

"Watchman, what of the night?"



"The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you, the hour and the end!" Ezekiel 7:6 (Moffatt)

"LIGHT SHINING IN THE DARKNESS"

A 1999 WWN Article reconsidered

Editor's Preface

We begin this first Issue of WWN for 2020 with a re-presentation of a write-up taken from WWN, XXXII - Nov. 1999. ¹ Following our previous year long focus on "Last Generation Theology" (L.G.T.), this editor was contemplating what subject to present next in the thought paper.

During the course, I came across an article written by Brother Christopher Stojanov. Immediately, after rereading his essay, I was convinced that it would be a fitting presentation for this Issue of WWN. This work, in light of Luke 21: 24 ² touches upon principles and consequences involved in the recognition and following of truth historically as advanced through fulfilled biblical prophecy.

► A subscriber awhile back inquired as to whether the Iowa Foundation planned on writing material on the Three Angels' Messages. We have written a short, concise tri-fold tract as a handout for evangelistic outreach. It is inserted in this Issue of WWN for your reproduction and distribution. Two PDF versions are also available on our website.

Light Shining In The Darkness

Christopher Stojanov

(Footnotes and minor corrections by current editor)

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4: 6).

In this verse, we have a revelation for our deepest meditation, and prolonged contemplation. The truth here suggested is so deep and yet so exalted, that the Apostle Paul reached back to the crea-



tion of the world for an illustration to help us understand how the Word of God alone can and will dispel darkness. That Word "was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John 1: 9). Jesus, the Word made flesh, proclaimed, "I am the light of the world" (John 8: 12).

That Light had been penetrating the darkness across the centuries of time. In their sojourn in Egypt the children of Israel had to a large degree lost the truth which had been committed to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The meaning of the sacrificial system and the significance of the Sabbath were all but forgotten during the years of their captivity, surrounded as they were by spiritual darkness. God saw their sufferings and heard their cry. He came down to deliver them out of their bondage and out of darkness. He said to Moses at the burning bush:

"I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them" (Exodus 3:7-8).

God sent a man, a prophet for their deliverance. Moses, as that prophet, was a type of the Prophet to come to dispel darkness. Through Moses, God gave in symbolism the most wonderful truth man was to ever know - the light of the Sanctuary. God instructed Moses, "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." (Exodus 25: 8). God wanted to dwell among His creatures made in His image, and gave to them the best that He could give, "light amid darkness," which we call "the Sanctuary Message." That message and the true understanding of it can dispel all darkness.

The building of the Sanctuary, the material used, the contrast between its inner bril-

liance and outward covering, represented God's love for humanity as would be seen in "the Word coming in the flesh" - our sinful flesh. Its services prefigured the ministry which He as Victim and Priest would perform for man.

The whole of the Sanctuary services called for the exercise of faith. From the lone entrance into the Court to the Most Holy Place of God's presence, the exercise of faith was required. Jesus said of Himself, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10: 9). He is represented by the lone entrance. It was a door of faith. Those coming to the Altar were to follow closely the Priestly acts. This was especially necessary when on the Day of Atonement, Israel gathered at the Sanctuary, and the High Priest entered the Tabernacle. They entered with him by faith.

It is safe to say that the Israelites did not fully understand the message of the Sanctuary, or exercise their faith in Him who revealed Himself in the Most Holy Place. The forty years of wilderness wanderings testifies to this fact. They did not find God's way because, as Asaph would sing centuries later:

"Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary" (Psalms 77: 13).

Through the centuries of their national existence, God sought to guide Israel by sending them prophets to awaken and warn them. Some of these they mocked, others they persecuted and killed. Their continued unbelief and rejection of light brought darkness and subsequently led them into captivity in Babylon. The Temple was destroyed and His Presence was no longer with them. The very symbol of truth which God in mercy provided so He could dwell among them was destroyed, and His courts forsaken. Yet God didn't forget His promise.

At the time appointed, God sent light. The Scripture reads:

"Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem." (Ezra 1: 2-3)

The Temple was to be rebuilt. God loved His people - He made it possible for His house to be built again. He heard their "cry." He wanted to be with them and once again dwell in their midst. He wanted them to have faith in Him, and follow the Priest wherever He goes. Light would dispel the darkness; God was in their midst.

