fox Sisters.

Mormon Movement

In 1844, Joseph Smith started the Mormon movement, claiming to be divine and of the order of Melchizedek.ⁱⁱⁱ On June 27, 1844, Smith was martyred. Mormonism became a mega-movement of counterfeit Christian ideology.

Spiritualism

The spiritualistic secret society Delta Kappa Epsilon also began in 1844 at Yale, ensuring that the universities were accessible for New Age error.

Babism (the Baha'i Faith)

Siyid 'Ali-Muhammad rose in 1844 to say, "I am the Bab," starting the Baha'i movement. Ultimately, the movement for the unification of all religions under one umbrella began.

Feminism

In the same year of 1844, the rise of the feminist movement began, inverting Genesis 1 and putting the doctrine of God on its head.

Concealment of Scripture

On May 8, 1844, Pope Gregory XVI condemned the Bible Societies as enemies of Catholicism, and condemned the distribution of Bibles to the common people. He confirmed "the decrees recited above delivered in former times by apostolic authority against the publication distribution reading and possession of books of the holy scriptures translated into the vulgar [i.e., common] tongue."^{iv}

That same year, the Codex Sinaiticus manuscript, which agrees with the distorted Codex Vaticanus version of Scripture found in 1481, was discovered in the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai.

Every single one of these movements started in 1844, so that Satan could prepare the world for his deception.

God's work in 1844

In that same year, God was quietly working to set up a truth that would stand for all eternity. In 1844, a Seventh-day Baptist lady, Rachel Oakes, challenged a Millerite preacher, Frederick Wheeler, to keep all the commandments of God. He preached his first sermon on the Sabbath in March 1844, and the Sabbath was reestablished in that year.

In 1844, the noble preacher Charles Fitch accepted the Biblical teaching of soul sleep and another important truth surfaced.

In 1844, we also see the emergence of the Spirit of Prophecy. Typology tells us not to wait for another prophet. One has already come. The testimonies have been written and the health message is there.

But what's the use of a message without the means to broadcast to the world? God's hand was over the creation of a system whereby this message could go to the world. In 1844, Samuel Morse, a Protestant who wrote more about the Bible than he did about telecommunications and was a fervent student of Daniel and Revelation, created the Morse code.

On May 24, 1844, he sent the first message from the Capital in Washington to the B&O Railway in Baltimore. The first words to run across the wire were, "What hath God wrought?" And from those humble beginnings, technology exploded.

Even the Columbus and Zinnia railroad was chartered on March 12, 1844. In that year, there were great advances in technology, transportation, and information. God had a message for the world, and Satan has a counter-message.

As the Lord's people show their determination to follow the light God has given them, the enemy will bring all his powers to bear to discourage them, but they are not to give up because of the difficulties that arise when they try to follow the counsels of the Lord.^v

The Beginning of the End of Time

We are living in what the Old Testament calls the "time of the end," a period just before the Second Coming of Christ. Daniel uses the phrase five times in chapters 8-12, and tells us that the period would arise at a very specific time appointed by God. That time came in 1798, as we will learn.

*And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until **the time of the end**; because it is still for the appointed time (Daniel 11:35 NKJV, emphasis added).*

How do we know that era of the end times has begun?

Daniel 7:25 tells us about the period of papal dominance, which, as we can see from the chart, was 1260 years long:

The Length of Rome's Authority

Daniel 7:25
given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time

Daniel 12:7
it shall be for a time, times and a half

Revelation 12:6
the woman fled into the wilderness...that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days

Revelation 12:14
that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time

Revelation 13:5
power was given unto him to continue forty and two months

A time	times	and half a time	
(1 Jewish year)	(RSV "two times")		
360 days	720 days	180 days	= 1260 prophetic days
12 months	24 months	6 months	= 42 prophetic months

And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

Daniel 12:6-7 uses the same time period to explain when the end times would be. With the completion of the 1260-year period of papal dominion in 1798, the time of the end began.

During the era of papal dominance, the truth about Christ and His Gospel were trampled on—"great words" were spoken "against the most High." However, Daniel

12:4 tells us that the beginning of the time of the end also signifies the restoration of those truths:

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.

