

The Book of Joel and The Laodicean Seventh-day Adventist Church - Number One

Testing Present Truth

Jeff Pippenger

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“There are in the Scriptures some things which are hard to be understood and which, according to the language of Peter, the unlearned and unstable wrest unto their own destruction. We may not, in this life, be able to explain the meaning of every passage of Scripture; but there are no vital points of practical truth that will be clouded in mystery. When the time shall come, in the providence of God, for the world to be tested upon the truth for that time, minds will be exercised by His Spirit to search the Scriptures, even with fasting and with prayer, until link after link is searched out and united in a perfect chain. Every fact which immediately concerns the salvation of souls will be made so clear that none need err or walk in darkness.

“As we have followed down the chain of prophecy, revealed truth for our time has been clearly seen and explained. We are accountable for the privileges that we enjoy and for the light that shines upon our pathway. Those who lived in past generations were accountable for the light which was permitted to shine upon them. Their minds were exercised in regard to different points of Scripture which tested them. But they did not understand the truths which we do. They were not responsible for the light which they did not have. They had the Bible, as we have; but the time for the unfolding of special truth in relation to the closing scenes of this earth’s history is during the last generations that shall live upon the earth.

“Special truths have been adapted to the conditions of the generations as they have existed. The present truth, which is a test to the people of this generation, was not a test to the people of generations far back. If the light which now shines upon us in regard to the Sabbath of the fourth commandment had been given to the generations in the past, God would have held them accountable for that light.” Testimonies, volume 2, 692, 693.

New and Old

“In every age there is a new development of truth, a message of God to the people of that generation. The old truths are all essential; new truth is not independent of the old, but an unfolding of it. It is only as the old truths are understood that we can comprehend the new. When Christ desired to open to His disciples the truth of His resurrection, He began ‘at Moses and all the prophets’ and ‘expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.’ Luke 24:27. But it is the light which shines in the fresh unfolding of truth that glorifies the old. He who rejects or neglects the new does not really possess the old. For him it loses its vital power and becomes but a lifeless form.

“There are those who profess to believe and to teach the truths of the Old Testament, while they reject the New. But in refusing to receive the teachings of Christ, they show that they do

not believe that which patriarchs and prophets have spoken. 'Had ye believed Moses,' Christ said, 'ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me.' John 5:46. Hence there is no real power in their teaching of even the Old Testament.

"Many who claim to believe and to teach the gospel are in a similar error. They set aside the Old Testament Scriptures, of which Christ declared, 'They are they which testify of Me.' John 5:39. In rejecting the Old, they virtually reject the New; for both are parts of an inseparable whole. No man can rightly present the law of God without the gospel, or the gospel without the law. The law is the gospel embodied, and the gospel is the law unfolded. The law is the root, the gospel is the fragrant blossom and fruit which it bears.

"The Old Testament sheds light upon the New, and the New upon the Old. Each is a revelation of the glory of God in Christ. Both present truths that will continually reveal new depths of meaning to the earnest seeker." Christ's Object Lessons, 128.

Present truth is by definition the "revealed truth" for a specific period of time that is "clearly seen and explained." The generation living at the time when "present truth" is revealed are held "accountable" to accept that truth or die. The combined truths which make up the "present testing truth" for "this generation," are represented in "the unfolding of special" truths "in relation to the closing scenes of this earth's history." Truth, and therefore "present truth" is typified by the New Testament in relation to the Old Testament. Truth is established upon two witnesses and truth has a beginning and an end, a literal and a spiritual, an ancient and a modern, an alpha and an omega, a first and a last.

The Millerite foundation of the first angel's message is the "old" in relation to the "present truth" message of the third angel. Those who are "rejecting the Old," "virtually reject the New" for both are parts of an inseparable whole."

"I saw the necessity of the messengers, especially, watching and checking all fanaticism wherever they might see it rise. Satan is pressing in on every side, and unless we watch for him, and have our eyes open to his devices and snares, and have on the whole armor of God, the fiery darts of the wicked will hit us. There are many precious truths contained in the Word of God, but it is 'present truth' that the flock needs now. I have seen the danger of the messengers running off from the important points of present truth, to dwell upon subjects that are not calculated to unite the flock and sanctify the soul. Satan will here take every possible advantage to injure the cause.

