

Elijah - Number One

The First and Last

Jeff Pippenger

2023-07-31

The closing statement of the Old Testament sets forth a promise of the prophet Elijah appearing with a message before the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Malachi 4:5, 6.

The Bible is clear that “the great and dreadful day of the Lord” or the “curse” that God smites “the earth with” is also symbolically portrayed as “the seven last plagues” or “the wrath of God” in the book of Revelation. Chapter fifteen of Revelation introduces the prophetic setting that leads to the pouring out of the great and dreadful seven last plagues of chapter sixteen.

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. Revelation 15:1–8.

The reason “no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled” is that the opportunity to secure salvation closes when the temple is filled with smoke in chapter fifteen. The probationary time that mankind was given to repent and find salvation is then over. When that point in time is reached “the great and dreadful day of the Lord” that John calls “the seven last plagues” are poured out in advance of Christ’s Second Coming. Malachi called that day “dreadful,” and Isaiah identifies it as God’s “strange act.”

For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act. Now

therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth. Isaiah 28:21, 22.

Although God's "strange act" encompasses "the whole earth," Inspiration is clear that the outpouring of the plagues is associated with the rebellion of one nation.

"Foreign nations will follow the example of the United States. Though she leads out, yet the same crisis will come upon our people in all parts of the world." Testimonies, volume 6, 395.

"As America, the land of religious liberty, shall unite with the Papacy in forcing the conscience and compelling men to honor the false sabbath, the people of every country on the globe will be led to follow her example." Testimonies, volume 6, 18.

Every nation will fill their cup of their probationary time, but the "judgments of God" that Sister White identifies as "national ruin", "the time of God's destructive judgments" as she also calls the history that begins at the Sunday law in the United States, are not the seven last plagues.

"A time is coming when the law of God is, in a special sense, to be made void in our land. The rulers of our nation will, by legislative enactments, enforce the Sunday law, and thus God's people be brought into great peril. When our nation, in its legislative councils, shall enact laws to bind the consciences of men in regard to their religious privileges, enforcing Sunday observance, and bringing oppressive power to bear against those who keep the seventh-day Sabbath, the law of God will, to all intents and purposes, be made void in our land; and national apostasy will be followed by national ruin." Review and Herald, December 18, 1888.

The judgments of God, which Sister White identifies as "national ruin" begin at the national Sunday law and mark the beginning of God's "strange act," though God's strange act is more specifically the seven last plagues. A more complete picture of the strange act of God appears when the deliverance from Egypt is added to the line of God's executive judgments. The Egyptian plagues, though ten in number, were divided. The first three were distinguished from the last seven. Thus, the deliverance from Egypt identifies a period of time represented by the first three plagues that begins with the national ruin of the United States, and continues until Michael stands up and human probation closes.

"God's judgments will be visited upon those who are seeking to oppress and destroy His people. His long forbearance with the wicked emboldens men in transgression, but their punishment is nonetheless certain and terrible because it is long delayed. 'The Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act.' Isaiah 28:21. To our merciful God the act of punishment is a strange act. 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.' Ezekiel 33:11. The Lord is 'merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, ... forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.' Yet He will 'by no means clear the guilty.' 'The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.' Exodus 34:6, 7; Nahum 1:3. By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. The severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor may be judged by the Lord's reluctance to execute justice.

The nation with which He bears long, and which He will not smite until it has filled up the measure of its iniquity in God's account, will finally drink the cup of wrath unmixed with mercy.

“When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark (Revelation 14:9, 10), will be poured out. The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God's people. Says the revelator, in describing those terrific scourges: ‘There fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image.’ The sea ‘became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.’ And ‘the rivers and fountains of waters ... became blood.’ Terrible as these inflictions are, God's justice stands fully vindicated. The angel of God declares: ‘Thou art righteous, O Lord, ... because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.’ Revelation 16:2–6. By condemning the people of God to death, they have as truly incurred the guilt of their blood as if it had been shed by their hands. In like manner Christ declared the Jews of His time guilty of all the blood of holy men which had been shed since the days of Abel; for they possessed the same spirit and were seeking to do the same work with these murderers of the prophets.

“In the plague that follows, power is given to the sun ‘to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat.’ Verses 8, 9. The prophets thus describe the condition of the earth at this fearful time: ‘The land mourneth; ... because the harvest of the field is perished.... All the trees of the field are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.’ ‘The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate.... How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture.... The rivers of water are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.’ ‘The songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence.’ Joel 1:10–12, 17–20; Amos 8:3.