Daniel also had a vision in which he was told that the sanctuary would be cleansed after 2300 days. Daniel himself did not understand this vision, nor did he fully understand what would unfold during the time of the end. This is because the prophecy was sealed until the time of the end, as we just read in Daniel 12:4.

In the Hebrew, the definite article is given with the word "knowledge," indicating that knowledge of the book of Daniel itself will be increased at the time of the end. If the time of the end has begun, then **knowledge must have already increased**, and **Daniel's prophecy must have been unsealed**. Has this happened?

Increasing Knowledge

In Psalm 119:98-99, we read, "Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than my enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation."

Understanding comes from obedience to God's law (Psalm 119:100,104) and to God's testimony—His Word spoken through the prophets of all ages (Psalm 119:125,130,144). If truth is to be restored, then knowledge and understanding of the Biblical concept of truth is essential.

Three definitions of truth are given in the Scriptures:

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me (John 14:6).

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth (John 17:17).

Thou art near, O LORD; and all thy commandments are truth (Psalm 119:151).

Truth restored contains all these elements. It is Christ-centered, Word-based, and involves obedience to God's law.

According to the book of Daniel, the time of the end will include an increase of knowledge and unveiling of Daniel's sealed prophecies. History confirms that a great resurgence of interest in the Scriptures, accompanied by missionary zeal, began around 1798—the beginning of the end times:

In 1795, the London Missionary Society was organized, followed a year later by the New York Missionary Society.

The great Bible societies of the world were also formed in the period between 1798 and 1844, which is the close of the 2300-year prophecy.

Associated with this resurgence of interest, numerous health and temperance societies were formed. By 1807 William Metcalf had even founded the vegetarian and teetotaler Society of Bible Christians of Philadelphia.

Many of the historical names and accounts in the Bible—especially in the book of Daniel—were unsubstantiated by other sources until the end of the 18th century. According to page 10 of *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, “Modern archaeology may be said to have had its beginning in 1798 when the rich antiquities of the Nile Valley were opened up to scientific study by Napoleon’s Expeditions.” In this era, ancient hieroglyphics were deciphered that aligned perfectly with the Scriptures’ historical accounts

The first steam engine was patented in 1769, and this opened the way for steamboats (1810-1807) and the railroads (1825). The Gospel was to be spread to “all the world” and God saw to it that the means to achieve this end would also be available.

In the world of music, the great Biblical themes were a prominent source of inspiration with Handel’s “Messiah” focusing attention on the King of kings and Haydn composing *The Creation* in 1844.

Unsealing Daniel's Prophecy

During this period of renewed interest in the Scriptures, Baptist William Miller began exploring the themes of Biblical prophecy. He rejected the popular interpretations of Scripture and reintroduced the idea that the return of Christ, and the actions of His followers, were at the heart of Biblical prophecy.

While some of his ideas were correct, Miller incorrectly concluded that the date of Christ's Second Coming would be October 22, 1844. As we know, Christ did not return in 1844. Those expecting His return were greatly disappointed, and many turned away from Miller's teachings altogether.

A few believers, however, began to study the Scriptures deeply to find the meaning of their disappointment. It was these faithful who uncovered the mysteries in Daniel's prophecy of the sanctuary. They found that the books of Hebrews and Revelation held many clues to understanding the prophecy of Daniel 8.

The Great Disappointment and the Birth of Adventism

William Miller

In the early 1800s, a young Baptist farmer named William Miller (1782-1849) published a series of articles in the Baptist weekly *Vermont Telegraph* about the prophecies of Daniel. He used a simple set of rules to unravel the great themes of prophecy:

- The New Testament is the expositor of the Old Testament
- Scripture must be its own expositor
- The symbolism of type and antitype
- Every word must be taken into consideration
- Prophecy compliments prophecy

Miller's study of Daniel 8 led him to believe that the cleansing of the sanctuary, which was to take place at the end of the 2300-year period (Daniel 8:14), referred to the cleansing of the earth from sin. He concluded that this meant Christ would return at that time.

