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Unveiling the Rebellion of 1888: Lessons from the Second Generation of Laodicean Adventism

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The second generation of Laodicean Adventism arrived in 1888, and that generation is symbolically represented in Ezekiel chapter eight, as the second abomination, which is represented by the “chambers of his imagery.”

So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, poured upon the wall round about. And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up. Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth. Ezekiel 8:10–12.

The chambers of imagery represent the wicked secrets within the hearts of those represented as the ancient men, and they have brought that very wickedness into not only the chambers of their minds, but also into the chambers of God’s sanctuary.

Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee. Proverbs 23:6, 7.

The wickedness of the chambers of imagery is written both on the walls of the temple and the walls of the ancient men’s minds. The secret chambers of imagery of the second abomination of Ezekiel chapter eight, represent the second generation of Laodicean Adventism, and of the four abominations the second abomination takes more time to emphasize a corporate rebellion, although all four abominations are represented as being carried out by the men who were supposed to be the guardians of the people.

“The mark of deliverance has been set upon those ‘that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done.’ Now the angel of death goes forth, represented in Ezekiel’s vision by the men with the slaughtering weapons, to whom the command is given: ‘Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.’ Says the prophet: ‘They began at the ancient men which were before the house.’ Ezekiel 9:1–6. The work of destruction begins among those who have professed to be the spiritual guardians of the people. The false watchmen are the first to fall. There are none to pity or to spare. Men, women, maidens, and little children perish together.” The Great Controversy, 656.

The rebellion that marks the arrival of the second generation is specifically associated with the leadership of Laodicean Adventism, as fulfilled at the 1888 General Conference meeting in Minneapolis. It is represented by the expression “ancients of the house of Israel” and also by the “seventy men.” It was seventy elders that were associated with the work of Moses, and Jesus’ second group of disciples consisted of seventy men. “Seventy” represents leadership, as does “the ancients.” The second abomination places an extra emphasis upon the leadership, and in so doing it places the emphasis upon the abomination as being associated with a corporate rebellion of the leadership.

In the midst of the seventy ancient men stood “Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan.” The name “Jaazaniah,” means “heard of God”, and he represents a leadership that rebelled at the very time that God was speaking, for he heard God, but refused to listen, for he professed that God had forsaken his people, and that God did not see what was happening in the secret chambers. Jaazaniah was the “son of Shaphan,” and the name “Shaphan” means “to hide”. The setting of the second generation represents a rebellion of the leadership that rebelled in the very time when God was speaking, and they believed that God did not see or care about their actions.

Sister White recorded that she was shown the conversations of the leadership of Laodicean Adventism during the 1888 General Conference. At the 1888 General Conference God showed Sister White the meetings of the leaders which they had among themselves when they thought God was not listening. There in the secrecy of their rooms they spoke evil against Sister White, her son, and Elders Jones and Waggoner. They believed they could speak freely, for God could not see them in their private quarters, but God showed these very conversations to the prophetess. They were in a corporate meeting, and according to inspiration they were hearing the message of the latter rain, but they refused to hear.

What was it that had produced a leadership that manifested such open rebellion in 1888, that Sister White compared it to the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram?

“When you are enlightened by the Holy Spirit, you will see all that wickedness at Minneapolis as it is, as God looks upon it. If I never see you again in this world, be assured that I forgive you the sorrow and distress and burden of soul you have brought upon me without any cause. But for your soul’s sake, for the sake of Him who died for you, I want you to see and confess your errors. You did unite with those who resisted the Spirit of God. You had all the evidence that you needed that the Lord was working through Brethren Jones and Waggoner; but you did not receive the light; and after the feelings indulged, the words spoken against the truth, you did not feel ready to confess that you had done wrong, that these men had a message from God, and you had made light of both message and messengers.

