

The Spirit of Prophecy: The Midnight Cry

Habakkuk's Two Tables

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A Word of Clarification

Recently we began to prepare the transcription of Habakkuk's Two Tables to be translated into the various languages represented on our website. The task of changing a spoken presentation into a written presentation is much more of a task than might be understood if one is not familiar with all the hoops that must be jumped through to turn a spoken presentation into a written presentation, along with the necessary problems of ultimately translating the material into the various languages on the website. We just started our copy-editing of the first of the ninety-five presentations and I discovered another hoop that we must also jump through. It has to do with the progressive development of this message from 1989 until our current history.

In the presentations of about fifteen years ago there were truths that were in their infant state of understanding. The first of those truths that I must clarify is the arrival of the second angel in Millerite history. I understood at that time that the second angel arrived when the Protestant churches began to close their doors against Miller's presentation of the first angel's message, in conjunction with the termination of the year 1843. William Miller worked upon a reckoning of time that he believed identified that the years of 1843 began on March 22, 1843 and ended on March 22, 1844. He had thought the three prophecies that ultimately were placed upon the two sacred charts would terminate in the year of 1843, and he believed that year ended on March 22, 1844. He was wrong on two points.

The three prophecies of the 1335 days of Daniel twelve, the 2520 years of the "seven times" of Leviticus twenty-six and the 2300 days of Daniel eight were understood by Miller to concluded in March of 1844. The Lord thereafter guided Samuel Snow to not only understand that the prophecies ended not in 1843, but 1844; but Snow also began to apply the Karite reckoning of time, that was not the time application Miller had been employing. Miller had been using the Rabbinic/equinox-based reckoning of time that based the year upon spring to spring.

When we were presenting Habakkuk's Two Tables, we had not understood this historical reality and were using Miller's experience to mark March 22, 1844 as the arrival of the second and the beginning of the tarrying time. I understood, and still do that the arrival of that angel corresponded to when the Protestants rejected Miller's message of the first angel, and the following passage was my point of reference.

"In June, 1842, Mr. Miller gave his second course of lectures at the Casco Street church in Portland. I felt it a great privilege to attend these lectures; for I had fallen under discouragements, and did not feel prepared to meet my Saviour. This second course created much more excitement in the city than the first. With few exceptions, the different

denominations closed the doors of their churches against Mr. Miller. Many discourses from the various pulpits sought to expose the alleged fanatical errors of the lecturer; but crowds of anxious listeners attended his meetings, and many were unable to enter the house. The congregations were unusually quiet and attentive.” Life Sketches, 27.

I understood the closing of the doors to Miller’s message marked the beginning of the rejection of the first angel, and in agreement with Miller’s understanding of the Rabbinic/equinox-based reckoning of time I assumed that March 22, 1844 marked the conclusion of 1843. Miller’s presentation in Portland in June of 1842 is actually a waymark that identifies a progressive rejection that ultimately concluded on April 18, 1844, but at the time of the presentations we had not recognized Samuel Snow’s application of the Karaite reckoning of time.

In the first presentation we began to copy-edit I began to see that what was recorded at that time seems to contradict what we now teach. It does and it doesn’t. It is simply an emphasis upon the progressive arrival of the second angel, and also an illustration of the progressive unsealing of this message, as was the case also in Millerite history. This note of clarification should address those who have stumbled over our identification of April 19, 1844 as the first Millerite disappointment and what was taught in the past.

“The first and second messages were given in 1843 and 1844, and we are now under the proclamation of the third; but all three of the messages are still to be proclaimed. It is just as essential now as ever before that they shall be repeated to those who are seeking for the truth. By pen and voice we are to sound the proclamation, showing their order, and the application of the prophecies that bring us to the third angel’s message. There cannot be a third without the first and second. These messages we are to give to the world in publications, in discourses, showing in the line of prophetic history the things that have been and the things that will be.” Selected Messages, book 2, 104.

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Introduction to Habakkuk's Two Tables and the Midnight Cry

In this series, we will be looking at Habakkuk's two tables—the 1843 and 1850 Charts—over an extended period. We will begin by putting the Midnight Cry in place. As mentioned, much of the initial presentations will be review for those familiar with this message, but since we are preparing a series that may be studied by people new to this message, we must lay out some basic ideas for them. We will start with the Midnight Cry, focusing on an aspect found in Ellen White's first vision. Let's read the first paragraph from *Christian Experience and Teachings*, page 57.