Miller was just beginning to understand the sanctuary message, and misunderstood its connection to the 2300-day prophecy. He believed that the cleansing of the sanctuary meant the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary—the cleansing of the Church at the return of Christ. However, the sanctuary referred to here is instead the heavenly sanctuary.

Using the day-year principle, he at first calculated that Christ would return in 1843. He believed The “spiritual sanctuary,” the Church, would be cleansed at that time.

Miller rejected the popular interpretations of the day such as futurism, preterism, and dispensationalism. He stressed the premillennial return of Christ, and reintroduced the old Protestant, Christ-centered interpretation, which saw the followers of Jesus at the heart of the end-time prophecies. And even though Scripture tells us that we cannot know the hour of Christ's return (see Matthew 24:36 and Luke 12:40), Miller eventually set a definite date for this event: October 22, 1844.ⁱ

The Great Disappointment

Miller, together with some 100,000 others were expelled from their churches for their beliefs. These believers in the soon advent of Christ came from all denominations, and included at least 200 ministers from prominent Protestant churches.

Drawing from the parable of the ten virgins, Miller's message became known as the “midnight cry,” the return of the bridegroom. There was a return to primitive godliness, as the various groups of believers awaited the return of the Lord.

As we know, Jesus did not return to this earth in 1844. Those that eagerly awaited His return were devastated, and the day became known as the Great Disappointment. Many were disillusioned and left the movement. Those that remained were ridiculed and became objects of scorn.

Rediscovering the Truth

Centuries before the Great Disappointment, the Church experienced a similar disappointment. The followers of Christ had awaited His coronation as the Messiah in Jerusalem. They had hailed Him as their King and thrown palm branches before His feet (John 12:12-13). But instead of a coronation, they had to witness a crucifixion. Their disappointment was real, and many lost their faith. Even the disciples were filled with fear and hid themselves “for fear of the Jews” (John 20:19).

Two followers of Jesus were contemplating His death when Jesus Himself joined them and, “beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27 NKJV).

Similarly, the Great Disappointment of 1844 led to ardent study of the Scriptures and the truths uncovered by the Reformation. Those who remained in the Advent movement after 1844 considered themselves “the remnant.” The prophecies of Daniel were reexamined and a number of believers discovered that the books of Hebrews and Revelation are full of references to a sanctuary in heaven—the very topic of Daniel's sealed prophecy in Daniel 8.

They rediscovered the great doctrine of the sanctuary. The role of Jesus as our sacrificial lamb and high priest in heaven were understood in the correct context. The typology of the Jewish feasts and their meaning and fulfillment were also uncovered.

Along with this breakthrough in understanding came the realization of what the ancient Day of Atonement symbolized, and what its relevance was in terms of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary or the judgment in heaven. The standard of judgment—the law—and its significance was also understood in its relationship to the plan of salvation. The truths that had served as a guard against evil were being rebuilt, as Isaiah had prophesied.

The law and the Sabbath were rediscovered, as was the correct relationship between the law and grace. The commandments of God and faith in Jesus Christ became pillars on which the faith of the remnant rested, fulfilling Revelation 12:17's description of the last generation of believers before the return of Christ:

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The Birth of Adventism

Out of the ashes of the Millerite movement grew the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They adopted, coordinated, and continued reforms that had been lost since the Reformation. These doctrines were grounded on Scriptural teaching about the following concepts:

- The Second Coming of Christ
- The binding claims of the Seventh-day Sabbath
- The Third Angel's Message in relation to the First and Second Angels' Messages
- The ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary
- The non-immortality of the soul

What are the Three Angel's Messages?

Revelation 14 tells of three important messages to the world. John's vision here is not symbolic of three literal angels who will come and proclaim these messages to the world. Rather, it refers to God's people—His ambassadors—who proclaim these truths.

The Three Angels' Messages are the final messages of warning to the world. These messages ensure that everyone has had a chance to choose between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Earth—Satan's kingdom. When the messages have reached everyone, the time of probation will close and Christ will return to free His people.

