

**"GOD'S CHARACTER AND
THE LAST GENERATION"**

- 5 -

"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)

Editor's Preface

With this issue of WWN, we will begin winding down our evaluation of the book *God's Character and the Last Generation*. However, due to the importance that "Last Generation Theology" (L.G.T.) has within the context of a proper biblical understanding of the sanctuary message, we will by God's grace continue presenting this topic in impending issues of the thought paper. Though L.G.T. may not be the focus of the main article then, we believe that it, in close connection with our ongoing coverage of *The Sanctuary Truth*, needs to be frequently dwelt upon as it constitutes the necessary corollary to the "present truth" for our time.

Of interest, it should be noted that since we began this critique of the book, a number of significant things have surfaced over the last few months in this regard. Perhaps the most prominent, was a "first ever" symposium on Last Generation Theology held at the Sacramento Central Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sacramento, California, on March 22-23, 2019. Attendees, numbering from 400 to 500 "in regular attendance" gathered primarily in response to the attacks on L.G.T. that "for the past 60 years ... continues to be the target of recent books that have mischaracterized the true message of LGT." ¹ Along similar lines, this editor and associate editor attended a series of meetings held at the Le Center Seventh-day Adventist Church in Le Center, Minnesota, on July 13, 2019. The speaker, Pastor Kevin Paulson, presented a series of topics which all centered



around the truth of L.G.T. within the context of the sanctuary teaching and related issues. It was all ably supported by numerous texts from both the Bible and the Writings. Although well attended, there were a number of dissenters present who voiced their opposition toward the basic tenor of the message; those objections particularly surfaced during the "Question and Answers" session at the close of Paulson's presentations. And while, overall, he handled it in a respectful, courteous - yet pointed manner, our own dialog afterwards with some of those who disagreed with L.G.T. revealed just how far astray this excursion from truth has steadily and subtly led a growing number of our professed brethren today. It is our settled conviction that one of the best ways to help stay the tide of this increasing infiltration of error into present truth is by recalling and documenting its progressive history. The Lord willing, this we plan on doing in upcoming publications of WWN.

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Critique: Chapter 10 (with excerpts from Chapters 7 and 12) --

This chapter of the book, as we briefly noted in Issue # 32 of WWN, encapsulates "what is perhaps the most forceful polemic against L.G.T. found in this book." ² The essay, entitled *The Significance, Meaning, and Role of Christ's Atonement*, is presented by Dr. Jiří Moskala who is one of the two co-editors of this volume. It consists of an untitled introductory overview section of the subject followed by four subtitled sections. This work contains a copious number of footnotes scattered throughout its entirety which are referenced in the 96 "endnotes" which closes out the composition.

The first paragraph, which briefly and preliminarily exalts "Jesus Christ [as] our atonement (or the atoning sacrifice)," sets the tenor for the next statement:

"This chapter focuses on the meaning of Christ's atonement using as a background the assertion by last generation theology (LGT) proponents that 'Jesus is currently [from 1844] making the final atonement' as part of the 'cleansing of the [heavenly] sanctuary.'"

What is then outlined from this point on is the author's understanding of this "assertion." For instance, this quotation from page 94 of the book *Cleanse and Close: Last Generation Theology in 14 Points* ³ by Pastor Larry Kirkpatrick (an "LGT proponent") is first set forth:

"The sanctuary is cleansed when God has a people who have become so settled into the truth that they will never again be moved to doubt Him or to disobey known duty. The torrent of sin that has needed forgiveness is dried up."

Then Moskala *asserts*: "This point *implies* that this last generation of saints will live sinless lives *in order* to finally and definitively defeat Satan and prove that God is right; thus, *they* will provide *the ground* for the vindication of God by *their* perfection of character and the great controversy can be closed. By *their* blameless lives, *the last generation of saints* will prove the validity of God's law and demonstrate that Satan is a liar. The final atonement is then defined in close connection to the entire sanctification and perfection of the final generation of faithful believers, the final defeat of Satan, and the final vindication of God *by them*." (emphasis added).