"It was not long after the passing of time in 1844 that my first open vision was given me. I was visiting Mrs. Haines in Portland, Maine, a dear sister in Christ, whose heart was knit with mine. Five of us, all women, were kneeling quietly at the family altar. While we were praying, the power of God came upon me as never before."

These five women, whose hearts were knit with Sister White, were not opposing any manifestation of the power of God. Notably, they were all women, representing the church, and there were five of

them, which can be seen as five wise virgins. This is simply an observation.

"I seemed to be surrounded with light and to be rising higher and higher from the earth. I turned to look for the advent people in the world, but could not find them, when a voice said to me, 'Look again and look a little higher.' At this, I raised my eyes and saw a straight and narrow path cast up high above the world. On this path, the Advent people were traveling to the city, which was at the farther end of the path. They had a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path, which an angel told me was the Midnight Cry. This light shone all along the path and gave light for their feet so that they might not stumble. If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the city, they were safe. But soon some grew weary and said the city was a great way off, and they expected to have entered it before. Then Jesus would encourage them by raising His glorious right arm, and from His arm came a light which waved over the advent band, and they shouted 'Alleluia!' Others rashly denied the light behind them and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out, leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and lost sight of the mark and of Jesus, and fell off the path down into the dark and wicked world below."

William Miller and the Midnight Cry

In this first presentation, after establishing a few points, we will discuss the Low Hampton Conference of Adventists in December 1844. At this conference, some Millerites gathered, and William Miller rejected the understanding of the Midnight Cry. The logic here is that this vision, while for all of us, was especially for William Miller.

In that same month, William Miller denied the light behind them—the Midnight Cry—which would cause him to fall off the path to the wicked world below. We will explore the implications of this. Historical evidence shows that the Millerites all believed they were fulfilling the parable of the ten virgins; it was common knowledge among them. We will show that William Miller had an understanding of what the Midnight Cry was. Miller believed the Midnight Cry was the judgment hour message of Daniel 8:14 and Revelation 14:6-9. He believed the message he began proclaiming in the early 1830s was the Midnight Cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom cometh,' and that Jesus was coming to the world as the bridegroom.

For most of Millerite history, they believed they were fulfilling the parable of the ten virgins, but they thought the Midnight Cry described the message they had been proclaiming. However, by the summer of 1844, a new and correct understanding emerged: the Midnight Cry was the Seventh Month movement, with Jesus expected to come on the tenth day of the seventh month. That was the true Midnight Cry. When Miller rejected the true Midnight Cry in December 1844, he was rejecting the history of the summer of 1844 and reverting to his earlier position that it was just the general message from the 1830s. Understanding the dynamics of the Midnight Cry is crucial. If you do not understand the 2520 as the Millerites did, you cannot understand the Midnight Cry. If you cannot understand the Midnight Cry as the Millerites did, you fall off the path to the wicked world below.

In this presentation, we will start with some truths on the chart that are openly rejected by Adventism today. The Biblical Research Institute of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and most Adventist theologians reject the 2520. We will address this biblically as we proceed, but initially, we will show that Ellen White fully endorses the 2520. The Institute and most theologians also reject the pioneer understanding of the Daily. We will show that rejecting the pioneer understanding of the Daily being paganism is rejecting the spirit of prophecy. The Institute also publicly rejects the pioneer understanding of the trumpets—the Fifth and Sixth Trumpet. We will begin by showing that rejecting the pioneer understanding of the trumpets is rejecting the Spirit of Prophecy.

Today, most Adventists are vague at best about the 1290 and the 1335. Without the pioneer understanding of the 1335, there is no biblical justification for identifying the tarrying time that began on March 22, 1844. Without understanding the tarrying time, one cannot grasp the dynamics of the Midnight Cry. Without understanding the Midnight Cry, one falls off the path to the wicked world below. We will show these truths on the chart in terms of the clear endorsement of the Spirit of Prophecy, and then dissect them from the Word of God. But first, we need to see what surrounded Millerite history and what produced the Midnight Cry.