The great war between Christ and Satan reaches its climax as these messages are preached, and the people of the world will be split into two groups: the followers of Christ and the followers of Satan. The contest will be fierce and there will be a time of the worst trouble to ever happen (Daniel 12:1).

Throughout the book of Revelation, the two great camps are contrasted. Satan tries his best to counterfeit the plan of salvation, in order to deceive God's chosen people (Matthew 24:24). Revelation tells of a Beast power, which we see to be Roman Catholicism, that Satan uses to counterfeit the ministry of Christ. He even sets up a false trinity to lead the world astray.

Only the true Prince of this world, Jesus Christ, can save us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness:

And from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood (Revelation 1:5).

When Christ returns, the false prince—Satan—will be judged and cast out (John 16:11).

The battle and stark differences between the two sides is a theme in the book of Revelation.

Learn more about the Three Angels' Messages that will be preached in the end times:

The First Angel's Message

The First Angel's Message was to remind God's people fear God and worship Him as Creator, because the judgment is coming. This was the message proclaimed by the Millerite movement.

The First Angel's Message is not only a message of judgment, but also a message of the "restoration of all things." It is the Elijah message, the final reformation that would separate the remnant of spiritual Israel from the world, and prepare a people for the coming of the Lord.

Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water" (Revelation 14:6-7 NKJV).

The angel spreads the everlasting Gospel to every nation. We see this as God using His people to be coworkers together with Him in the spreading of the Gospel around the world.

The First Angel's Message has three central themes:

The Everlasting, Unchanging Gospel

The everlasting Gospel is the great theme of salvation—we are saved by the blood of the Lamb. This Gospel has never changed.

Adam and Eve were taught the lesson of salvation by grace when God covered their nakedness with the pelt of a sheep to symbolize the righteousness of Christ which would cover them.

Abel offered a lamb as sacrifice because he understood that salvation was to be found outside himself in the merits of the Lamb that was to be slain for the sins of the world. Cain, however, sought favor through the works of his hands and his offering was not acceptable to God. The great divide between salvation by grace and salvation by works was established from the very beginning.

Abraham understood the significance of the Lamb when God demonstrated the plan of salvation in miniature form through Abraham's own son, Isaac. Isaac was a symbol of God's Son who was to be offered. But in Isaac's stead God provided His own lamb—a ram, a symbol of Jesus who would die for the sins of the world.

The Jews were taught the plan of salvation through the ceremonial law, and the same principles still apply today: our salvation lies in the Lamb that was slain. The Gospel has never changed, but Satan perverts the Gospel to suit his ends.

Judgment and Grace

The Lamb was slain because the law could not be compromised. If the law could have been done away with, then Christ need not have died. To be saved by grace does not give a license for sin, which is transgression of the law (1 John 3:4):

For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified...Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law...How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein (Romans 2:13, 3:31, 6:2)?

Every deed will be brought into judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10). God's grace is as great as God's justice:

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven (Matthew 7:21 NKJV).

The Gospel rests on the twin pillars of law and grace. Satan knows this and wars against those who bring these twin pillars into a right relationship:

And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:17 NKJV).

In ancient Israel, Satan exalted the law and crucified the Lamb while in spiritual Israel he exalts the Lamb and crucifies the law. Make no mistake—we cannot claim the merits of Christ while we deliberately keep on sinning:

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 10:26 NKJV).

We cannot accept justification before God without also accepting His work in our lives to make us holy (2 Corinthians 5:15). Without holiness, no one will see God (Hebrews 12:14).

We accept sanctification in the same way as which we accepted justification—through faith in Christ. We can't keep the law in our own strength. It is only through Christ in us that obedience becomes possible. Sanctification is a growth in Christ and not a magic wand. Through abiding trust in God, our bent sinful nature can be overcome.

Some strive for perfection, and some even believe that they are sinless. All such striving is useless for only through Christ in us can we attain the victory. By ourselves we can do nothing.

Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us (1 John 3:24 NKJV).

You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked (2 Peter 3:17 NKJV).

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall (1 Corinthians 10:12 NKJV).