But as the centuries continued, darkness again came upon Israel because the meaning of the sanctuary was perverted and its services became meaningless rites due to the traditions of the religious leaders. The true message of the Sanctuary was lost and darkness enveloped the people. The record reads:

"The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." (Matthew 4: 16).

When the Messiah came, the people were sitting in darkness. God had given a prophecy as to when the Messiah was to appear, yet the people sat in darkness. This darkness was due in a large degree because of the teachings of the leaders of the Jewish Church. Due to the "lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4: 6), and the ignorance which darkness brings, the people did not understand the time of their visitation.

The Light of heaven had come down to them; the people were sitting in darkness.

God wanted to dwell with them, and when the time was fulfilled, He came in person to His Temple to abide with them, a boy of 12 years of age. The Temple which represented Himself, He now visits. To His mother's questioning, Jesus responded, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2: 49). The ASV translates this question, "knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" ³ And Moffatt renders it, "I had to be at my Father's house?" ⁴ Jesus said, "I must," "I had to be," i.e., "It is absolutely necessary for Me to be in my Father's house, and being in my Father's house, I must be doing my Father's business!"

Jesus was twelve years of age in A.D. 8, and the first Passover following would have been in A.D. 9. In A.D. 6, Archelaus was removed from the throne, and Judea became a Roman province. Until that time, there had always been someone of Jewish blood ruling over Judea. But following A.D. 6 there was no longer a ruler of Jewish blood on the throne. This brought the expectation in Israel to a high pitch. Why? Because of a prophecy. It read:

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Genesis 49: 10).

"Shiloh" is another term for the Messiah. The sceptre was not to depart from Judah until He came. In other words, there was to be someone of Jewish blood on the throne of Judah until the Messiah would appear. But now on the vacated throne sat a Roman governor; "Shiloh" must be around! He appeared, just a boy of 12, before the Doctors of the Law, the leaders of the Church, yet the people were sitting in darkness. Light came to penetrate that darkness, but they did not

recognize Him. (John 1: 5). They knew not the time of their visitation.

This prophecy of Genesis 49: 10 is not a "time prophecy," but an "event prophecy." By the event taking place, something was fulfilled. The God of history (His-story) gives a prophecy and then gives the light of its fulfilment in the way He chooses. The One that gave the prophecy came to His Temple at an appointed time. To the Priests, the Leaders and the General Conference of Judaism, He came. His knowledge of the Scriptures astonished them, but they perceived not the time of their visitation. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4: 6). They understood not the words of Malachi: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant" (Malachi 3: 1).

Today there are those who, students of the Bible, are aware of the moral decline, and doctrinal deviations which mark the S.D.A. Church, but who believe that God will not hold them as individuals responsible for the condition of the body. One does not have to be a scholar to recognize that the Church has changed. Since the 1960s the Church has been declining to the point that presently you can believe, what prior to 1960 would have been considered abject heresy, just so long as you continue to support the financial structure of the Church. This time, not as Judah of old who was taken into captivity to Babylon, the Church has willingly gone into captivity - darkness has come over her.

The God of history does not change. "I am the Lord, I change not" (Malachi 3: 6). His method of dealing with one situation at one point in time does not change at another

point in time. In other words, God is consistent. He has given light to scatter the darkness through a prophecy fulfilled in our own day. That prophecy is found in Luke 21: 24. It is an "event" prophecy, not a "time" prophecy, and unless we understand this prophecy, we will continue in darkness.

One of the landmarks of the Adventist Movement is "the Temple of God, seen by His truth-loving people in heaven, and the ark containing the law of God." (C.W.E., p. 30).⁵ This landmark requires faith and an understanding of the typical services performed in the earthly model given to Israel at Mt. Sinai. Through the type, we understand the great antitype and the ministry of our High Priest as He enters into the final work of the atonement. By faith we follow Him in the last act of the final atonement.

To us has been given this "Sanctuary" truth as a sacred trust. But more than just a doctrine, God wants to dwell with us and in us. He wants us as His temple. This is only possible through faith and acceptance of Christ and His righteousness. He designs to accomplish His objective in a generation of believers. Those who will "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (Revelation 14: 4),⁶ will follow Him now by carefully heeding His words and prophecy for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10: 17). How can we really "follow the Lamb" if we cannot accept His own prophecy for this time, which He gave when He came to be the Lamb which was to take away the sin of the world?

Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." (John 10: 9). In accepting the prophecy of Jesus in Luke 21: 24, the light will dispel the darkness which now engulfs us, and we shall "find pasture" -

be fed the word of truth, pure and unadulterated! In other words, Truth will become clearer and the words of life easier to understand.

This prophecy which Jesus gave also shows us what our relationship is to be to the S.D.A. Church. Are we to stay in it and seek to purify it, or do we do something else? "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalms 11: 3) The foundations, with their basic pillar have been destroyed, what can we do?

Connected with this prophecy, in the same setting, Jesus also had given the prophecy concerning the fall of Jerusalem (Luke 21: 20), and told those who would believe, when the sign was given, what to do. If they had stayed in Jerusalem what would have happened to them? If we cannot see and heed the message contained in the fulfilment of the final sign, what will happen to us?

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: BUT THE LORD SHALL ARISE UPON THEE, AND HIS GLORY

SHALL BE SEEN UPON THEE." (Isaiah 60: 1-2; emphasis added). ❖

1. William H. Grotheer, *"Watchman, what of the night?"* (Ozone, AR: Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi, Inc., XXXII - Nov. 1999), 2-4.
2. (For our concern in this regard see): Gary L. Patrick, *"Watchman, what of the night?"* (Nora Springs, IA: Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Iowa, Inc., Issue # 19 - Oct. / Nov. 2016, "Luke 21: 24 - A Continuing Conundrum ... Why?"), 1-7.
3. American Standard Edition, *The Holy Bible* (New York, NY: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1901), <https://www.biblestudytools.com/asv/luke/2.html>
4. James Moffatt, *The Bible, A New Translation* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1954 Ed.), 73.
5. Ellen G. White, *Counsels To Writers And Editors* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1946), 30.
6. This is undoubtedly a reference to the "hundred forty and four thousand" (Revelation 7: 4; 14: 1, 3), the 'last generation' of living believers that will receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit without measure to prepare them for translation without experiencing death when Christ comes "the second time without sin unto salvation." (Hebrews 9: 28). See also 1 Corinthians 15: 51-55, and compare with 1 Thessalonians 4: 15-17.

* All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

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“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her ... Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

④. The fall of Babylon is repeated. Here is the second distinct call that is made to the apostate churches. The time will come when those who love God supremely can no longer remain in connection with them. The people of God that are still in Babylon will heed the call to “come out of her.” This separation that is proclaimed will be the last message of mercy given to the world. Those who stay in Babylon will open themselves to receive “strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (2 Thess. 2:11). Afterwards, when the cases of all have been decided, the seven last plagues shortly follow. The wicked will experience the wrath of God for refusing to receive “the love of the truth” (2 Thess. 2:10).

◆ “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord;” “and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (2 Cor. 6:17, 16). This is the arrangement of the everlasting covenant. “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new” (Rev. 21:5).

THE inhabitants of the world are to be warned that Jesus is about to finish His high priestly ministry in heaven. This life-and-death message will cause each person to make a decision for or against God. Truth will be seen in its clearness so that those who heed not the warning are found without excuse. Thereafter, human probation comes to a final end. No one on earth knows the moment of its closing.

Conversely, the cry of the ungodly is “Peace and safety” (1 Thess. 5:3). The world is deceived into believing that it is entering a golden era. That time will be short-lived because “sudden destruction cometh.” God’s vengeance, the seven last plagues, is poured out and followed shortly by the return of Jesus to “judge and make war” (Rev. 19:11). While the righteous are given immortality, He will destroy the wicked with “flaming fire” (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

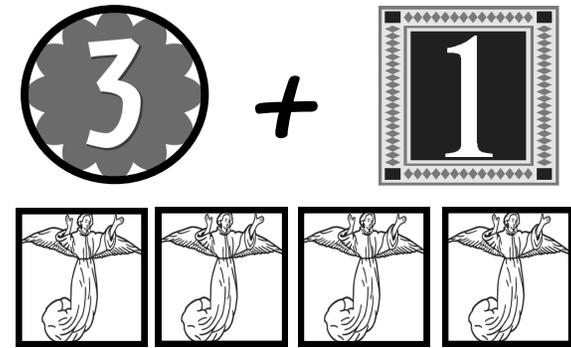
That great Day of reckoning is fast approaching. Now is the time of preparation. Repent in deep humility and live according to the expressed will of God. “Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh” (Mk. 13:35). ❖

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WILL the world end without any warning from God? Thanks to His mercy, that is not going to happen. Soon, the trio of angels that are presented in Revelation 14:6-12, will finish proclaiming their end-time, threefold message along with the fourth angel of Revelation 18:1-4. What each has to say is important to know. Before it’s too late, God’s faithful remnant people will alert earth’s inhabitants of the vital actions needed in order to be saved.