Millerite History and the Arrival of the First Angel

We begin with Uriah Smith from *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation*, page 521, to show the Millerite history and address 1798. Uriah Smith writes, 'The chronology of the events of Revelation 10 is further ascertained from the fact that this angel is identical with the first angel of Revelation 14.' In Revelation 10, a mighty angel comes down from heaven with a little book open in his hand. Ellen White informs us that this mighty angel is Jesus Christ, and the little book is the Book of Daniel. By the end of chapter ten, John is told to eat the little book, which will be sweet in his mouth and bitter in his stomach. John represents the Millerite history, where the message of Daniel is sweet but leads to bitter disappointment. The mighty angel of Revelation 10, according to the pioneers, is the first angel of Revelation 14—they are the same angel.

We often do not spend much time being specific about these angels in Revelation, but we should. The mighty angel in Revelation 10 is also the angel that William Miller believed was fulfilling the Midnight Cry by accomplishing the work of the first angel of Revelation 14: 'Fear God and give Him glory, for the hour of His judgment is come.' The hour of His judgment refers to Daniel 8:14. These angels identify different aspects of the work accomplished.

Returning to Uriah Smith: 'The chronology of the events of Revelation 10 is further ascertained from the fact that this angel is identical with the first angel of Revelation 14.' He explains what ties them together: both have a special message to proclaim, both utter their proclamation with a loud voice, both use similar language referring to the Creator, and both proclaim time—one swearing that time should be no more, and the other proclaiming the hour of God's judgment has come. The message of Revelation 14:6 is located on this side of the commencement of the time of the end.

Uriah Smith states that the time of the end is 1798, and the message of Revelation 14 comes after that. He writes, 'But the message of Revelation 14:6 is located this side of the commencement of

the time at the end. It is a proclamation of the hour of God's judgment come, and hence must have its application in the last generation. Paul did not preach the hour of judgment come. Luther and his coadjutors did not preach it. Paul reasoned of a judgment to come, indefinitely future, and Luther placed it at least three hundred years off from his day. Moreover, Paul warns the church against any such preaching as that the hour of God's judgment has come until a certain time.' In 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, Paul says that the day of Christ is not at hand until the falling away comes first and the man of sin is revealed. Paul introduces the man of sin, the little horn, the papacy, and covers with a caution the whole period of his supremacy, which continued 1260 years, ending in 1798.

In 1798, the restriction against proclaiming the day of Christ at hand ceased. The time of the end commenced, and the seal was taken from the little book. Since then, the angel of Revelation 14 has gone forth. Uriah Smith says, 'If you will see it,' since 1798, the first angel's message has gone forth. In 1798, the first angel of Revelation 14 arrives in history—this is the pioneer understanding. Since then, the angel of Revelation 14 has proclaimed the hour of God's judgment come, and the angel of chapter ten has taken his stand on the sea and the land, swearing that time should be no more. Their identity is unquestionable. All arguments that locate one are effective for the other. The present generation is witnessing the fulfillment of these two prophecies. In the preaching of the advent, especially from 1840 to 1844, began their full and circumstantial accomplishment.

Smith marks 1840 and 1844 in reference to the first angel of Revelation 14 arriving in 1798, but also marks the first angel in 1840, where the message is empowered. In the preaching of the advent, especially from 1840 to 1844, began their full accomplishment. The angel's position with one foot on the sea and one on the land denotes the wide extent of his proclamation. The message would cross the ocean and extend to various nations, and the advent proclamation did go to every missionary station in the world. From 1840, the first angel's message, according to Ellen White, was carried to every mission station in the world. This was accomplished when the year-day principle of Bible prophecy was confirmed with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. We are not dealing with the details at this point, but setting the stage for the Millerite history and the dynamics of the Midnight Cry.

Key Historical Events: 1833 and the Falling of the Stars

In 1833, the falling of the stars occurred. Ellen White comments in *The Great Controversy*, page 333: 'In 1833, two years after Miller began to present in public the evidences of Christ's soon coming, the last of the signs appeared which were promised by the Saviour as tokens of His second advent. Said Jesus: "The stars shall fall from heaven." Matthew 24:29. And John in the Revelation declared, as he beheld in vision the scenes that should herald the day of God: "The stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." Revelation 6:13. This prophecy received a striking and impressive fulfillment in the great meteoric shower of November 13, 1833.'