“These plagues are not universal, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off. Yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals. All the judgments upon men, prior to the close of probation, have been mingled with mercy. The pleading blood of Christ has shielded the sinner from receiving the full measure of his guilt; but in the final judgment, wrath is poured out unmixed with mercy.

“In that day, multitudes will desire the shelter of God's mercy which they have so long despised. ‘Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.’ Amos 8:11, 12.” The Great Controversy, 627–629.

In the previous passage it stated, “The nation with which He bears long, and which He will not smite until it has filled up the measure of its iniquity in God's account, will finally drink the cup of wrath unmixed with mercy.” She also penned in the same paragraph, “The plagues upon Egypt

when God was about to deliver Israel were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God's people." The nation (the United States) that fills up "the measure of iniquity" will suffer plagues similar to the ten plagues in Egypt.

The plagues of Egypt were divided into two periods. The first three plagues fell on everyone, but the seven last plagues only fell upon the Egyptians.

And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth.
Exodus 8:22.

The first three plagues in Egypt fell everywhere, but Goshen, where the Hebrews lived did not receive Egypt's seven last plagues. The United States is the nation that fills up its cup of iniquity at the Sunday law. At that point national apostasy is followed by national ruin, but the judgments which produce national ruin are mixed with mercy until Michael stands up and probation closes for all mankind. At the Sunday law in the United States the majority of those who now profess to be Sabbath-keepers will bow to the powers that be and accept the mark of the beast. At that time the Sunday law issue becomes a spiritual test for those who have been outside of Adventism. From the Sunday law in the United States until Michael stands up is the great ingathering of eleventh-hour workers, but the door has already been closed upon those who are held accountable for the light of the seventh-day Sabbath before the Sunday law.

"More and more, as the days go by, it is becoming apparent that God's judgments are in the world. In fire and flood and earthquake He is warning the inhabitants of this earth of His near approach. The time is nearing when the great crisis in the history of the world will have come, when every movement in the government of God will be watched with intense interest and inexpressible apprehension. In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another—fire and flood and earthquake, with war and bloodshed.

"Oh, that the people might know the time of their visitation! There are many who have not yet heard the testing truth for this time. There are many with whom the Spirit of God is striving. The time of God's destructive judgments is the time of mercy for those who have had no opportunity to learn what is truth. Tenderly will the Lord look upon them. His heart of mercy is touched; His hand is still stretched out to save, while the door is closed to those who would not enter.

"The mercy of God is shown in His long forbearance. He is holding back His judgments, waiting for the message of warning to be sounded to all. Oh, if our people would feel as they should the responsibility resting upon them to give the last message of mercy to the world, what a wonderful work would be done!" Testimonies, volume 9, 97.

In the previous passage she identified that "the time of God's destructive judgments is the time of mercy for those who have had no opportunity to learn what is truth." In the next passage she refers to that period of time as "the time of trouble."

“I saw that the holy Sabbath is, and will be, the separating wall between the true Israel of God and unbelievers; and that the Sabbath is the great question, to unite the hearts of God’s dear waiting saints. And if one believed, and kept the Sabbath, and received the blessing attending it, and then gave it up, and broke the holy commandment, they would shut the gates of the Holy City against themselves, as sure as there was a God that rules in heaven above. I saw that God had children, who do not see and keep the Sabbath. They had not rejected the light on it. And at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully. This enraged the church, and nominal Adventists, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth. And at this time, God’s chosen, all saw clearly that we had the truth, and they came out and endured the persecution with us.” A Word to the Little Flock, 18, 19.

Though modified a little, the same passage just cited is found in the book Early Writings. In that book she includes commentary on her statement about “the time of trouble.” A Word to the Little Flock was the first publication of the disappointed faithful Millerites after the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844, and decades later, when editors used portions of that pamphlet to include in the book Early Writings, they clarified that “the time of trouble” that was referred to was not the seven last plagues, for when the seven last plagues are poured out there is no mercy mixed with the judgments.

“1. On page 33 is given the following: ‘I saw that the holy Sabbath is, and will be, the separating wall between the true Israel of God and unbelievers; and that the Sabbath is the great question to unite the hearts of God’s dear, waiting saints. I saw that God had children who do not see and keep the Sabbath. They have not rejected the light upon it. And at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully.’