“Never before have I seen among our people such firm self-complacency and unwillingness to accept and acknowledge light as was manifested at Minneapolis. I have been shown that not one of the company who cherished the spirit manifested at that meeting would again have clear light to discern the preciousness of the truth sent them from heaven until they humbled their pride and confessed that they were not actuated by the Spirit of God, but that their minds and hearts were filled with prejudice. The Lord desired to come near to them, to bless them and

heal them of their backslidings, but they would not hearken. They were actuated by the same spirit that inspired Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Those men of Israel were determined to resist all evidence that would prove them to be wrong, and they went on and on in their course of disaffection until many were drawn away to unite with them.

“Who were these? Not the weak, not the ignorant, not the unenlightened. In that rebellion there were two hundred and fifty princes famous in the congregation, men of renown. What was their testimony? ‘All the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?’ [Numbers 16:3]. When Korah and his companions perished under the judgment of God, the people whom they had deceived saw not the hand of the Lord in this miracle. The whole congregation the next morning charged Moses and Aaron, ‘Ye have killed the people of the Lord’ [Verse 41], and the plague was upon the congregation, and more than fourteen thousand perished.

“When I purposed to leave Minneapolis, the angel of the Lord stood by me and said: ‘Not so; God has a work for you to do in this place. The people are acting over the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. I have placed you in your proper position, which those who are not in the light will not acknowledge; they will not heed your testimony; but I will be with you; My grace and power shall sustain you. It is not you they are despising, but the messengers and the message I send to My people. They have shown contempt for the word of the Lord. Satan has blinded their eyes and perverted their judgment; and unless every soul shall repent of this their sin, this unsanctified independence that is doing insult to the Spirit of God, they will walk in darkness. I will remove the candlestick out of his place except they repent and be converted, that I should heal them. They have obscured their spiritual eyesight. They would not that God would manifest His Spirit and His power; for they have a spirit of mockery and disgust at My word. Lightness, trifling, jesting, and joking are daily practiced. They have not set their hearts to seek Me. They walk in the sparks of their own kindling, and unless they repent they shall lie down in sorrow. Thus saith the Lord: Stand at your post of duty; for I am with thee, and will not leave thee nor forsake thee.’ These words from God I have not dared to disregard.

“Light has been shining in Battle Creek in clear, bright rays; but who of those that acted a part in the meeting at Minneapolis have come to the light and received the rich treasures of truth which the Lord sent them from heaven? Who have kept step and step with the Leader, Jesus Christ? Who have made full confession of their mistaken zeal, their blindness, their jealousies and evil surmisings, their defiance of truth? Not one; and because of their long neglect to acknowledge the light, it has left them far behind; they have not been growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. They have failed to receive the needed grace which they might have had, and which would have made them strong men in religious experience.

“The position taken at Minneapolis was apparently an insurmountable barrier which in a great degree shut them in with doubters, questioners, with the rejecters of truth and the power of God. When another crisis comes, those who have so long resisted evidence piled upon evidence will again be tested upon the points where they failed so manifestly, and it will be hard for them to receive that which is from God and refuse that which is from the powers of darkness. Therefore their only safe course is to walk in humility, making straight paths for their

feet, lest the lame be turned out of the way. It makes every difference whom we company with, whether it is with men who walk with God and who believe and trust Him, or with men who follow their own supposed wisdom, walking in the sparks of their own kindling.

“The time and care and labor required to counteract the influence of those who have worked against the truth has been a terrible loss; for we might have been years ahead in spiritual knowledge; and many, many souls might have been added to the church if those who ought to have walked in the light had followed on to know the Lord, that they might know His going forth is prepared as the morning. But when so much labor has to be expended right in the church to counteract the influence of workers who have stood as a granite wall against the truth God sends to His people, the world is left in comparative darkness.

“God meant that the watchmen should arise and with united voices send forth a decided message, giving the trumpet a certain sound, that the people might all spring to their post of duty and act their part in the great work. Then the strong, clear light of that other angel who comes down from heaven having great power, would have filled the earth with his glory. We are years behind; and those who stood in blindness and hindered the advancement of the very message that God meant should go forth from the Minneapolis meeting as a lamp that burneth, have need to humble their hearts before God and see and understand how the work has been hindered by their blindness of mind and hardness of heart.” Manuscript Releases, volume 14, 107–111.