William Miller's testimony recounts: 'On Saturday after breakfast—in the summer of 1833, I sat down at my desk to examine some point, and as I rose to go out to work, it came home to me with

more force than ever, "Go and tell it to the world." The impression was so sudden and came with such force that I settled down into my chair saying, "I can't go, Lord." "Why not?" seemed to be the response, and then all my excuses came up, my want of ability, but my distress became so great I entered into a solemn covenant with God that if He would open the way, I would go and perform my duty to the world. "What do you mean by opening the way?" seemed to come to me. Why, said I, if I should have an invitation to speak publicly in any place, I will go and tell them what I find in the Bible about the Lord's coming. Instantly all my burden was gone. And I rejoiced that I should not probably be thus called upon, for I'd never had such an invitation, my trials were not known, and I had but little expectation of being invited to any field of labor. In about a half an hour from this time, before I'd left the room, a son of Mr. Guilford of Dresden, about sixteen miles from my residence, came in and said that his father had sent for me and wished me to go home with him, supposing that he'd wish to see me on some business. I asked him what he wanted. He replied that there was to be no preaching in their church the next day, and his father wished to have me come and talk to the people on the subject of the Lord's coming. I was immediately angry with myself for having made the covenant I had. I rebelled at once against the Lord and determined not to go. I left the boy without giving him any answer and retired in great distress to a grove nearby. Then I struggled with the Lord for about an hour, endeavoring to release myself from the covenant I had made with him, but I could get no relief. It was impressed upon my conscience, "Will you make a covenant with God and break it so soon?" and the exceeding sinfulness of thus doing overwhelmed me. I finally submitted and promised the Lord that if He would sustain me, I would go, trusting in Him to give me grace and ability to perform all He should require of me. I returned to the house and found the boy still waiting. He remained till after dinner, and I returned with him to Dresden.' This is how Miller, in the summer of 1833, began to publicly present the message. In December 1833, the falling of the stars added solemnity to his message.

1840: The Fulfillment of Prophecy and the Ottoman Empire

In 1840, Ellen White comments on a remarkable fulfillment of prophecy. This passage is often controverted in the Spirit of Prophecy, with some arguing that Uriah Smith inserted it into The Great Controversy, but these arguments are unfounded. She is speaking about the sequence of prophetic fulfillment's leading up to 1840, including the falling of the stars and the Dark Day. She writes, 'In the year 1840, another remarkable fulfillment of prophecy excited widespread interest.'

She refers to biblical prophecy, not merely a human prediction by Josiah Litch. Two years before, Josiah Litch, a leading minister preaching the second advent, published an exposition of Revelation 9, predicting the fall of the Ottoman Empire. According to his calculations, this power was to be overthrown on August 11, 1840. At the specified time, Turkey, through her ambassadors, accepted the protection of the Allied Powers of Europe and thus placed herself under the control of Christian nations. The event exactly fulfilled the prediction. When it became known, multitudes were convinced of the correctness of the principles of prophetic interpretation adopted by Miller and his associates, and a wonderful impetus was given to the Advent movement. Men of learning and position united with Miller in preaching and publishing his views, and from 1840 to 1844, the work rapidly extended.

Uriah Smith had told us that the first angel of Revelation 14 arrived in 1798, but it is the same angel as the angel of Revelation 10. In Revelation 10, John is told to take the little book out of the angel's hand and eat it, and it will become sweet in his mouth. The Millerite message became sweet on August 11, 1840, after two years of predicting the collapse of the Ottoman Empire based on the year-day principle of Bible prophecy. When the event was exactly fulfilled, the message they had been proclaiming became sweet in their mouth.

On August 11, 1840, the message became sweet in their mouth. John is told to take the little book out of the angel's hand that has descended. The angel descends on August 11, 1840, and this angel of Revelation 10 is the same as the first angel of Revelation 14. The angel of Revelation 14 arrives in 1798 at the time of the end, but his message is empowered in 1840. Ellen White says that when the event became known, multitudes were convinced of the correctness of the principles of prophetic interpretation adopted by Miller and his associates. Since the 1930s, beginning in 1919 but especially in the 1930s, Adventism has rejected the rules of prophetic interpretation adopted by Miller and his associates—those rules being the proof text method of Bible study.

The 1843 Chart and the Tarrying Time

The next waymark in history is the 1843 chart, produced in May 1842. Ellen White says, '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, and 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.' This chart is a prophetic waymark, produced in May 1842. In June 1842, the Protestant churches closed their doors and the second angel arrives.