“This view was given in 1847 when there were but very few of the Advent brethren observing the Sabbath, and of these but few supposed that its observance was of sufficient importance to draw a line between the people of God and unbelievers. Now the fulfillment of that view is beginning to be seen. ‘The commencement of that time of trouble,’ here mentioned does not refer to the time when the plagues shall begin to be poured out, but to a short period just before they are poured out, while Christ is in the sanctuary. At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel. At that time the ‘latter rain,’ or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out.” Early Writings, 85.

At the Sunday law in the United States national apostasy will be followed by national ruin. At that Sunday law Adventism in the United States will be divided into two classes, one will receive the mark of the beast the other the seal of God. The national ruin of the United States is represented by the first three plagues of Egypt. Those judgments continue until the close of human probation, then the seven last plagues that are unmixed with mercy are poured out.

My point is less about the prophetic history of Egypt and more about the fact that Ellen White identifies Egypt as the symbol of the nation that forces the entire world to receive the mark of the beast, for in doing so she is using the beginning to illustrate the end, which is the prophetic signature of Jesus as the Alpha and Omega. In the Exodus story when the Lord is entering into covenant with ancient Israel, He introduces Himself with a new name.

Then the Lord said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.

And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.

And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the Lord.

And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage. Exodus 6:1–9.

The Lord here is identifying Moses as the representative of His covenant as were Jacob, Isaac and Abraham. Until the history of Moses the name JEHOVAH was unknown to Abraham and his descendants, and in the history of the renewing of Abraham's covenant when the Hebrews were to be delivered from Egyptian bondage the Lord introduces a new revelation of His character, for a name represents character prophetically. When Abram entered into covenant with the Lord, the Lord changed his name to Abraham. At the beginning of the prophecy of Egyptian bondage the human representative of the covenant had his name changed and at the end of that prophecy God introduced a new name for Himself.

Abram entered into covenant in chapter fifteen and there set forth the prophecy of Egyptian bondage for four hundred years. In chapter seventeen Abram was given the rite of circumcision and his and Sarah's names were changed.

Four hundred years later Moses was raised up to fulfill Abraham's four-hundred-year prophecy. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses all represent the one hundred and forty-four thousand who enter into covenant with the Lord in the last days.

“In the last days of this earth's history, God's covenant with his commandment-keeping people is to be renewed.” Review and Herald, February 26, 1914.

The separation of the Sabbath-keepers who accept the mark of the beast from the Sabbath-keepers who receive the seal of God is accomplished at the Sunday law. The separation is represented in the parable of the ten virgins.

“The parable of the ten virgins of Matthew 25 also illustrates the experience of the Adventist people.” *The Great Controversy*, 393.

“I am often referred to the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were wise, and five foolish. This parable has been and will be fulfilled to the very letter, for it has a special application to this time, and, like the third angel’s message, has been fulfilled and will continue to be present truth till the close of time.” *Review and Herald*, August 19, 1890.

The parable was fulfilled on October 22, 1844 when the wise and foolish virgins of Millerite history were separated. The beginning of Adventism represents the end of Adventism, and the separation at the end is a fulfillment of the parable of the ten virgins and the separation at the end is produced by the Sunday law.

“Again, these parables teach that there is to be no probation after the judgment. When the work of the gospel is completed, there immediately follows the separation between the good and the evil, and the destiny of each class is forever fixed.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 123.

The parable of the ten virgins identifies that it is the wise virgins of Adventism that receive the seal of God and the foolish virgins of Adventism that receive the mark of the beast at the Sunday law in the United States. The foolish virgins are also represented as Laodiceans.

“The state of the Church represented by the foolish virgins, is also spoken of as the Laodicean state.” *Review and Herald*, August 19, 1890.

In the last days, when God renews His covenant with His commandment-keeping people, God will reveal a new name of Himself as He did when He renewed the covenant in the time of Moses. The condition of the foolish virgins is that they have no oil, and the condition of the Laodiceans is that they are too blind to see they have no oil. It is obvious that if the foolish virgins are Laodiceans, then the wise virgins are Philadelphians.

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new

Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Revelation 3:7–13.

The Philadelphians represent the one hundred and forty-four thousand and they are promised that God would write His new name upon them. When the Lord enters into covenant with the one hundred and forty-four thousand, He will introduce a new name of Himself. Abraham was told by the Lord that He was God Almighty.