"But such subjects as the sanctuary, in connection with the 2300 days, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, are perfectly calculated to explain the past Advent movement and show what our present position is, establish the faith of the doubting, and give certainty to the glorious future. These, I have frequently seen, were the principal subjects on which the messengers should dwell." Early Writings, 63.

The "sanctuary, in connection with the 2300 days, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" are the key to explain the "past Advent movement" of the Millerites and in so doing, to explain "perfectly" "what our present position is." Those who are "doubting" the "past Advent

movement,” are “doubting” what gives “certainty to the glorious future.” What gives certainty to the future is the past.

The book of Joel is a message of present testing truth. This is confirmed by multiple witnesses. Joel is identified as “present truth” by the Spirit of Prophecy, which according to John in the book of Revelation is the testimony of Jesus.

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. Revelation 1:1, 2.

The “testimony” of John (which he bore “record of”), was portrayed in three parts. He recorded the “word of God,” the “testimony of Jesus” and the “things that he saw.” In the first two verses of Revelation, John represents one who has been given the gift of the “spirit of prophecy.” That gift includes a special revelation of God’s Word, and it also includes special revelations conveyed to the prophet through the words of Christ; (either by Christ directly or through his angelic representatives) and the gift also includes truth presented through the medium of dreams and visions. The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Christ which is conveyed to the prophet and it bears the same authority as if an angel or Christ spoke the words.

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Revelation 19:10.

Gabriel identifies that he is a fellowservant with John, and he is not to be worshipped. Gabriel also identifies that the “brethren” that are represented by John “have the testimony of Jesus,” which is the “spirit of prophecy.” The “brethren” which John represents are the one hundred and forty-four thousand, and the brethren all have the “spirit of prophecy.”

“And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. 2 Chronicles 20:20.

“‘Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.’

“Isaiah 8:20. ‘To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.’ Two texts are here set before God’s people: two conditions for success. The law spoken by Jehovah himself, and the spirit of prophecy, are the two sources of wisdom to guide His people in every experience. Deuteronomy 4:6. ‘This is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, who shall say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’

“The law of God and the Spirit of Prophecy go hand in hand to guide and counsel the church, and whenever the church has recognized this by obeying His law, the spirit of prophecy has

been sent to guide her in the way of truth.

“Revelation 12:17. ‘And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.’ This prophecy points out clearly that the remnant church will acknowledge God in His law and will have the prophetic gift. Obedience to the law of God, and the spirit of prophecy has always distinguished the true people of God, and the test is usually given on present manifestations.

“In Jeremiah’s day the people had no question about the message of Moses, Elijah, or Elisha, but they did question and put aside the message sent of God to Jeremiah until its force and power was wasted and there was no remedy but for God to carry them away into captivity.

“Likewise in the days of Christ the people had learned that Jeremiah’s message was true, and they persuaded themselves to believe that if they had lived in the days of their fathers they would have accepted his message, but at the same time they were rejecting Christ’s message, of whom all the prophets had written.

“As the third angel’s message arose in the world, which is to reveal the law of God to the church in its fullness and power, the prophetic gift was also immediately restored. This gift has acted a very prominent part in the development and carrying forward of this message.

“As differences of opinion have arisen in reference to interpretations of Scriptures and methods of labor, calculated to unsettle the faith of believers in the message and lead to disunion in the work, the spirit of prophecy has always thrown light on the situation. It has always brought union of thought and harmony of action to the body of believers. In every crisis that has arisen in the development of the message and the growth of the work, those who have stood firmly by the law of God and the light of the Spirit of prophecy have triumphed and the work has prospered in their hands.” Loma Linda Messages, 33, 34.

The book of Joel is directly identified as “present truth” within the Spirit of Prophecy, which according to John in the book of Revelation is the testimony of Jesus. It is also endorsed directly within the Word of God. Both the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy directly apply the book of Joel to the last days.

“Each of the ancient prophets spoke less for their own time than for ours, so that their prophesying is in force for us. ‘Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.’ 1 Corinthians 10:11. ‘Not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.’ 1 Peter 1:12. ...

“The Bible has accumulated and bound up together its treasures for this last generation. All the great events and solemn transactions of Old Testament history have been, and are, repeating themselves in the church in these last days.” Selected Messages, book 3, 338, 339.