The nearer we are to Christ, the more we will be humbled by His beauty. Like Isaiah of old, we will be led to exclaim, “Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts” (Isaiah 6:5).

Creation and its Memorial

The everlasting Gospel to be preached by the remnant will set the record straight and put the issues of law and grace in the right perspective:

Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water (Revelation 14:7 NKJV).

The remnant will not only preach the judgment but also exalt the Creator who made heaven and earth and the sea and the fountains of water. This is the seal of God, which is the sign of His authority. It also appears in the Sabbath commandment which emphasizes not only God’s authority over, but also His ownership of the universe.

The Sabbath is a memorial to creation and the remnant is to point to and exalt God as Creator. It is noteworthy that, at the close of the 2300-day prophecy in 1844, God sent a message into the world reminding the world of its origins while at the same time (1844), Darwin’s concept of evolution was being readied for the world.

The First Angel’s Message calls for a choice between truth and error; between the binding claims of the Gospel and popular humanism; between exalting God and exalting self.

The Second Angel’s Message

When Advent believers were expelled from the established churches in the 1800s, they came to believe that because these churches refused to accept God’s warning, they had fallen in the eyes of God.

They associated this fall with the fall of Babylon—the Second Angel’s Message in Revelation 14:8:

And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (NKJV).

Ancient Babylon was opposed to Israel. Babylon enticed Jerusalem into paganism and idolatry. Babylon eventually took the whole nation of Israel captive, and only a small remnant returned to rebuild the ancient ruins.

God pronounced judgment on ancient Babylon:

*Babylon was a golden cup in the LORD's hand,
That made all the earth drunk.
The nations drank her wine;
Therefore the nations are deranged.
Babylon has suddenly fallen and been destroyed.
Wail for her!
Take balm for her pain;
Perhaps she may be healed.
We would have healed Babylon,
But she is not healed.
Forsake her, and let us go everyone to his own country;
For her judgment reaches to heaven and is lifted up to the skies (Jeremiah 51:7-9 NKJV).*

In similar fashion, antitypical Babylon—the confederacy of religious powers that opposes God at the end of time—will lead people astray and take them captive through her numerous false doctrines. The same judgment pronounced in Jeremiah 51:8 on ancient Babylon is given to end-time Babylon in Revelation 14:8. And, the same call given in Jeremiah 51:6 and 9 to come out of Babylon is given in Revelation 18:1-5:

After these things, I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities" (NKJV).

The Second Angel announces the fall of Babylon, but the loud call to "come out of her my people" is made later. God's people are thus still in Babylon. It is Babylon's system of religious structures aligned against God that is condemned—not the individuals.

There are two calls out of Babylon. Just as Jesus began and ended His ministry on Earth by cleansing the temple, so there are two calls to the churches at the end of time. The first of these calls was made at the beginning of the Advent movement

around 1844, and was confined largely to America, whereas the final call will be worldwide and climax in the loud cry just prior to the close of probation. This experience will be accompanied by the outpouring of the latter rain.

The Third Angel's Message

The Third Angel's Message is the most fearful message ever given to the world.

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:9-12 NKJV).

It was only after the Great Disappointment in 1844 that the message of the Third Angel began to be understood.

The Third Angel's Message is the final message of warning to the world. It is filled with power and deep spiritual truths. As its significance came to be understood, the symbolism of the entire book of Revelation was unfolded.

Consider these elements of the Third Angel's Message:

The Message warns against the worship of the Beast or its image.

Accepting the authority of the counterfeit religious system instead of God's authority is the same as worshiping the Beast system rather than God. Accepting the first-day Sabbath means accepting of the authority of the Beast in the place of the authority of God. As the Beast obtains his authority from the Dragon (Revelation 13:2), acknowledgment of that authority is worship of the Dragon—Satan himself.

Revelation 13:4 NKJV explains:

So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

To worship the counterfeit system, one must not only accept its authority but follow its principles. For example, end-time Babylon teaches that in Christ all are free to do as they please.

For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood

came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be (Matthew 24:38-39 NKJV).

Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have put no difference between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them (Ezekiel 22:26).