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. Genesis 17:1–5.

When the Lord first entered into covenant with a chosen people in the time of Abraham, He identified Himself as the Almighty God. When He furthered His covenant relationship in the time of Moses, for the first time he identified Himself as JEHOVAH. When Jesus came to confirm the covenant with many for one week, He introduced a new name of God that had only been expressed one time in the Old Testament and that was by a Babylonian.

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Daniel 3:24, 25.

It is very easy to establish that chapter three of Daniel is identifying the Sunday law in the United States. In Daniel three Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego represent the one-hundred and forty-four thousand. The one hundred and forty-four thousand are those that renew the covenant for the final time. In Daniel three we see a prophetic illustration of the Sunday law and latter rain history. Christ was and will be in the fires of persecution with his three worthies, representing not only the one hundred and forty-four thousand, but also the three angels messages. In the fire, which is typifying the Sunday law crisis, He is identified with one of His names, and it's a name that would not be introduced into history until Christ arrived as the Son of God. In the illustration of chapter three we see those that renew the covenant at the end of the world interacting with Christ during the final crisis, and He has a name that no man knew.

Before I stray too far away from our consideration of the Egyptian deliverance representing the Sunday law in the United States, we should remind ourselves that before the first of the ten plagues began in Egypt there was genuine Sabbath agitation.

And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them

go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words. And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished. So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. And the taskmasters hastened them, saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw. And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and today, as heretofore? Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people. But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord. Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks. And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not diminish ought from your bricks of your daily task. Exodus 5:5–19.

Before the Sunday law there will be escalating agitation against those who keep the seventh-day Sabbath, just as there was leading up to the Egyptian plagues. Moses was the one that was identified by both the Egyptians and the Hebrews as the one who was causing all the trouble, just as Ahab accused Elijah of.

And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim. 1 Kings 18:17, 18.

The story of Moses illustrates the Sunday law history and the story of Elijah illustrates the Sunday law history. Together, or apart Moses and Elijah are symbols. At the Transfiguration of Christ, they together represented the one hundred and forty-four thousand who do not die and those who die in the Lord. Moses was resurrected, Elijah never died. They are also the two prophets who are the tormentors of the people in Revelation eleven. Much truth is represented by Moses and Elijah as symbols, and we hope to address that later.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Malachi 4:5, 6.

Just before human probation closes "Elijah the prophet" is to appear with a special message that turns "the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." The prophets all testify of the end of the world, and they all agree with each other.

And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. 1 Corinthians 14:32, 33.

Elijah's message arrives just before the great and dreadful day of the Lord; therefore, it is the very same special message in the book of Revelation which is represented as "the Revelation of Jesus Christ." When "the time is at hand" Elijah's special message shows God's "servants things which must shortly come to pass."

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. Revelation 1:1–3.

Notice that when Malachi employs Elijah as a symbol, he includes a direct reference to commandment keeping.

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Malachi 4:4–6.

These three verses are the last of the Old Testament, and contain the final promise of the Old Testament as well as an emphasis on keeping the ten commandments. There are seven "blessings" in the book of Revelation and the final one is a blessing upon those who keep the ten commandments.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. Revelation 22:13, 14.

The last promise in the Old Testament informs us to "Remember" the ten commandments, but in so doing it emphasizes the one commandment that includes the command to "remember."

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. Exodus 20:8–11.

The last promise in both the Old and New Testaments emphasizes the commandments of God with a special emphasis on the seventh-day Sabbath. Malachi says to "remember" and John informs us you are blessed for doing so. The seventh-day Sabbath commemorates God's creation and his creative power. The Sabbath also becomes the point of controversy in the last days of earth's history. When John records the "blessing" upon those who do his commandments, he is simply recording what Jesus, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending, the first and the last proclaimed. Therefore, the last promise of the New Testament has to do with the Seventh-day

Sabbath and also the attribute of divinity that identifies the end by the beginning.

The first truth mentioned in Genesis, which means beginnings identifies the Creator, the creation and a special emphasis on the Sabbath. Taken together, line upon line the beginning of the Old Testament and the end of the both the Old and New Testaments emphasize God as the Creator, the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath commandment and that Jesus is the beginning and end.