From Testimonies, volume one, page 21: 'In June of 1842, Mr. Miller gave his second course of lectures at the Casco Street Church in Portland, Maine. With few exceptions, the different denominations closed the doors of their churches against Mr. Miller.' Ellen White informs us that as Seventh-day Adventist Christians, we should learn to reason from cause to effect. The cause that led the Protestant churches to close their doors was the introduction of this chart. When the chart was introduced in May, the Protestant churches determined that the Millerites were deluded fanatics.

The first disappointment is next. From *The Great Controversy*, page 393: 'As early as 1842, the direction given in this prophecy to write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it, had suggested to Charles Fitch the preparation of a prophetic chart to illustrate the visions of Daniel and Revelation.' Charles Fitch, who died just before the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844, was used by the Lord in this history. He prepared the chart, which was published in May 1842.

The publication of this chart was regarded as a fulfillment of the command of Habakkuk. No one, however, noticed an apparent delay in the accomplishment of the vision. A tarrying time is presented in the same prophecy. After the disappointment, this scripture appeared significant: 'The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie, though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry. The just shall live by faith.' The tarrying time is the

first disappointment, which comes on March 22, 1844. The Millerites were predicting the end of the world in 1843, using the biblical reckoning of time. When the Lord had not come by then, the first disappointment set in on March 22, 1844. That is the tarrying time.

This is the tarrying time in the parable of the ten virgins, in Habakkuk 2, and in Daniel 12. Daniel 12:11 says, 'And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away...' The pioneers understood that paganism was subdued in 508, with Clovis defeating the Visigoths. From the time that paganism is taken away and the papacy is set up (thirty years later in 538), there shall be 1290 days. The next verse says, 'Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.' 508 plus 1335 equals 1843. 'Blessed is he that comes to 1843.' The 1335 marks the tarrying time, saying, 'Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to 1843.' If you uphold the pioneer understanding of the daily, as Ellen White does, this is clear.

To further clarify, Isaiah 30:18 says, 'And therefore will the Lord wait.' Here, the Lord is the bridegroom in the parable of the ten virgins, and He is tarrying. 'And therefore will the bridegroom tarry that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted that he may have mercy on you, for the Lord is a God of judgment. Blessed are all they that wait for Him.' This matches Daniel 12:12: 'Blessed is he who waiteth and cometh to the 1335.' The bridegroom tarries on March 22, 1844. There is a blessing attached to coming to the first disappointment and then waiting. When you get here, you are to wait. What are you waiting for? Habakkuk 2:3 says, 'For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie, though it tarry, wait for it.' The blessing of coming to the 1335 is the blessing of coming to this history, where the Lord will accomplish the Midnight Cry.

Not everyone will be allowed to participate in the Midnight Cry. Some people traveled along with the Millerites not because of their own personal experience with Jesus Christ or personal study of God's Word, but out of fear. Before the Midnight Cry arrives, the Lord separates these brethren from the movement. The first disappointment is part of the process preparing for the Midnight Cry. According to Ellen White, if we do not understand this, we fall off the path to the wicked world below.

The Empowerment of the Second Angel's Message

From Early Writings, page 238: 'Near the close of the second angel's message, I saw a great light from heaven shining upon the people of God. The rays of this light seemed bright as the sun, and I heard voices of angels crying, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh."' This was the Midnight Cry, which was to give power to the second angel's message. The pioneers understood that the first angel's message arrived in 1798 but was empowered with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1840. All the messages arrive at a point in time and are thereafter empowered. The second angel's message arrives in March 22, 1844 when the Protestant churches closed their doors against the Millerite message. The Midnight Cry empowers the second angel's message. The third angel's message arrives on October 22, 1844, and is empowered when the mighty angel of Revelation 18 joins it. Every message arrives in history and is thereafter empowered. This is important to understand.

The Midnight Cry gave power to the second angel's message. Angels were sent from heaven to arouse the discouraged saints and prepare them for the great work before them. The most talented men were not the first to receive this message. William Miller was not the first to receive this message; quite the opposite, he was the last to receive it. He was the most talented in understanding the message, while Samuel Snow was the first. Those who had formerly led in the work were the last to receive and help swell the cry. Historically, the last person to accept the message of the Midnight Cry was William Miller.

