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Prophetic Unfolding: The Second Gathering and Its Significance in Adventist Eschatology

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We are considering the prophetic period represented as the second gathering that is identified by the prophet Isaiah, and afterward by Sister White.

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. Isaiah 11:10–13.

When God's last-day people are gathered a second time there is a unification among those disciples that was represented by the ten days that preceded Pentecost, and that Isaiah refers to as a time when, "The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim."

"Trials are to come upon God's people and the tares are to be separated from the wheat. But let not Ephraim envy Judah any more, and Judah will no more vex Ephraim. Kind, tender, compassionate words will flow out from sanctified hearts and lips. It is essential that we be united, and if we all seek the meekness and the lowliness of Christ, we shall have the mind of Christ, and there will be unity of spirit." Review and Herald, March 19, 1895.

Unification is an element of the work Christ accomplishes when He gathers the one hundred and forty-four thousand a second time. That unity was represented by the ten days leading to Pentecost, and the six days of the Exeter camp meeting, and could have been accomplished from 1856 unto 1863, if those who had experienced the great disappointment of October 22, 1844, had not lost their way.

"But in the period of doubt and uncertainty that followed the disappointment, many of the advent believers yielded their faith. Dissensions and divisions came in.... Thus the work was hindered, and the world was left in darkness. Had the whole Adventist body united upon the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, how widely different would have been our history!

"It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. God did not design that His people, Israel, should wander forty years in the wilderness. He promised to lead

them directly to the land of Canaan, and establish them there a holy, healthy, happy people. But those to whom it was first preached, went not in 'because of unbelief' (Hebrews 3:19). Their hearts were filled with murmuring, rebellion, and hatred, and He could not fulfill His covenant with them.

"For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years." Selected Messages, book 1, 68, 69.

The descent of the second angel identified a scattering at the first disappointment that initiated the tarrying time, and then led to a period of six days at the Exeter camp meeting where unity upon the message was accomplished in advance of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the message of the Midnight Cry at the conclusion of the meeting.

The descent of the third angel on October 22, 1844, identified a scattering at the great disappointment, and ushered in a period of education as the truths associated with the Most Holy Place were opened to God's people. By 1849 the Lord was stretching His hand to gather his people together a second time, and by 1851, the 1850 chart was being presented. That chart represented the foundational message, and the very message that was to be lifted up before the world as an ensign.

The gathering a second time of the disciples by Christ began immediately at His descent, and the gathering of those in Exeter began during the period of the tarrying time. In the history of the rebellion of 1863, the gathering a second time began at least five years into the educational process that began when the light of the sanctuary was opened up in 1844. In 1848, Islam was then angering the nations. The second gathering is represented as a progressive work that is accomplished by the arrival of the ten days that preceded Pentecost, and also by the six days of the Exeter camp meeting, and should have been completed by 1856.

The work of gathering His people a second time is the closing work of the third angel, and it is accomplished by Christ's hand.

And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Mark 6:2.

The scattering that occurs when the divine symbol descends initiates a testing process that ultimately manifests two classes of worshippers, and in so doing cleanses the temple.

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Matthew 3:12.

In that period God's people are to take the message from the angel's hand and eat it.

And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth. Revelation 10:1, 2.

At the arrival of the second angel on April 19, 1844, God's people were scattered. They had been initially gathered with the fulfillment of the prophecy of Revelation chapter nine, verse fifteen on August 11, 1840, but the Lord had held His hand over a mistake in the reckoning of some of the figures on the chart.

"I have seen that the 1843 chart was directed by the hand of the Lord, and that it should not be altered; that the figures were as He wanted them; that His hand was over and hid a mistake in some of the figures, so that none could see it, until His hand was removed." Early Writings, 74.

The removal of His hand allowed Samuel Snow to identify the correct date for the vision that tarried.