Those that are in Christ, on the other hand, will align themselves with the principles of Christ (Romans 12:1-2). They will strive for holiness and stay away from things that separate them from Christ:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what concord has Christ with Belial?

...Wherefore, Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Corinthians 6:14-15, 17-18; 7:1).

The whole lifestyle of believers in Christ must reflect this relationship. Babylon is in enmity with God, and teaches a doctrine of compromise, but compromise with sin is impossible.

It is a Message of separation from Babylon and its principles.

The Third Angel's Message puts our relationship with Christ in its right perspective. It is a message that brings about lifestyle changes necessary for those who want to stand in the presence of a holy God.

Separating from the world does not mean retiring to solitary confinement. We are to labor in the world as Christ labored, but we are not to be trapped by the ways of the world. It will take courage for us to stand for truth, but we know that Christ has overcome the world. The Bible tells us the consequences of following Babylon:

The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb (Revelation 14:10).

When Revelation says "poured out without mixture" it means not watered down. This wrath of God will contain no mercy or grace:

Anyone who has rejected Moses' law die without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay" says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful things to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:28-31 NKJV).

In ancient Israel, the enemies of God were to be totally destroyed (Deuteronomy 7:2; 20:16-18). The false prophets that led Israel astray were to be executed without mercy (Deuteronomy 13:7-10). This typology is applicable also to the enemy of God in the last days.

But to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God (Romans 2:8-11 NKJV).

We can see the Third Angel's Message coming to fruition today. Spiritualism is making inroads into the Christian Church, the Papacy is making stealthy but rapid progress towards global control, and the observances of the Catholic Church are being enforced by civil authority. It is crucial that God's people cling to the truth and do not become overtaken by these happenings.

God's people need not fear the judgment in this Message.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:18-19 NIV).

We are heading for perilous times, a time such as never was. But be encouraged:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us (Romans 8:35-37).

In Scripture, those who accept the mark of the Beast are set in sharp contrast with those that receive the seal of God. In Revelation 7, John sees the 144,000 who receive the seal of God. These 144,000 have a number of identifying characteristics, given in Revelation 14:

They have the name of the Lamb and His Father written on their foreheads (Revelation 14:1). The name stands for their character. They have a share in the nature and character of God.

They are redeemed from the earth (Revelation 14:3). They stand in sharp contrast to those who receive the mark of the Beast—they are a called out people.

They have not defiled themselves with women, and they are chaste virgins (Revelation 14:4). They refuse to be defiled by women, which means that they refuse to become involved with idolatrous practices.

They follow the Lamb wherever he goes (Revelation 14:4). They remain faithful to Jesus.

There is no lie found in their mouths and they are blameless (Revelation 14:5). Their character has been investigated, and they have been found justified.

We should be holy and without blame before Him (Ephesians 1:4, Philippians 2:15, Colossians 1:22, 2 Peter 3:11). This is not a message of legalism or perfectionism, since without Jesus we can do nothing. It is a recognition of the power of Christ.

Christ depicts His bride dressed in spotless white, covered with the righteousness of Christ. We should never dare to utter “I am sinless,” but Christ can write that very truth in His book, because His forgiveness not only removes the stain of sin, but also the record of sin.

In the book of Leviticus we read that priests were only permitted to marry virgins, a type of Christ and His bride. The priests were not even permitted to marry chaste widows, because they had previous relationships. Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, all of us fall into the category of having had previous relationships with evil. To fulfill the requirements of the typology, the forgiveness of God has to be so complete that not even the record of the previous unfaithfulness of God’s people will remain. Only then can they qualify as the chaste virgin, pure and undefiled.

All the honor and glory belong to God. This leaves no room for legalism or salvation by works. There is nothing we can do to earn forgiveness.

We cannot receive a more emphatic warning than the one we find in the Third Angel’s Message. God wants everyone to know the result of following the Deceiver’s rationale. God wants everyone to chose Him and His grace.