Elijah the prophet is employed by Malachi as a symbol in the last promise of the Old Testament and he was the prophet who confronted Jezebel and Ahab. The book of Revelation employs Jezebel as a symbol of the papacy and ten kings as a symbol of the United Nations. Elijah's confrontation with Ahab and Jezebel represents the one hundred and forty-four thousand's confrontation with the United Nations, empowered by the United States and directed by the papacy. As king of the ten northern tribes of Israel Ahab represented the ruling power over ten tribes, thus typifying the United States (Ahab) empowering the United Nations (ten tribes or ten kings in Revelation seventeen) to do the persecution of Sabbath-keepers for the Papacy (Jezebel). When Malachi uses Elijah to represent a message that comes before the great and dreadful day of the Lord, Elijah represents those who are persecuted by modern Rome (the dragon, the beast and the false prophet) as he was persecuted by Jezebel for three and a half years. Emphasizing the Sabbath by employing the word "remember" in Malachi 4:4 adds the Sunday law crisis to the prophetic scenario illustrated by Malachi.

Much more needs to be added to the consideration of the truths that are conveyed by comparing the beginning of the Old Testament with the end of the Old Testament, and then comparing the beginning of the Bible with the end of the Bible. In Genesis we have the Creator, creation and the Sabbath that commemorates the creation. In Malachi we have the Sabbath commandment identified as the crisis issue that leads to the close of human probation and the seven last plagues, or as Malachi calls it, "the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Elijah represents God's people who present the third angel's message to a dying world.

"Today, in the spirit and power of Elias and of John the Baptist, messengers of God's appointment are calling the attention of a judgment-bound world to the solemn events soon to take place in connection with the closing hours of probation and the appearance of Christ Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords." Prophets and Kings, 715, 716.

The beginning of the Bible which is also the beginning of the Old Testament identifies the same story as the end of both Testaments, but each beginning and ending has its own truth to emphasize and contribute to the message. In Genesis the focus is on the activities of God, in Malachi the focus is on the message that warns of the coming crisis. The end of Revelation identifies the Alpha and Omega. In the first book of the New Testament, we read the following.

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; And

Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias; And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa; And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias; And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias; And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias; And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon: And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel; And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS. Matthew 1:1–25.

The beginning of the New Testament agrees with the beginning and ending of the Old Testament and the ending of the New Testament for it emphasizes God's creative power, for the power Christ employed to create all things in six days is the identical power He uses to "save his people from their sins." The word Emmanuel, as the passage cites from the writings of Isaiah means "God with us." He dwells within His people by combining His divinity with our humanity, and this was the very combination He accomplished when He was incarnated in Mary.

"Nothing less than perfect obedience can meet the standard of God's requirement. He has not left His requirements indefinite. He has enjoined nothing that is not necessary in order to bring man into harmony with Him. We are to point sinners to His ideal of character and to lead them to Christ, by whose grace only can this ideal be reached.

"The Savior took upon Himself the infirmities of humanity and lived a sinless life, that men might have no fear that because of the weakness of human nature they could not overcome. Christ came to make us 'partakers of the divine nature,' and His life declares that humanity,

combined with divinity, does not commit sin.” Ministry of Healing, 180.

The beginning of the New Testament identifies where, when and why Jesus took upon himself our human nature. He did so to demonstrate that human power combined with divine power does not sin. Sin is the transgression of the law, which Malachi says we are to “remember.” John informs us that those who keep the law, and therefore those who are not sinning, can enter through heavenly gates. Matthew identifies that a sinner can overcome sin, just as Christ overcame. When we have Christ within us, (the hope of glory) we have the creative power that made the universe within us. This possibility was provided by Christ choosing to enter into the human family, and for the rest of eternity becoming not only the son of God but also the son of man.

There is a special message of truth opened up to God’s people from the book of Revelation just before the close of human probation. That special message is also Malachi’s “Elijah message” that is proclaimed just before the “dreadful day of the Lord”.

At the beginning of both Testaments and the end of the New Testament we have specific attributes of God identified. In Genesis He is the Creator, and at the end of Revelation He is Alpha and Omega. At the beginning of the New Testament, He becomes the son of man. And with the end of the Old Testament, we find the principle which the messenger Elijah uses to accomplish the message he would proclaim as turning the hearts of the fathers unto the children and vice-versa.