The prophecy of Joel is “in force” “upon” those “whom the ends of the world are come.” “In force” is simply emphasizing that “present truth” is always a test, and those who fail the test are represented by such biblical characters as Judas.

“Lesson after lesson fell unheeded on the ears of Judas. How many today follow in his steps. In the light of God’s law, selfish men see their evil characters, but fail to make the required reformation, and go on from one state of sin to another.

“The lessons of Christ are applicable to our own time and generation. He said, ‘Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.’ The same testimony is brought to us in these last days as was brought to Judas. The same lessons which he failed to make practical in his life come to men who hear, and yet make a like failure, because they do not put away their sin.” Review and Herald, March 17, 1891.

John throughout the book of Revelation typifies God’s last day people, and in being banished to Patmos John represents those who are persecuted in the Sunday law crisis. He states why he was incarcerated.

I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. Revelation 1:9.

John was persecuted for the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Why are the one hundred and forty-four thousand persecuted because of the Spirit of Prophecy? The first truth the prophet Joel identifies is the apostasy of the Seventh-day Adventist church. When the apostle Peter identified that Pentecost was a fulfillment of the book of Joel, Peter did so in response to the Jews attacking the manifestation of “tongues.” The Jews, who then typified Seventh-day Adventists in the last days, were arguing that Peter and those proclaiming the message were “drunk.” Seventh-day Adventists will fight against the message of the latter rain as did the Jews of Peter’s time. They do so for those who are proclaiming the “present truth” testing message of the latter rain have the “old” foundational truths, for new truth is always based upon old truth. Jeremiah called for God’s people in the time of the latter rain to walk in the old paths and hearken to the sound of the watchman’s trumpet, but they refuse. The foundational “old” truth message is symbolically represented by the “seven times” of Leviticus twenty-six, which sets forth the covenant relationship in terms of the Sabbath for the land.

“I saw the nominal church and nominal Adventists, like Judas, would betray us to the Catholics to obtain their influence to come against the truth. The saints then will be an obscure people, little known to the Catholics; but the churches and nominal Adventists who know of our faith and customs (for they hated us on account of the Sabbath, for they could not refute it) will betray the saints and report them to the Catholics as those who disregard the institutions of the people; that is, that they keep the Sabbath and disregard Sunday.

“Then the Catholics bid the Protestants to go forward, and issue a decree that all who will not observe the first day of the week, instead of the seventh day, shall be slain. And the Catholics, whose numbers are large, will stand by the Protestants. The Catholics will give their power to

the image of the beast. And the Protestants will work as their mother worked before them to destroy the saints. But before their decree bring or bear fruit, the saints will be delivered by the Voice of God." Spalding and Magan, 1, 2.

Twice Sister White identifies the "nominal church" and the "nominal Adventists," while drawing a distinction between the two "nominal groups" and the "Catholics." The "nominal church" and the "nominal Adventists," "hated" those represented by Peter and John "on account of the Sabbath, for they could not refute it." The nominal church and Catholics cannot "refute" the seventh-day Sabbath truth, and "nominal Adventists" cannot "refute" the "seven times" of Leviticus twenty-six, which is the Sabbath commandment of the land. The nominal church and Catholics cannot "refute" the fact that the seventh-day Sabbath is a "foundational" biblical truth, and "nominal Adventists" cannot "refute" the fact that the "seven times" of Leviticus twenty-six is a "foundational" Millerite truth.

John's captivity on Patmos represents the one hundred and forty-four thousand who uphold both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, and who are especially persecuted from outside over the seventh-day Sabbath and persecuted from inside over the seventh-year Sabbath for the land. For this reason, John's testimony of why he was being persecuted in verse nine is followed with verse ten's Sabbath and the message from the past ("behind") from the "great voice" as of a "trumpet."

I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet. Revelation 1:9, 10.

John represents those who at 9/11 heard the trumpet voice of the angel of Revelation eighteen calling for God's people to return to Jeremiah's "old paths." That great voice was also the warning of the seventh trumpet, which is also the third woe.

Sister White recorded that the "Bible has accumulated and bound up together its treasures for this last generation." The book of Joel is one of the biblical "treasures" that is present truth in the "last days." At the time of Pentecost Peter identified that it was the book of Joel that was then being fulfilled. Peter, as with Joel, "spoke less for" the time period of Pentecost than for our "time." The time period of Pentecost was the early rain for the Christian Dispensation. Pentecost marks the beginning of the Christian Dispensation, and in so doing it illustrates the end of the Christian Dispensation. The end of the Christian Dispensation is the time of the latter rain as typified by Pentecost. Peter is therefore a symbol of God's people in the end of the Christian Dispensation who identify the fulfillment of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit by employing the book of Joel to do so.