Adventism and the Final Conflict

The American Bible Society and Church Missions document lists the Seventh-day Adventist Church as the only universally distributed Protestant denomination in the world. The Catholic Church demands obedience to its system and claims Sunday as the mark of her authority, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church propagates obedience to God and Him only and upholds the Seventh day Sabbath as the sign of obedience to God, in accordance with the Scriptures.

As Catholics admit, compromise is impossible:

Reason and common sense demand the acceptance of One or the other of these alternatives: either Protestantism and the keeping holy of Saturday, or Catholicity and the keeping holy of Sunday. Compromise is impossible.ⁱ

Pope John Pauls II's encyclical on Sunday worship calls the world to honor that day.ⁱⁱ Conversely, the Seventh-day Adventist Church warns the world against accepting Sunday—the mark of the Beast. The Adventist Church is protesting against the stealing of God's authority. This is the recipe for the final conflict.

As the Roman Catholic Church admits, the Adventists have the authority of Scripture on their side in this confrontation. In fact, they boast that Protestants keeping Sunday are paying homage to them:

You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, A day which we never sanctify.ⁱⁱⁱ

Thus the observance of Sunday by Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the (Catholic) Church.^{iv}

The Catholic Church openly acknowledges that only the Seventh-day Adventist Church is acting in accordance with the Scriptures:

*The Adventists are the **only body of Christians with the Bible as their teacher**, who can find no warrant in its pages for the change of the day from the seventh to the first. Hence their appellation, "Seventh-day Adventists." Their cardinal principle consists in setting apart Saturday for the exclusive worship of God, **in conformity with the positive command of God himself**, repeatedly reiterated in the sacred books of the Old and New Testaments, literally obeyed by the children of Israel for thousands of years to this day, and endorsed by the teaching and practice of the Son of God whilst on earth (emphasis added).^v*



The (Catholic) Church changed the observance of the Sabbath to Sunday by right of the divine, infallible authority given to her by her Founder, Jesus Christ. The Protestant claiming the Bible to be the only guide of faith has no warrant for observing Sunday. In this matter the Seventh-day Adventist is the only consistent Protestant.^{vi}

The Saint Catherine Catholic Church Sentinel had this to say on the issue:

People who think that the Scriptures should be the sole authority, should logically become 7th Day Adventists, and keep Saturday holy.^{vii}

The choice is ours: will we follow the commandments of God or the commandments of people? Those who knowingly disobey God will have to give an account to God.

The final conflict in the great war between Christ and Satan is about to unfold. Once the mark of the Beast has been legislated and each person has a chance to choose where they will put their allegiance, probation will close and Christ will return.

The redeemed will sing a "new song before the throne." Their unique experience as those who come out of the last tribulation will qualify them to sing this song of praise to the God. The choice is clear. God longs to redeem us. He didn't even spare His own Son, and wants to give us all things. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart.

Sources and Footnotes:

- i. http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/letters/44_11_19.htm
- ii. <http://the-brights.net/>
- iii. <http://www.gnosis.org/ahp.htm>
- iv. Pope Gregory XVI (May 8, 1844), as quoted in *The Bibliotheca sacra and biblical repository* volume 17 (W.F. Draper, 1860): 338.
- v. Ellen White, *This Day with God*, 309.1.
- vi. Miller originally calculated the end of the 2300-day prophecy to be in 1843. However, he was a year off because he had not considered the transitional year when the calendar moved from BC to AD. This is why, upon recalculation, Miller's date was moved to 1844.
- vii. *The Catholic Mirror* (September 23, 1893).
- viii. John Paul II, *Dies Domini* (July 5, 1998).
- ix. Cardinal James Gibbons, *The Faith of Our Fathers* 92nd edition (Baltimore: John Murphy Company): 89.
- x. Monsignor Louis Segur, *Plain Talk about the Protestantism of To-Day* (London: Thomas Richardson and Son, 1874): 213.
- xi. *The Catholic Mirror* (September 23, 1893).
- xii. "The Question Box," *The Catholic Universe Bulletin* (August 14, 1942): 4.
- vxii. "Pastor's Page," *The Saint Catherine Catholic Church Sentinel* Volume 50, Number 22 (May 21, 1995).