

"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)

► THIS ISSUE'S READING

THE SANCTUARY TRUTH - Part 8 pg. 1

Steps into the Roman Church pg. 6

Editor's Preface

The content of this Issue's article was largely inspired by the book, The Consecrated Way, by A.T. Jones. It draws from and roughly follows the basic outline in chapter 13 of the book which, for further study on this subject, this editor highly recommends.

OBSERVATIONS AND REVIEW # 2 THE GREAT APOSTASY

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21: 34-36).

With this warning, Jesus particularly stressed to His disciples the universal unpreparedness of "the whole earth" at the time of His second coming. His return on "that day (would) come upon [them] unawares ... as a snare" (Gr. *pagis*; "a snare, trap, noose ... i.e. unexpectedly, suddenly, because birds and beasts are caught unawares"). ¹ The Apostle Paul, also within a context expounding on the return of Christ, wrote to the church at Thessalonica about twenty years later and reiterated and elaborated on



this same theme:

"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." (1 Thessalonians 5: 1-6).

The main point of this counsel given by Jesus and Paul is clear and precise. If we turn our attention away from looking 'heavenward' as we await our Lord's return and instead focus that attention 'earthward,' our minds will be so burdened with the things of this world - all its excesses and cares (anxieties, concerns, worries, etc.) - we will be lulled into an overwhelming state of stupor. Instead of seeking "those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (concentrating on the intercessory ministry of Jesus in heaven as the overall plan of salvation progresses toward the restoration of all things), we will rather concentrate all our hopes and aspirations on the progression of events here on the earth. At last, Satan will so deceive the world into false security with a counterfeit offer of "Peace and safety" for all, that

when Jesus does return, the inhabitants on the earth who have not heeded the heaven-sent warning will be so utterly surprised and caught off-guard by the sudden, unexpected manner of His appearing, that "sudden destruction [will come] upon them" as a result of their unpreparedness - "and they shall not escape."

Though the Thessalonian Christians "[knew] perfectly" about the Lord's coming as a "thief," there were certain aspects of it in regard to the "times and seasons" that they apparently misunderstood. Shortly afterward, Paul wrote them another letter; in part to further address and clarify the issue:

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 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. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" (2 Thessalonians 2: 1-5).

They were *not* to anticipate that the second advent of Jesus and "our gathering together unto him" (as detailed in 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-17) was "at hand" (immi-

nent then). There was to be no deception of any manner on this point! While "that day" will indeed come unexpectedly, there would be certain things *preceding* it. Paul directs their attention specifically on the "falling away" (Gr. *he apostasia*; "the rebellion" - "the apostasy").¹ In fact, the details given in this text concerning the blasphemous "man of sin" (and in verses 6-12 which follow) is clearly describing the same satanic power symbolized in Daniel, chapter 8, by the "little horn" (see Daniel 8: 9-13). What he writes in these verses is nothing new to his audience. Earlier when he was with them in person at Thessalonica he had instructed them about "these things" at that time:

"Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ." (Acts 17: 1-3).

It was while reasoning with them out of the Scriptures the proofs of Jesus' Messiahship, that he also (out of the Scriptures) told them about this falling away which should come, therein revealing the man of sin, the mystery of iniquity, the son of perdition, who would oppose himself to God and exalt himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, even putting himself in the place of God and passing

himself off as God. And where in the Scriptures did Paul find this revelation to tell all this to the Thessalonians? It is found in the eighth chapter of Daniel, and it was from there that the apostle expounded it to the brethren while he was with them. For the very expressions which he uses in 2 Thessalonians - of which he says: "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" - are in Daniel 8: 11-12:

"Yea, he (*the little horn - the man of sin*) magnified himself even to the prince of the host (*"against the Prince of princes" [see verse 25] - Christ*), and by him (*the man of sin*) the daily sacrifice (*the continual service, the ministry, and the priesthood of Christ*) was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary (*the sanctuary of the prince of the host, of the Prince of princes - Christ*) was cast down. And an host was given him (*the man of sin*) against the daily sacrifice (*against the continual service, of the ministry of Christ, the Prince of the host*) by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered." (emphasis added).