What was it that had produced a leadership that manifested such open rebellion in 1888, that Sister White compared it to the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram? The answer no doubt lies in the rebellion of 1863, that prepared the way for what Ezekiel was told would be even greater abominations. Rejecting the “seven times,” of Leviticus twenty-six, and introducing a counterfeit chart, would produce the necessity to uphold the counterfeit of 1863. Thus, Miller would watch his jewels get scattered and covered up with rubbish and counterfeit jewels and coins. The worldly saying says, “history is written by the victors.”

Though not actually the victors, those leading the Laodicean Adventist church have spent time and effort to construct a historical narrative that upholds the increasing rebellion through the four generations, in an attempt to place that rebellion in a light that is far from the actual history recorded by the heavenly angels. The revision of history is a hallmark characteristic of the Jesuits of the Catholic Church, and historical revisionism has been a stock and trade of Laodicean Adventist historians. What is written these days by Laodicean Adventist “historians” about the Minneapolis General Conference session is a classic example of historical revisionism.

There may have been a few of the rebels from that conference that eventually repented, but the exception to the rule, does not deny the rule. Sister White was commanded to stay and record the meeting, for the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram was being repeated. For Adventist historians to construct the testimony around whether the message of righteousness by faith was understood, not understood; rejected or not rejected, or thereafter accepted is to avoid the inspired testimony of a rebellion that was typified by Korah, Dathan and Abiram.

Which of those three rebels did Moses' record show was afterward repentant and accepted back in the leadership with Moses?

“Korah, the leading spirit in this movement, was a Levite, of the family of Kohath, and a cousin of Moses; he was a man of ability and influence. Though appointed to the service of the tabernacle, he had become dissatisfied with his position and aspired to the dignity of the priesthood. The bestowal upon Aaron and his house of the priestly office, which had formerly devolved upon the first-born son of every family, had given rise to jealousy and dissatisfaction, and for some time Korah had been secretly opposing the authority of Moses and Aaron, though he had not ventured upon any open act of rebellion. He finally conceived the bold design of overthrowing both the civil and the religious authority. He did not fail to find sympathizers. Close to the tents of Korah and the Kohathites, on the south side of the tabernacle, was the encampment of the tribe of Reuben, the tents of Dathan and Abiram, two princes of this tribe, being near that of Korah. These princes readily joined in his ambitious schemes. Being descendants from the eldest son of Jacob, they claimed that the civil authority belonged to them, and they determined to divide with Korah the honors of the priesthood.

“The state of feeling among the people favored the designs of Korah. In the bitterness of their disappointment, their former doubts, jealousy, and hatred had returned, and again their complaints were directed against their patient leader. The Israelites were continually losing sight of the fact that they were under divine guidance. They forgot that the Angel of the covenant was their invisible leader, that, veiled by the cloudy pillar, the presence of Christ went before them, and that from Him Moses received all his directions.

“They were unwilling to submit to the terrible sentence that they must all die in the wilderness, and hence they were ready to seize upon every pretext for believing that it was not God but Moses who was leading them and who had pronounced their doom. The best efforts of the meekest man upon the earth could not quell the insubordination of this people; and although the marks of God's displeasure at their former perverseness were still before them in their broken ranks and missing numbers, they did not take the lesson to heart. Again they were overcome by temptation.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 395, 396.

Laodicean Adventism began in 1856, and in 1863 it became the legally registered Laodicean Adventist church. As previously addressed in prior articles, there is no inspired testimony that Laodicea is ever saved. It cannot be saved unless it repents of its condition, and accepts the experience represented by Philadelphia. Laodicea is a people that is judged, by being spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. As the Laodicean church, inspiration identifies that the church was destined to wander in the wilderness as did ancient Israel.