The prophetic principle which Elijah applies to present his warning message is just what John was commanded to do in the Revelation. Elijah “shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers,” and John was told to write the things that then were and in so doing he would simultaneously be writing the things that would come. John was used to illustrate how the principle of alpha and omega operates in the prophetic Word, and Elijah will base his message upon the same principle. When we compare the beginning of the Bible with the end of the Bible, we are comparing Old with the New. A father is the beginning of his child and the child is the ending of the father. The one hundred and forty-four thousand are the final generation of Abraham’s children, and the history where God entered into covenant with Abraham typifies the history when God renews that covenant with the one hundred and forty-four thousand.

Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all. Romans 4:16.

The message of Elijah is representing the principle of alpha and omega, for the fathers are alpha and the children are omega. Elijah’s message would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. Christ identified John the Baptist as Elijah and Ellen White identified William Miller as both Elijah and John the Baptist. The message of all of these representative men was represented as turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and vice-versa. That work represents the effect of the message in turning men’s hearts to their heavenly Father, but it means more, for it is a symbol of the work. In Bible prophecy symbols have more than one meaning and must be identified by context.

“What was it that made John the Baptist great? He closed his mind to the mass of tradition presented by the teachers of the Jewish nation, and opened it to the wisdom which comes from above. Before his birth the Holy Spirit testified of John: ‘He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.... And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.’ Luke 1:15–17.” Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students, 445.

The message is designed that those who choose to hear will turn their hearts unto the Heavenly Father, yet the primary prophetic principle that will be used to convey the warning message will be that Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and ending. The Elijah message is based upon the presentation of God’s prophetic Word from the perspective that Jesus Christ is the Word of God, and the rules that govern the Bible are also attributes of His character.

“The law of God is as sacred as God Himself. It is a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, the expression of divine love and wisdom. The harmony of creation depends upon the perfect conformity of all beings, of everything, animate and inanimate, to the law of the Creator. God has ordained laws for the government, not only of living beings, but of all the operations of nature. Everything is under fixed laws, which cannot be disregarded. But while everything in nature is governed by natural laws, man alone, of all that inhabits the earth, is amenable to moral law. To man, the crowning work of creation, God has given power to understand His requirements, to comprehend the justice and beneficence of His law, and its sacred claims upon him; and of man unswerving obedience is required.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 53.

Everything (and this would include the Bible, for the Bible is something and if it is something, then it is part of everything) is under fixed laws. The Bible has fixed laws or rules that govern its correct interpretation. One of those rules is that the Bible identifies the end of a thing with the beginning of a thing. Jesus is the Word of God, and He is the first and the last, and it’s a “fixed law” and an attribute of His character.

We used this introduction of Elijah to show that the beginning and ending of both the Old and New Testaments agree. The ending of the Bible, which is also the end of the book of Revelation also agrees with the beginning of Revelation. Five witnesses to the same truths based upon the principle which is an attribute of God’s character that God’s Word always illustrates the end of a thing with the beginning of that thing. This reality is part of what it means that Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega.

“To the apostle John on the isle of Patmos were opened scenes of deep and thrilling interest in the experience of the church. Subjects of intense interest and vast importance were presented to him in figures and symbols, that the people of God might become intelligent concerning the perils and conflicts before them. The history of the Christian world to the very close of time was revealed to John. With great clearness he saw the position, dangers, conflicts, and final deliverance of the people of God. He records the closing message which is to ripen the harvest

of earth, either as sheaves for the heavenly garner, or as fagots for the fires of the last day.

“In vision John beheld the trials which God’s people would endure for the truth’s sake. He saw their unyielding firmness in obeying the commandments of God, in the face of the oppressive powers that sought to force them into disobedience, and he saw their final triumph over the beast and his image.

“Under the symbols of a great red dragon, a leopard-like beast, and a beast with lamblike horns, the earthly governments which would especially engage in trampling upon God’s law and persecuting His people, were presented to John. The war is carried on till the close of time. The people of God, symbolized by a holy woman and her children, were represented as greatly in the minority. In the last days only a remnant still existed. Of these John speaks as they ‘which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.’