From *The Great Controversy*, 376: During the empowerment of the Midnight Cry, about 50,000 left the churches. As Miller's work tended to build up the churches, it was initially regarded with favor, but as ministers and religious leaders decided against the Advent doctrine and desired to suppress all agitation on the subject, they opposed it from the pulpit and denied their members the privilege of attending preaching on the second advent or even speaking of their hope in social meetings. Leaders in the Adventist Church today who forbid the teaching of this message in the church and even in private homes are prefigured here in the Millerite movement.

Believers found themselves in great trial and perplexity. They loved their churches and were reluctant to separate, but as they saw the testimony of God's Word suppressed and their right to investigate the prophecies denied, they felt that loyalty to God forbade them to submit. Those who sought to shut out the testimony of God's Word could not be regarded as constituting the Church of Christ. Hence, they felt justified in separating from their former connection. In the summer of 1844, about 50,000 withdrew from the churches.

Miller's Understanding and the True Midnight Cry

From Elder Damsteegt's book, *Foundation of Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*, Miller believed that the proclamation of Daniel 8:14 and the first angel of Revelation 14 was the Midnight Cry—'Behold, the bridegroom cometh.' He believed this message was identifying the second coming of Christ. Miller thought the entire history was the Midnight Cry, but Ellen White states the Midnight Cry was accomplished at a specific point. Samuel Snow titled his presentation 'The True Midnight Cry' to distinguish it from the Millerite teaching that the Midnight Cry was the general message.

The most spiritual received the message first, and those who had formerly led in the work were the last to receive and help swell the cry. William Miller, who had led the work from 1833 onward, struggled with the Midnight Cry message when it came in August 1844. He was unsure about separating from the churches and had been teaching another understanding of the Midnight Cry for many years.

William Miller wrote, 'I'd never been positive as to any particular day for the Lord's appearing, believing that no man could know the day and hour. In all my published lectures, it will be seen on the title page, about the year 1843. In all my oral lectures, I invariably told my audiences that the periods would terminate in 1843 if there were no mistake in my calculation, but that I could not say the end might not come even before that time, and that they should be continually prepared. In 1842, some of the brethren preached with great positiveness, the exact year, and censured me for

putting in an "if." In May 1842, the 1843 chart was published, and the brethren told Miller to remove the 'if' from his presentation.

Miller continued, 'The public press had also published that I'd fixed upon a definite day, the twenty-third of April, for the Lord's advent. Therefore, in December of that year, as I could see no error in my reckoning, I published my belief that sometime between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844, the Lord would come.' Miller had already concluded the tenth day of the seventh month, and long before Samuel Snow used this conclusion to proclaim the Midnight Cry, Miller had written about it. Miller was the one the Lord used to put together the logic that Samuel Snow employed to identify October 22, 1844.

Miller wrote, 'During the year 1843, the most violent denunciations were heaped upon me and those associated with me by the press and some pulpits. Our motives were assailed, our principles misrepresented, our characters traduced.' Time passed, and March 21, 1844, went by without the Lord's appearing. The disappointment was great, and many walked no more with them. Before this time, from 1840, there were an estimated 200,000 Millerites, but by this point, only 50,000 remained.

Miller continued, 'Previously to this, in the fall of 1843, some of my brethren began to call the churches Babylon and to urge that it was the duty of Adventists to come out of them. With this, I was much grieved. Not only was the effect very bad, but I regarded it as a perversion of the Word of God, a wresting of the Scriptures.' Miller struggled with the second angel's message, making it more difficult for him to accept the true Midnight Cry message. The practice spread, and the churches were closed against them, creating hostility and separating most Adventists from their respective churches.

After his published time passed, Miller acknowledged his disappointment regarding the exact period but maintained his faith. He continued his labors at the West during the summer of 1844 until the Seventh Month movement. He had no participation in this movement except for a letter written eighteen months earlier about the Mosaic Law observances pointing to that month. He did not expect that such a use would be made of those topics or that belief in such evidence would become a test of salvation. He had no fellowship with the movement until two or three weeks before October 22, 1844. In a letter to Himes on October 6, 1844, Miller wrote, 'I see a glory in the seventh month which I never saw before... Now, blessed be the name of the Lord, I see a beauty, a harmony, an agreement in the scriptures, for which I've long prayed but did not see until today. Thank the Lord, O my soul. Brother Snow, Brother Storrs, and others, be blessed for their instrumentality in opening my eyes. I'm almost home. Glory, glory, glory, glory.'

Afterward, Miller rethought the Midnight Cry, calling it fanaticism. Damsteegt notes that Snow got his basic outline of the Midnight Cry message from Miller's earlier work.