Which of the rebels of ancient Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years and then entered into the Promised Land? Not a single soul, and their wandering typified the wandering of modern Israel.

The rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram (that typified the rebellion of 1888), was premised upon their unwillingness to accept the judgment upon the people assigning them to wander for forty years in the wilderness. The rebellion of 1888, was premised upon the leadership's rejection

of the pronouncement identifying them as Laodicea and assigning them to wander many more years in the wilderness because of their insubordination.

“The message given us by A. T. Jones, and E. J. Waggoner is the message of God to the Laodicean church, and woe be unto anyone who professes to believe the truth and yet does not reflect to others the God-given rays.” The 1888 Materials, 1053.

The ancient men, who were to be the guardians of the people in 1888, believed they were “rich and increased with goods”. We will consider what produced this condition in advance of 1888, in the next article.

“My soul is made very sad to see how quickly some who have had light and truth will accept the deceptions of Satan, and be charmed with a spurious holiness. When men turn away from the landmarks the Lord has established that we may understand our position as marked out in prophecy, they are going they know not whither.

“I question whether genuine rebellion is ever curable. Study in Patriarchs and Prophets the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. This rebellion was extended, including more than two men. It was led by two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation, men of renown. Call rebellion by its right name and apostasy by its right name, and then consider that the experience of the ancient people of God with all its objectionable features was faithfully chronicled to pass into history. The Scripture declares, ‘These things ... are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.’ And if men and women who have the knowledge of the truth are so far separated from their Great Leader that they will take the great leader of apostasy and name him Christ our Righteousness, it is because they have not sunk deep into the mines of the truth. They are not able to distinguish the precious ore from the base material.

“Read the cautions so abundantly given in the Word of God in regard to false prophets that will come in with their heresies, and if possible will deceive the very elect. With these warnings, why is it that the church does not distinguish the false from the genuine? Those who have in any way been thus misled need to humble themselves before God, and sincerely repent, because they have so easily been led astray. They have not distinguished the voice of the true Shepherd from that of a stranger. Let all such review this chapter of their experience.

“For more than half a century God has been giving His people light through the testimonies of His Spirit. After all this time is it left for a few men and their wives to undeceive the whole church of believers, declaring Mrs. White a fraud and a deceiver? ‘By their fruits ye shall know them.’

“Those who can ignore all the evidences which God has given them, and change that blessing into a curse, should tremble for the safety of their own souls. Their candlestick will be removed out of its place unless they repent. The Lord has been insulted. The standard of truth, of the first, second, and third angels’ messages has been left to trail in the dust. If the watchmen are left to mislead the people in this fashion, God will hold some souls responsible for a lack of keen discernment to discover what kind of provender was being given to His flock.

“Apostasies have occurred and the Lord has permitted matters of this nature to develop in the past in order to show how easily His people will be misled when they depend upon the words of men instead of searching the Scriptures for themselves, as did the noble Bereans, to see if these things are so. And the Lord has permitted things of this kind to occur that warnings may be given that such things will take place.

“Rebellion and apostasy are in the very air we breathe. We shall be affected by them unless we by faith hang our helpless souls upon Christ. If men are so easily misled now, how will they stand when Satan shall personate Christ, and work miracles? Who will be unmoved by his misrepresentations then—professing to be Christ when it is only Satan assuming the person of Christ, and apparently working the works of Christ? What will hold God’s people from giving their allegiance to false christs? ‘Go not after them.’

“The doctrines must be plainly understood. The men accepted to preach the truth must be anchored; then their vessel will hold against storm and tempest, because the anchor holds them firmly. The deceptions will increase, and we are to call rebellion by its right name. We are to stand with the whole armor on. In this conflict we do not meet men only, but principalities and powers. We wrestle not against flesh and blood. Let Ephesians 6:10–18 be read carefully and impressively in our churches.” Notebook Leaflets, 57, 58.