While this places the time of "the apostasy" *after* the days of the apostles, it is also clear that there is a definite connection between this power and the pagan Roman Empire of apostolic times. Paul declares in this same counsel written to the Thessalonians that "the mystery of iniquity doth already work" (2 Thessalonians 2: 7) and Jesus speaks of "the abomination of desola-

tion, spoken of by Daniel the prophet (referring to Daniel 8: 12-13; 9: 27; 11: 31; 12: 11), stand[ing] in the holy place," as "Jerusalem compassed with armies" - meaning pagan Roman armies in 66 A.D. (compare Matthew 24: 15; Mark 13: 14; with Luke 21: 20). It was a Roman power that attacked, desecrated, and devastated the Jerusalem temple (sanctuary) and its services in 70 A.D. Accordingly, sometime after this "desolation" of the earthly temple, the "falling away" [the apostasy] would occur "reveal[ing]" another Roman power ("that man of sin"), linked with and similar in character to imperial Rome, which will then do likewise also to "the temple of God." Thus, the Scriptures show that what pagan imperial Rome did physically to the visible, earthly temple (sanctuary) in 70 A.D. - which sanctuary was but "the [figure] of the true" (Hebrews 9: 24), is what this latter Roman power would do to the invisible, heavenly temple (sanctuary) sometime *after* 70 A.D. - which sanctuary was itself the actual, true one (Hebrews 8: 1-2). The identity of this other Roman power (Paul's "man of sin," Daniel's "little horn") is now a matter of recognizably defined history:

"The removal of the capital of the Empire from Rome to Constantinople in 330, left the Western Church, practically free from imperial power, to develop its own form of organisation. The Bishop of Rome, in the seat of the Caesars, was now the greatest man in the West, and was soon forced to become the political as well as the spiritual head. To the Western world Rome was still

the political capital - hence the whole habit of mind, all ambition, pride, and sense of glory, and every social prejudice favoured the evolution of the great city into the ecclesiastical capital. Civil as well as religious disputes were referred to the successor of Peter for settlement ... It is not difficult to understand how, under these responsibilities, the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, established in the pre-Constantine period, was emphasised and magnified after 313. The importance of this fact must not be overlooked. The organisation of the Church was thus put on the same divine basis as the revelation of Christianity. This idea once accepted led inevitably to the mediaeval Papacy. The priesthood came, in consequence, to assume all the powers of the great Founder [Christ!]. The Mosaic forms, as well as the Roman empire, suggested the convenient models and authoritative examples for the new structure. It is not difficult to detect in the oligarchical Church polity of the fourth and fifth centuries a yearning for unity. It was but natural, therefore, that Rome should boldly take the remedy into her own hands and pose as the authorised representative of the visible unity demanded by the Christian world. The position Rome had already attained and the worthy part played in the organisation and spread of the gospel gave her a superior advantage, and enabled, nay compelled, her bishop to become the one high-priest, the 'universal bishop.'" ²

As the historical record clearly outlines, gradually the Roman church bishop literal-

ly assumed the headship (power) over the Western world, politically as well as spiritually, once occupied by the Roman Emperors. This eventually led to the development of the Papacy in the medieval period. It modeled itself after the example of "the Mosaic forms as well as the Roman Empire" thus creating a religio-political system which was a counterfeit and apostate form of Christianity. This "new structure" consisted of a perverse amalgam of Judeo-paganism. Not only were the political and religious forms of pagan Rome intermixed with Christianity so, too, were "the Mosaic forms." The entire Jewish economy was misinterpreted to support a perverted view of the Levitical sanctuary / temple and its services.

This apostate system, masquerading as the true church, taught the professed church and the world to fix their attention on it, down here on earth, as the only mediator between them and God. Twisting the true meaning of the Levitical priesthood contrary to New Testament Scripture, it proclaimed the Church's bishops as counterparts of the Jewish high priests, the Church's presbyters as counterparts of the Jewish priests, the Church's deacons as counterparts of the Jewish Levites, and the Church's Eucharist (Lord's Supper) as the counterpart of the Jewish sacrifices. On this point the Writings state:

"The accession of the Roman Church to power marked the beginning of the Dark Ages. As her power increased, the darkness deepened. Faith was transferred from Christ, the true foundation, to the pope of

Rome. Instead of trusting in the Son of God for forgiveness of sins, and for eternal salvation, *the people looked to the pope, and to the priests and prelates to whom he delegated authority.* They were taught that the pope was their earthly mediator and that none could approach God except through him; and, further, that he stood in the place of God to them and was therefore to be implicitly obeyed." (GC, pg. 55, emphasis added).³

In the place of Christ, the only true, divine High Priest by God's appointment in heaven, the Roman Catholic Papacy has substituted a false, sinful, human priesthood by man's appointment on earth. In the place of the true continual ministry of Christ as High Priest, mediating the blood of His own one and only true sacrifice in heaven, the Papacy has substituted a false interim ministry of bloodless, repeated sacrifice in the "daily mass" mediated by a sinful, human priesthood on earth. In the place of the true sanctuary in heaven, "the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man," the Papacy has substituted its own, man-made sanctuary on earth by setting itself up as "the temple of God" through its false claims of being the only true church and vaunting its worldly structures made of wood, stone, and human organizational devisings as "the place of [God's] sanctuary."