NOAH, a preacher of righteousness for 120 years to the antediluvian world, gives us a picture of what God did with a sinful generation when a period of probation was closing. In Noah’s time, wickedness, evil, corruption, and violence filled the land continually. Being told of God’s plan, Noah proceeded to build an ark. During its construction, he warned the people that God would bring a flood of water upon the earth to destroy the wicked. Noah’s message centered on repentance and reformation: follow God and seek refuge in the ark before its door is shut by Him. (Gen. 7:16).

SINFULNESS is reaching another historic level today. The messages of these angels are to prepare a people to stand in “that great day of God Almighty” (Rev. 16:14).

"Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

①. An important work is going on in the heavenly sanctuary – the antitypical Day of Atonement. There in the Most Holy Place, in preparation for His second coming to earth, Jesus as our Great High Priest is progressing with the pre-Advent judgment. He's in the process of cleansing the sanctuary above from the record of sin and His people alive on earth from ongoing sin and its defilement. This is where the world's focus needs to be placed. Every person's case is to be decided either for salvation or destruction, so now is the moment to seek true repentance. The sins of all the truly penitent will be blotted from the books of heaven by virtue of the atoning blood of Christ and transferred upon Satan, the antitypical scapegoat (Lev. 16:9-10, 20-22).

■ The Ten Commandments of God, as exemplified in the life of Christ, are the standard of character in the judgment. One of those commandments is alluded to here with the words, "him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Part of the 4th commandment states, "the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day" (Ex. 20:11). Sunday is a spurious sabbath made by man. The seventh day Sabbath directs our worship to God as the Creator through Christ, the "Lord also of the sabbath" (Mk. 2:28).

"Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

②. Understanding what the city of "Babylon" represents is crucial to this prophecy. In Revelation 17:5, the word "mystery" is descriptive of Babylon, making it a mystical (symbolical) entity. This indicates that under the name (character) of Babylon it is a power like that of ancient Babylon. During the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar (605 - 562 BC), Babylon was the most magnificent city in the world. But something evil was going on in it that would bring about its destruction.

▶ Babylon served heathen deities. Nebuchadnezzar had a golden image of a man made that was 90 feet tall. He commanded "people, nations, and languages" to "worship" it. (Dan.3:4-5). Later, a new king reigned and blasphemed the true God. He ordered a great feast in the palace that turned into a massive orgy. While misusing the vessels of the Lord's temple, they praised the gods of silver, gold, brass, iron, wood, and stone. Little did they know that Babylon was about to fall and be "weighed in the balances" (Dan. 5:27). "Babylon is fallen, is fallen" (Is. 21:9).

▶ The name "Babylon" in Revelation is figurative of all "fallen" denominational churches that have abandoned biblical truths. Babylon's false doctrines, her "wine," are intoxicating the world. God wants them to break their allegiance with Satan and all those united with him.

"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation."

③. This warning is to us individually – "If any man." The "beast" signifies a power that is in direct opposition to the work of God. At an early date, the apostle Paul saw a human agency creeping into the Christian Church with gross errors. As it grew in strength, great apostasy ("a falling away") would follow. The "man of sin ... Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:3-4). History and the Bible identify this power as the Roman Papacy.

◆ The *Catholic National*, July 1895 remarked, "The pope is not only the representative of Christ, but he is Jesus Christ Himself, hidden under a veil of flesh." The pope proudly proclaims to be the Vicar (in place) of Christ. For instance, to demonstrate its supremacy, the Papacy substituted Sunday for Saturday as the Lord's Day. The papal power is not alone in committing abominations, it has daughters: "THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS" (Rev. 17:5). Many other religious bodies have endorsed this change, along with other wrong teachings, giving her their mark of allegiance. An individual is strongly warned not to become a part of this unholy alliance.