Snow's calculations, published in March 1844, aroused little attention until the Exeter camp meeting, August 12–17, 1844. There, his exact date for Christ's return stirred many Millerites, bringing their missionary endeavor to a peak. Their response became known as the Seventh Month movement. Although Millerite leaders were initially skeptical, some weeks before the expected

event, they joined the movement and allowed Snow's views to be printed and supported.

The Midnight Cry and Its Aftermath

Ellen White's first vision shows God's people on a path to heaven, with a light behind them called the Midnight Cry. The message Samuel Snow presented needs to be understood. In May 1842, 300 charts were printed for 300 preachers. By March 22, 1844, after the first disappointment, the chart was set aside, and many left the movement. Those who remained were to wait. At the Exeter camp meeting, Snow showed that the Lord would come on October 22, 1844, the Day of Atonement. This impelled them to proclaim the message.

Joseph Bates recounted that after the Exeter camp meeting, as he walked through the train cars, he heard voices repeating, 'Behold, the bridegroom cometh!' This movement swept over the United States in two months, leading to the Great Disappointment on October 22, 1844.

Damsteegt comments on the Low Hampton Conference of Adventists, December 28–29, 1844, involving Himes and Miller. Himes urged comforting the saints, arousing the Christian world, and proclaiming salvation to sinners. A few weeks later, the Advent Press resumed, and Himes declared the door of salvation open. Miller gradually gave up the extreme shut door concept and returned to his original view of the Midnight Cry. In that same month, Ellen White had her first vision, showing that those who reject the Midnight Cry fall off the path. That vision was for William Miller as much as anyone else.

William Miller's Final Test and Legacy

From *Early Writings*, page 257: "My attention was then called to William Miller. He looked perplexed and was bowed with anxiety and distress for his people. The company who had been united and loving in 1844 were losing their love, opposing one another, and falling into a cold, backslidden state. As he beheld this, grief wasted his strength. I saw leading men watching him, primarily Joshua Himes, and fearing lest he should receive the third angel's message." The third angel's message in this context is the Sabbath. As Miller leaned toward the light from heaven, these men would lay plans to draw his mind away. Human influence kept him in darkness and retained his influence among those who opposed the truth. Eventually, Miller raised his voice against the light from heaven—the Sabbath. He failed to receive the message that would have explained his disappointment and cast light and glory on the past. He leaned on human wisdom instead of divine. Being broken by labor and age, he was not as accountable as those who kept him from the truth. The sin rests upon them. If Miller could have seen the light of the third angel, many things would have been explained. But his brethren professed such deep love for him that he thought he could never tear away from them. God allowed him to fall under the power of death and hid him in the grave from those who drew him from the truth. Moses erred before entering the Promised Land; likewise, Miller erred as he was soon to enter the heavenly Canaan. Others led him to do this; others must account for it. But angels watch the precious dust of this servant of God and will come forth at the sound of the last trumpet.

Conclusion: Lessons for Today

In conclusion, William Miller typifies Seventh-day Adventists at the end of the world. Ellen White's first vision is more for our day than for her own. At the end of the world, Seventh-day Adventists will reject the light of the Midnight Cry. The light of the Midnight Cry can only be understood by understanding this history. The first disappointment purged the Millerite movement of those there for the wrong reasons and prepared the people for the testing experience that would lead them into the Most Holy Place. Those who come to the first disappointment are blessed only if they wait for October 22, 1844. This time is designed by God to produce a people He will gather into the Most Holy Place. To reject the Midnight Cry and fall off the path is to reject this entire history.

William Miller made three mistakes, and we are always tested by three tests. His first error was rejecting the Midnight Cry in December 1844. His second was listening to men instead of God, which led to his third mistake: rejecting the Sabbath. At the end of the world, Seventh-day Adventists will reject the history of the Midnight Cry and the call to return to the old paths because they listen to their leaders. In so doing, they prepare themselves for the mark of the beast, repeating Miller's three-step testing process, which begins with how they relate to the message and history of the Midnight Cry.

There are only two prophecies that deal with the history from the first disappointment to the second disappointment: the 2300 days ('Though the vision tarry, wait for it') and the 2520. To reject the 2520 is to reject the Midnight Cry. To reject the Midnight Cry is to fall off the path to the wicked world below.

We will address this further in the next presentation.