“Through paganism, and then through the Papacy, Satan exerted his power for many centuries in an effort to blot from the earth God’s faithful witnesses. Pagans and papists were actuated by the same dragon spirit. They differed only in that the Papacy, making a pretense of serving God, was the more dangerous and cruel foe. Through the agency of Romanism, Satan took the world captive. The professed church of God was swept into the ranks of this delusion, and for more than a thousand years the people of God suffered under the dragon’s ire. And when the Papacy, robbed of its strength, was forced to desist from persecution, John beheld a new power coming up to echo the dragon’s voice, and carry forward the same cruel and blasphemous work. This power, the last that is to wage war against the church and the law of God, was symbolized by a beast with lamblike horns. The beasts preceding it had risen from the sea, but this came up out of the earth, representing the peaceful rise of the nation which is symbolized. The ‘two horns like a lamb’ well represent the character of the United States Government, as expressed in its two fundamental principles, Republicanism and Protestantism. These principles are the secret of our power and prosperity as a nation. Those who first found an asylum on the shores of America rejoiced that they had reached a country free from the arrogant claims of popery and the tyranny of kingly rule. They determined to establish a government upon the broad foundation of civil and religious liberty.

“But the stern tracing of the prophetic pencil reveals a change in this peaceful scene. The beast with lamblike horns speaks with the voice of a dragon, and ‘exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him.’ Prophecy declares that he will say to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast, and that ‘he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.’ Thus Protestantism follows in the steps of the Papacy.

“It is at this time that the third angel is seen flying in the midst of heaven, proclaiming: ‘If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation.’ ‘Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’ In marked contrast to the world stands the little company who will not swerve from their allegiance to God. These are they of whom Isaiah speaks as repairing the breach which

had been made in the law of God, they who are building the old waste places, raising up the foundation of many generations.

“The most solemn warning and the most awful threatening ever addressed to mortals is that contained in the third angel’s message. The sin that calls down the wrath of God unmixed with mercy must be of the most heinous character. Is the world to be left in darkness as to the nature of this sin?—Most assuredly not. God does not deal thus with His creatures. His wrath is never visited upon sins of ignorance. Before His judgments are brought upon the earth, the light in regard to this sin must be presented to the world, that man may know why these judgments are to be inflicted, and may have opportunity to escape them.

“The message containing this warning is the last to be proclaimed before the revelation of the Son of man. The signs which He Himself has given declare His coming to be near at hand. For well-nigh forty years has the message of the third angel been sounding. In the issue of the great contest two parties are developed, those who ‘worship the beast and his image,’ and receive his mark, and those who receive ‘the seal of the living God,’ who have the Father’s name written in their foreheads. This is not a visible mark. The time has come when all who have an interest in their soul’s salvation should earnestly and solemnly inquire, What is the seal of God? and what is the mark of the beast? How can we avoid receiving it?

“The seal of God, the token or sign of His authority, is found in the fourth commandment. This is the only precept of the Decalogue that points to God as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and clearly distinguishes the true God from all false gods. Throughout the Scriptures the fact of God’s creative power is cited as proof that He is above all heathen deities.

“The Sabbath enjoined by the fourth commandment was instituted to commemorate the work of creation, thus to keep the minds of men ever directed to the true and living God. Had the Sabbath always been kept, there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel. The sacred observance of God’s holy day would have led the minds of men to their Creator. The things of nature would have brought Him to their remembrance, and they would have borne witness to His power and His love. The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God. It points to God as the Creator, and is the sign of His rightful authority over the beings He has made.

“What, then, is the mark of the beast, if it is not the spurious sabbath which the world has accepted in the place of the true?

“The prophetic declaration that the Papacy was to exalt itself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, has been strikingly fulfilled in the changing of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. Wherever the papal Sabbath is honored in preference to the Sabbath of God, there the man of sin is exalted above the Creator of heaven and earth.

“Those who assert that Christ changed the Sabbath are directly contradicting His own words. In His Sermon on the Mount He declared: ‘Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he

shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.’

“Roman Catholics acknowledge that the change in the Sabbath was made by their church, and they cite this very change as evidence of the supreme authority of this church. They declare that by observing the first day of the week as the Sabbath, Protestants are recognizing her power to legislate in divine things. The Roman Church has not relinquished her claim to infallibility, and when the world and the Protestant churches accept the spurious sabbath of her creating, they virtually acknowledge her claim. They may cite the authority of the apostles and fathers in defense of this change, but the fallacy of their reasoning is easily discerned. The papist is sharp enough to see that Protestants are deceiving themselves, willingly closing their eyes to the facts in the case. As the Sunday institution gains favor, he rejoices, feeling assured that it will eventually bring the whole Protestant world under the banner of Rome.” Signs of the Times, November 1, 1899.