

The Book of Daniel - Number One-Hundred and Twenty-One

Unlocking the Signs of the Last Days: Understanding Christ's Pointers to the Budding Trees of Spring

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2024-03-07

Christ pointed His people to the budding trees of Spring, in order that they would understand the “signs” and the implication of the “signs” of the last days.

“Christ had bidden His people watch for the signs of His advent and rejoice as they should behold the tokens of their coming King. ‘When these things begin to come to pass,’ He said, ‘then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.’ He pointed His followers to the budding trees of spring, and said: ‘When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.’ Luke 21:28, 30, 31.”
The Great Controversy, 308.

The “signs” of the last days were typified by the “signs,” that announced and ushered in the movement of the first angel. Those “signs” included the shaking of the heavens, but Joel identifies that the “signs” of the last days, the days when the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for and not found, when God’s holy mountain is holy forever, for no strangers will ever pass through her again, the shaking of the powers of the heavens, will also include the shaking of the powers of earth. Sister White identifies the distinction between the shaking of the powers of the heavens and the powers of the earth.

“December 16, 1848, the Lord gave me a view of the shaking of the powers of the heavens. I saw that when the Lord said ‘heaven,’ in giving the signs recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, He meant heaven, and when He said ‘earth’ He meant earth. The powers of heaven are the sun, moon, and stars. They rule in the heavens. The powers of earth are those that rule on the earth. The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then the sun, moon, and stars will be moved out of their places. They will not pass away, but be shaken by the voice of God.

“Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. The atmosphere parted and rolled back; then we could look up through the open space in Orion, whence came the voice of God. The Holy City will come down through that open space. I saw that the powers of earth are now being shaken and that events come in order. War, and rumors of war, sword, famine, and pestilence are first to shake the powers of earth, then the voice of God will shake the sun, moon, and stars, and this earth also. I saw that the shaking of the powers in Europe is not, as some teach, the shaking of the powers of heaven, but it is the shaking of the angry nations.”
Early Writings, 41.

The shaking of the heavens in Matthew, Mark and Luke represent the shaking of the powers that rule the heavens, as represented by the sun, moon and stars. All of these heavenly powers were shaken, and produced the “signs,” which ushered in and announced the movement of the first angel. Those heavenly powers will be again shaken during the movement of the third angel. But in the movement of the third angel, the powers of earth will also be shaken. The powers of earth are the powers that rule the earth. On September 11, 2001, the powers of earth, not heaven, were shaken.

“Now comes the word that I have declared that New York is to be swept away by a tidal wave? This I have never said. I have said, as I looked at the great buildings going up there, story after story, ‘What terrible scenes will take place when the Lord shall arise to shake terribly the earth! Then the words of Revelation 18:1–3 will be fulfilled.’ The whole of the eighteenth chapter of Revelation is a warning of what is coming on the earth. But I have no light in particular in regard to what is coming on New York, only that I know that one day the great buildings there will be thrown down by the turning and overturning of God’s power. From the light given me, I know that destruction is in the world. One word from the Lord, one touch of his mighty power, and these massive structures will fall. Scenes will take place the fearfulness of which we cannot imagine.” Review and Herald, July 5, 1906.

In the history of the Millerites one of the signs recorded by Luke was the “distress of nations.” The nations represent the powers that rule the earth, and on September 11, 2001, every nation on earth was shaken as the third Woe arrived into prophetic history. That earthly shaking was represented in Luke twenty-one, but not by the biblical expression of the shaking of the powers of the earth. It was represented by the phrase, “the distress of nations,” as was brought upon the nations of the world when the great buildings of New York were brought down. “The distress of nations” in Luke is the shaking of the powers of earth, and it was fulfilled in the history of the Millerites.