"Those faithful, disappointed ones, who could not understand why their Lord did not come, were not left in darkness. Again they were led to their Bibles to search the prophetic periods. The hand of the Lord was removed from the figures, and the mistake was explained. They saw that the prophetic periods reached to 1844, and that the same evidence which they had presented to show that the prophetic periods closed in 1843, proved that they would terminate in 1844." Early Writings, 237.

The history of the first and second angels contains a line of waymarks associated with Christ's hand. When He descended on August 11, 1840 and April 19, 1844 He had a message in His hand. It was His hand that directed the production and publication of the 1843 chart in May of 1842. It was His hand that sealed up a mistake in the figures on the chart. After the scattering of that first disappointment, Jeremiah sat alone because of Christ's hand. Then He removed His hand, and thus unsealed the message of the Midnight Cry. The act of stretching His hand out to gather His people a second time occurred from the first disappointment unto the Exeter camp meeting, as the disciples were ultimately gathered together at Jerusalem for ten days in advance of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. At the arrival of the third angel on October 22, 1844 the Lord lifted up His hand.

And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer. Revelation 10:5, 6.

From the first gathering on August 11, 1840 until October 22, 1844 the history of the first and second angels is marked by Christ's hand. On October 22, 1844 the third angel descended and the little Millerite flock was scattered by the Great Disappointment. On that date Christ lifted His hand to heaven and swore that time would be no longer.

The second gathering in the history of 1844 until 1863, began with Christ lifting up His hand, while also holding a message to be eaten in His hand. Then in 1849, He stretched forth His hand a

second time to gather His scattered people. Those people had been gathered at the message of the Midnight Cry, and scattered when the event predicted did not happen. At the Exeter camp meeting Christ gathered His flock and unified them upon the message, as He had done in the ten days that preceded Pentecost. The Philadelphian Millerites left the Exeter camp meeting and repeated Pentecost. In 1856, Christ was outside of the movement that had transitioned into Laodicea, for Christ stands outside of a Laodicean's heart and knocks, seeking an entrance.

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. Revelation 3:20.

In 1856, Christ's hand was knocking upon the Laodicean Millerite movement, but to no avail. In 1849, seven years earlier, He had begun to gather His people a second time, but doubt and uncertainty stopped the Philadelphian movement.

“Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward. But in the period of doubt and uncertainty that followed the disappointment, many of the advent believers yielded their faith.... Thus the work was hindered, and the world was left in darkness. Had the whole Adventist body united upon the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, how widely different would have been our history!” Evangelism, 695.

On September 11, 2001 Christ gathered His last day people, who were thereafter scattered on July 18, 2020. On September 11, 2001 those who were gathered took the hidden book out of Christ's hand and ate it. On July 18, 2020 they rejected the command represented by His uplifted hand, which identified that “time would be no longer.”

The Philadelphian Millerites manifested no rebellion in their false prediction of 1843, for they acted upon all the light the Lord had revealed, but on July 18, 2020 the Laodiceans of the third angel's movement rebelled against the light associated with His hand. After 1844, the Philadelphian movement of the first angel “in the period of doubt and uncertainty” “yielded their faith,” and became Laodiceans.

1856 represents that point of transition, typifying a point of transition for God's people of the last days.

Somewhere in the seven years between 1849 and 1856 the Philadelphian Millerite movement resisted the Lord's hand that was stretching out to gather His people a second time, and the promise was that He would do more then, than He did in the past.

“September 23d, the Lord showed me that he had stretched out his hand the second time to recover the remnant of his people, and that efforts must be redoubled in this gathering time. In the scattering time Israel was smitten and torn; but now in the gathering time God will heal and bind up his people. In the scattering, efforts made to spread the truth had but little effect,

accomplished but little or nothing; but in the gathering when God has set his hand to gather his people, efforts to spread the truth will have their designed effect. All should be united and zealous in the work. I saw that it was a shame for any to refer to the scattering for examples to govern us now in the gathering; for if God does no more for us now than he did then, Israel would never be gathered. It is as necessary that the truth should be published in a paper, as preached.” Review and Herald, November 1, 1850.