Therefore, instead of one true continual divine High Priest, one true continual divine ministry, one true and only divine sacrifice, and one true divine sanctuary, all ordained by God to *actually* take away sin through the mediatorial work of Christ in

heaven, Romanism created and substituted a rival, fraudulent mediatorial system on the earth consisting of many human high priests, many human ministries, many repeated man-made sacrifices, and many worldly sanctuaries. And through this blasphemous counterfeit, performing century after century its many pompous and vain rituals which can *never* take away sin, Papal Rome diverted and directed the hearts and minds of humanity away from heaven and down to the earth. This visible falsehood, which for a very long period of time had captivated the people's senses and concentrated them on a worldly "priesthood" of men that are seen, has shut away from mankind the invisible, true heavenly Priesthood of Christ that is unseen. As prophesied, this satanic Roman power has, through the apostasy, "taken away" the continual heavenly ministry of Jesus and the heavenly sanctuary where He accomplishes this ministry, by "cast[ing] down [this] truth to the ground ... to be trodden under foot" in the manner just outlined both scripturally and historically.

Coming down to our time, the people have been indoctrinated and conditioned for centuries to look to the institution of "the Church" (in reality, its human leaders) on earth to apply and make effectual both the forgiveness and cleansing of sin. This explains the reason "why" the post-Calvary, heavenly, high priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary above is so widely and near universally unknown. It also explains the reason why so many will be unprepared to meet Jesus when he does return the second time. And all of

this in spite of the fact that God's Word has thoroughly instructed and warned us of this great apostasy! ❖ GLP

■ **ANGLICAN ORDINARIATES - A MODEL BACK TO ROME.** On November 4, 2009, Pope Benedict XVI issued an Apostolic Constitution entitled, *ANGLICANORUM COETIBUS* (meaning "Groups of Anglicans"), in response to repeated and insistent petitions of Anglicans to be received into full communion within the Roman Catholic Church.

Recently, in November 2014, Father Dwight Longenecker, a former Anglican priest received into the Roman Church in 1995, wrote an article for Our Sunday Visitor Newsweekly entitled, "A bridge across the Tiber - A look at the Anglican ordinariate five years after Pope Benedict XVI paved the way." In it he discusses and evaluates the roots, formation, progress, and future of the "ordinariate movement" over the last five years:

"The Anglican ordinariate is an extraordinary and unexpected creation. Never before has a pope established a new ecclesial structure like it. It is a brave experiment - an innovative move toward church unity and a controversial action on the part of Rome ... While it was established as a response to a small minority of Anglicans, the Anglican ordinariate could be a bridge across the Tiber [and into the Vatican] not only for Anglicans, *but for many non-Catholic Christians* ... The first five years for the ordinariates have been a time to establish foundations, overcome teething

problems, find their identity and forge their mission ... The weakness of the Anglicans is *the weakness of all Protestants: Lacking a central authority*, they are too a law unto themselves ... If the leaders of the ordinarate can succeed in bringing together and holding in balance the best of the different Anglican streams of tradition, they will have a strong appeal not only to existing Anglicans, but *also to other non-Catholic Christians* and to members of the convergence movement: former Evangelicals who have founded Anglican-style churches. If the ordinarate movement is to survive and thrive, it will need to develop its own strong identity - an identity that will help with the work of evangelization, and an identity *that will draw many from the differing streams of non-Catholic Christianity* into the full unity and communion of Christ's one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church." ⁴ (emphasis added).

The message here is unmistakable. Are you unhappy with your "church" because you and it are focused on and fighting over unbiblical issues? Do you yearn for outward looking unity and a final authoritative voice in all your disputed spiritual matters? Look to the Roman Pope! Come to him! Petition this man for entrance into the "one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church!" Have him provide your disaffected group with an "ordinariate" tailored to accommodate its particular "traditions" and enjoy the bliss of full communion ... with Romanism! (compare Jeremiah 17: 5 with Revelation 13: 18). ❖

1. Joseph Henry Thayer, D.D., *The New Thayer's Greek - English Lexicon Of The New Testament* (Pea-

body, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979, 1981 by Jay P. Green, Sr.), 472, 67.

2. Alexander C. Flick, *The Rise Of The Mediaeval Church And Its Influence On The Civilisation Of Western Europe From The First To The Thirteenth Century* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1909), 168-169.

3. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950), 55.

4. Father Dwight Longenecker, *A bridge across the Tiber* (OSV Newsweekly: Nov. 9, 2014), <https://www.osv.com/OSVNewsweekly/Article/TabId/535/ArtMid/13567/ArticleID/16313/A-bridge-across-the-Tiber.aspx>

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

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Founder	Elder William H. Grotheer
Editor, Publications & Research	Gary L. Patrick
Associate Editor	Dennis J. Tevis
Proofreader	Linda R. Patrick

WEBSITES

www.alfiowa.com

www.adventistlaymen.com

www.adventistalert.com

E-MAIL

Editor - alfia@myomnitel.com

Webmaster - webmaster@adventistlaymen.com

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