“I saw that the powers of earth are now being shaken and that events come in order. War, and rumors of war, sword, famine, and pestilence are first to shake the powers of earth, then the voice of God will shake the sun, moon, and stars, and this earth also. I saw that the shaking of the powers in Europe is not, as some teach, the shaking of the powers of heaven, but it is the shaking of the angry nations.” Early Writings, 41.

The “shaking of the powers of the angry nations,” is the shaking of the “powers of earth,” as illustrated in the early history of Adventism by the shaking of the “powers in Europe.” Uriah Smith identified what was shaking the powers in Europe in 1838.

“As the prophetic period of this [6th] trumpet commenced by the voluntary surrender of power into the hands of the Turks by the Christian emperor of the East, so we might justly conclude that its termination would be marked by the voluntary surrender of that power by the Turkish Sultan back again into the hands of the Christians. In 1838 Turkey became involved in war with Egypt. The Egyptians bid fair to overthrow the Turkish power. To prevent this, the four great powers of Europe, England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, interfered to sustain the Turkish government. Turkey accepted their intervention. A conference was held in London at which an ultimatum was drawn up to be presented to Mehemet Ali, the Pacha of Egypt. It is evident that

when this ultimatum should be placed in the hands of Mehemet, the destiny of the Ottoman Empire would be virtually lodged in the hands of the Christian powers of Europe. This ultimatum was placed in the hands of Mehemet on the 11th day of August 1840! and on that very day the Sultan addressed a note to the ambassadors of the four powers, inquiring what should be done in case Mehemet refused to comply with the terms which they had proposed. The answer was that he need not alarm himself about any contingency that might arise; for they had made provision for that. The prophetic period ended, and on that very day the control of Mohammedan affairs passed into the hands of Christians, just as the control of Christian affairs had passed into the hands of the Mohammedans 391 years and 15 days before. Thus the second woe ended, and the sixth trumpet ceased its sounding." Uriah Smith, Synopsis of Present Truth, 218.

Islam of the second Woe, had passed the zenith of its power, which according to God's word was to continue for three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days. Yet in the 1830's Egypt was attempting to re-establish a caliphate in Egypt for the purpose of continuing the second great jihad of Muslim history. The possibility of more Islamic warfare was causing the European powers to shake in fear. For decades the crisis of Islam re-igniting its warfare was labelled by the historians and the reporters of those years as the "Eastern Question." The warfare of the children of the east had been carried out for centuries against the nations of Europe, who derived their religion from the Roman church. In 1838, "the distress of nations," referred to by Christ represented the shaking of the angry nations that was produced by the warfare brought against the former Roman Empire by Islam.

"By [loosing] the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates, I understand that God was now about to suffer the four principal nations of which the Ottoman empire was composed, which had in vain attempted to subdue the Eastern Empire at Constantinople, and made but little progress in conquering Europe, now to take Constantinople, and to overrun and subdue one third part of Europe, which was the fact about the middle of the fifteenth century." Works of William Miller, Volume 2, 121.

The distress of nations in the narrative found in Luke was "with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring," and with men's "hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." The perplexity of the Eastern Question continued to agitate the powers of earth all the way into the twentieth century, and the symbol of that distress was "men's hearts failing them for fear" and the "sea and waves roaring."

"This sealing of the servants of God is the same that was shown to Ezekiel in vision. John also had been a witness of this most startling revelation. He saw the sea and the waves roaring, and men's hearts failing them for fear. He beheld the earth moved, and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea (which is literally taking place), the water thereof roaring and troubled, and the mountains shaking with the swelling thereof. He was shown plagues, pestilence, famine, and death performing their terrible mission." Testimonies to Ministers, 445.

When John was shown the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, he saw the distress of nations, as represented by the seas and waves roaring, and men's hearts failing for fear, and it

was the same sealing that Ezekiel was shown in chapter nine. Ezekiel was shown the internal elements of the sealing and John was shown the external elements associated with the sealing. John saw that the angering of the nations is associated with the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, and the angering of the nations is also Luke's distress of nations which is historically identified as the Eastern Question. John was shown that Islam of the third Woe, is the external sign of the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand.