Obviously, the Lord attempted to move His work forward in unity, but the unity had evidently broken down, and “in the period of doubt and uncertainty that followed the disappointment, many of the advent believers yielded their faith.” The Present Truth (later the Review and Herald) began to be published in 1849, and by 1851 the 1850 chart was available, but by 1856, the message of the “seven times” of Leviticus twenty-six was left unfinished. The message that was unsealed on October 22, 1844 occurred when the time prophecies of the twenty-three hundred years and the twenty-five hundred and twenty years concluded.

The Sabbath was the doctrine that shone above the other doctrines at that time, and for twelve years a testing process progressed until the last test arrived in 1856. That test was upon the Sabbath rest for the land, and it marked the end of a testing process that began with the Sabbath rest for men. The testing period bore the signature of Alpha and Omega. 1856 also represented an increase of knowledge upon the first foundational truth discovered by Miller, so it possessed the signature of Alpha and Omega at that level as well. The Sabbath truth being the sign of God’s sanctified people was represented as the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, when the mystery of Christ in the believer, the hope of glory is fulfilled. The “seven times” was represented by the Jubilee Trumpet that was to be sounded on the Day of Atonement.

The seven years from 1856 unto 1863 represented the ten days in Jerusalem for the disciples, and the six days of the Exeter camp meeting for the Philadelphian Millerites, but, sadly, the period became the illustration of those who refuse to follow the Lord as He leads them through the transition period. The history of the first and second angels, which is the historical period of the Seven Thunders, identifies the Lord stretching His hand to gather His people a second time from April 19, 1844, and it illustrates an obedient response as the wise followed Christ into the Most Holy Place.

The history of the first Kadesh, which is the history of the third angel from 1844 unto 1863 identifies the Lord again stretching His hand to gather His people a second time, but in that history, rebellion is manifested. Now, for the third time, ever since July 2023, the Lord is again stretching forth His hand to gather His people a second time, and they will fulfill the second Kadesh as obedient Philadelphians, for the signature of truth identifies the three times as the beginning and ending representing obedient Philadelphians, and the middle example being disobedient Laodiceans.

We will continue this study in the next article.

“Will the churches heed the Laodicean message? Will they repent, or will they, notwithstanding that the most solemn message of truth—the third angel’s message—is being

proclaimed to the world, go on in sin? This is the last message of mercy, the last warning to a fallen world. If the church of God becomes lukewarm, it does not stand in favor with God any more than do the churches that are represented as having fallen and become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Those who have had opportunities to hear and receive the truth and who have united with the Seventh-day Adventist church, calling themselves the commandment-keeping people of God, and yet possess no more vitality and consecration to God than do the nominal churches, will receive of the plagues of God just as verily as the churches who oppose the law of God. Only those that are sanctified through the truth will compose the royal family in the heavenly mansions Christ has gone to prepare for those that love Him and keep His commandments.

“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him’ [1 John 2:4]. This includes all who claim to have a knowledge of God, and to keep His commandments, but who do not manifest this by good works. They will receive according to their deeds. ‘Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him’ [1 John 3:6]. This is addressed to all church members, including the members of the Seventh-day Adventist churches. ‘Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother’ [1 John 3:7–10].

“All who claim to be Sabbath-keeping Adventists, and yet continue in sin, are liars in God’s sight. Their sinful course is counterworking the work of God. They are leading others into sin. The word comes from God to every member of our churches, ‘And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears’ [Hebrews 12:13–17].

“This is applicable to many who claim to believe the truth. Rather than give up their lustful practices, they venture on in a wrong line of education under Satan’s deceiving sophistry. Sin is not discerned as sinful. Their very consciences are defiled, their hearts are corrupted, even the thoughts are continually corrupt. Satan uses them as decoys to lure souls to unclean practices which defile the whole being. ‘He that despised Moses’ law [which was the law of God] died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a

fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God' [Hebrews 10:28–31].” Manuscript Releases, volume 19, 176, 177.