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall

prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Acts 2:14–21.

To be a successful student of prophecy requires a settled understanding that the end of the world is illustrated “line upon line” within the historical narrative of Scripture. Connected with this truth is that the prophets themselves represent God’s people in the last days. Joel places his book in the last days for it announces the approach of the “day of the Lord.”

Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand. Joel 2:1.

A “trumpet” as a symbol, among other meanings, represents a warning message. As a symbol a trumpet may represent a period of time or a point in time, or both—based upon context. A trumpet also represents judgment. The feast of trumpets, ten days before the Day of Atonement was a warning of approaching judgment.

The “day of the Lord” represents either a point in time or a period of time, based upon the context of the passage where the “day of the Lord” is employed. The “day of the Lord” can be a symbol of the executive judgment represented as the seven last plagues, or it can be the executive judgment at the end of the thousand-year millennium. In either case, the trumpet is identifying God’s executive judgment. The “day of the Lord” therefore can represent the point where God’s punishment is delivered or the period of time when God’s punishments are delivered.

A “trumpet” as with the “day of the Lord” can represent a point and a period of time as witnessed to in the historical points and periods represented by the seven trumpets of Revelation eight and nine. The “day of the Lord” that Joel is representing with the “trumpet” that is to be blown—is both a point in time and also a period of time which begins when the judgment of the dead ended and the judgment of the living began. On 9/11, a trumpet was blown marking the arrival of the judgment of the living as a point in time, and also marking 9/11 as the beginning of the period of the judgment of the living.

Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Joel 2:12–15.

This is the second time Joel commands that a trumpet be blown. The “trumpets” in Joel are both warnings of the approaching executive judgment of the seven last plagues, and are set within the context of the Laodicean call for repentance and the imminent close of probation.

Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Isaiah 58:1.

Isaiah, Joel, John and Peter are all representing the one hundred and forty-four thousand of the last days, as does Jeremiah who identifies when the trumpet is to be sounded.

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken. Jeremiah 6:16, 17.

The trumpet sounded in these last days at 9/11, and the latter rain then began to fall upon those who chose the good way and walked therein. It is then that the angel of Revelation eighteen descended.

“The latter rain is to fall upon the people of God. A mighty angel is to come down from heaven, and the whole earth is to be lighted with his glory.” Review and Herald, April 21, 1891.

When the great buildings of New York were brought down on 9/11, the mighty angel descended and the latter rain began to fall.

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

On 9/11 the latter rain began to sprinkle in advance of its full outpouring at the Sunday law.

“The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. Here are ‘the times of refreshing’ to which the apostle Peter looked forward when he said: ‘Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus.’ Acts 3:19, 20.” The Great Controversy, 611, 612.

The perfect fulfillment of the “times of refreshing” occurs when you are living, for the warning is to “repent,” which is impossible to do if you are dead. The “times of refreshing” arrives when the “sins” of living souls might still be “blotted out”. The “times of refreshing” began on 9/11, thus identifying the beginning of the judgment of the living. Pentecost is repeated at the close of the gospel dispensation. When the “times of refreshing” arrived, the events typified at Pentecost began

to repeat.

“It is with an earnest longing that I look forward to the time when the events of the day of Pentecost shall be repeated with even greater power than on that occasion. John says, ‘I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.’ Then, as at the Pentecostal season, the people will hear the truth spoken to them, every man in his own tongue.

“God can breathe new life into every soul that sincerely desires to serve Him, and can touch the lips with a live coal from off the altar, and cause them to become eloquent with His praise. Thousands of voices will be imbued with the power to speak forth the wonderful truths of God’s Word. The stammering tongue will be unloosed, and the timid will be made strong to bear courageous testimony to the truth. May the Lord help His people to cleanse the soul temple from every defilement, and to maintain such a close connection with Him that they may be partakers of the latter rain when it shall be poured out.” Review and Herald, July 20, 1886.

We will continue in the next article.

And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.

So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Zechariah 4:1–6.