“The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the strained, restless relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place—that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.

“Angels are now restraining the winds of strife, that they may not blow until the world shall be warned of its coming doom; but a storm is gathering, ready to burst upon the earth; and when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture.

“The Bible, and the Bible only, gives a correct view of these things. Here are revealed the great final scenes in the history of our world, events that already are casting their shadows before, the sound of their approach causing the earth to tremble and men's hearts to fail them for fear.” Education, 179, 180.

In Luke chapter twenty-one Jesus identified the “signs” that ushered in the Millerite movement, and all those “signs”, according to Sister White, were fulfilled. The Lisbon earthquake, the dark day, the falling of the stars, and the distress of nations, which represented the shaking of the powers of earth that was fulfilled by Islam in the fear produced by the Eastern Question, are all fulfilled. The Millerite “signs” also include the Son of man coming with a cloud which was fulfilled in the correct order that the “signs” were given by Christ, for after the distress of nations ended with the restraint of the Ottoman supremacy in 1840, Christ came to the Most Holy Place on October 22, 1844, and when He came He came with clouds.

“And, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away.’ Daniel 7:13, 14. The coming of Christ here described is not His second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator. It is this coming, and not His second advent to the earth, that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844. Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies and there appears in the presence of God to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man—to perform the work of investigative judgment and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits.” The Great Controversy, 479.

The “signs” associated with the history of the Millerites typified the “signs” associated with the history of the one hundred and forty-four thousand. When Christ provided the second witness to the historical narrative with the parable, He pointed His disciples to “the budding trees of spring.” He informed them that when the trees begin to bud out you know you are near the end of the world, and that the generation that witnesses the budding trees of spring will live to see the heavens and the earth pass away, in the fires of His second coming.

When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. Luke 21:30–33.

The question then becomes, “when did the trees begin to shoot forth?” The latter rain began to sprinkle on September 11, 2001, which according to Isaiah is “the day” of God’s “rough wind in the day of the east wind.”

In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up. Yet the defenced city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof. When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem. Isaiah 27:8–13.

The latter rain began to sprinkle (measured) on September 11, 2001, and the debate over the message of the latter rain and the counterfeit peace and safety message began. The history of that debate is where the iniquity of Jacob is removed (purged, meaning atoned for). The history of the debate, which is the debate of Habakkuk, is the period of the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, that concludes with the Laodicean Seventh-day Adventist being spewed out of the mouth of the Lord, for it, as “the defenced city,” shall be desolate, for it had become the city of a people of no understanding, who find no mercy or favor. At that time the “second voice” of Revelation eighteen, will blow a great trumpet, which is the seventh trumpet and the third woe, and God’s other flock shall come and worship at “Jerusalem”, which will have become the movement of the church triumphant.

September 11, 2001, identifies that the last generation of earth’s history has arrived, and only those that recognize the budding trees of spring will receive the rain that is causing the trees to bud. Only those that recognize that Islam of the third woe, is what marks the arrival of the latter rain and the

sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, will be among that group.

“Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.” Testimonies to Ministers, 507.

“We must not wait for the latter rain. It is coming upon all who will recognize and appropriate the dew and showers of grace that fall upon us. When we gather up the fragments of light, when we appreciate the sure mercies of God, who loves to have us trust Him, then every promise will be fulfilled. ‘For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations’ (Isaiah 61:11). The whole earth is to be filled with the glory of God.” The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 7, 984.

We will continue the study in the next article.

“Unless those who can help in——are aroused to a sense of their duty, they will not recognize the work of God when the loud cry of the third angel shall be heard. When light goes forth to lighten the earth, instead of coming up to the help of the Lord, they will want to bind about His work to meet their narrow ideas. Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning. There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the angel who joins the third angel in the message to be given to the world. God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands. The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness.” Testimonies to Ministers, 300.