Again, a pattern emerges which we have already pinpointed in previous critiques of

this book. Notice, that "the ground (basis) for the vindication of God" is represented by the author as being provided *solely* by "the last generation of saints" who "by their blameless lives ... prove the validity of God's law and demonstrate that Satan is a liar." This "entire sanctification and perfection of the final generation of faithful believers" which "the final atonement is ... defined in close connection" with provides "the final defeat of Satan, and the final vindication of God by them" (the last generation saints). There is no mention of anything that God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit does regarding the final atonement - in fact, as stated, one could easily come to the conclusion that the final atonement itself is *accomplished* by the final generation of saints! Surprisingly, this misrepresentation of L.G.T.'s position can be shown by referencing the footnote which the author himself provides respecting this quote. Endnote # 7 provides "the full text of LGT's point ten" found on page 94 of *Cleanse and Close* which in context continues right after where Moskala left off as follows: "Christ's presence remains with those who have chosen to follow Him. The Holy Spirit empowers obedience even after the ministry of forgiveness is closed." This clearly reveals that the presence of Christ and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit is *the means* by which *God* gains the final (eschatological) victory with His people. Simply put, the final victory consists of *God vindicating Himself through His last generation saints*.

Moving along, the author continues defining L.G.T. using similar methods to misrepresent other "LGT proponents" - Pastor Dennis Priebe, Dr. Herbert Douglass, and (of course) Elder M.L. Andreasen - throughout the whole chapter. And while we could keep on exposing this dishonesty in each case, we believe

that the crux of this entire book is expressed most succinctly under the second subtitled section: "Critique of the LGT view," which itself is divided into seven numbered points. On page 201, under (point #) "4. *It disregards the fact that Christ is currently applying the benefits of His substitutionary atonement in the heavenly sanctuary*" - Moskala writes:

"The intercessory ministry of Jesus applies to the individual believer the benefits and results of His victorious death on the cross as is clearly explained in Fundamental Belief 24. It is not the case that Jesus is making additional atonement as our Intercessor and our High Priest in heaven as LGT supporters claim. Our church's official statement is very eloquent that Jesus Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary, where he 'ministers on our behalf, making available to believers *the benefits of His atoning sacrifice* offered once for all on the cross [cf. Hebrews 9: 26-28].'"

Mark well the wording which we underlined for emphasis. According to this, there is nothing *additional* that Jesus "as our Intercessor and our High Priest in heaven" is doing regarding atonement that He has not already done as the "atoning sacrifice" at the cross. Thus, *all* the salvific work of Christ is embodied *only* in the sacrificial offering of Himself on the cross. And, lest there be any doubt that this is exactly what this author means, he continues - after presenting a couple of excerpts from The Writings which he apparently supposes are in agreement with his position (rightly understood, they are not!) - with the following definitive statement:

"The same can be said about Christ's heavenly ministry during the antitypical day of atonement *when He is actually not making the final atonement but applying to us the*

results of the cross." (emph. added).

This is a plain, straightforward denial of the *dual* atonement ministry of Jesus and the efficacy of His heavenly high priestly work. In the earthly sanctuary "pattern" (Exodus 25: 8-9; Hebrews 8: 5), for both the daily and yearly ministrations, the slaying of the sacrificial animal out in the courtyard at "the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Leviticus 4: 4; 16: 7) - which corresponds to the antitypical sacrificial death of Christ on the cross at Calvary (Hebrews 7: 27; 1 Peter 2: 24) - provided the "necessary" means (i.e., the blood - compare Leviticus 17: 11 with Hebrews 8: 3; 9: 22-23) for the officiating priest, by an application (manipulation) of the blood, to "make" atonement for sin. In the type, it was only *after* the common priest/high priest took the blood and applied (manipulated) it that atonement was said to be made. For the daily service, after detailing the manner of priestly application (whether corporately or individually), the Scriptures testify:

"... and the priest shall make an atonement for them / him, and it shall be forgiven them / him." (Leviticus 4: 20, 26, 31, 35).

This typical daily atonement for sin obtained *forgiveness* for God's ancient covenant people, National Israel, throughout the whole year and corresponds to Christ's antitypical heavenly intercessory mediation to procure atoning forgiveness of sin for God's new covenant people, spiritual Israel, which work Jesus entered into upon His ascension into Heaven in 31 A.D. (Luke 24: 46-51; Acts 5: 30-31; 13: 38-39; Hebrews 4: 14-16).

Likewise, for the yearly service (Day of Atonement - Leviticus 23: 27), the Scriptures declare:

"For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye

may be clean from all your sins before the Lord ...

"And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary (second apartment), and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation (first apartment), and for the altar (of burnt offering out in the court), and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation." (Ibid. 16: 30, 33).

This typical yearly final atonement for sin obtained *cleansing* for National Israel "on that day" and corresponds to Christ's final antitypical heavenly intercessory/judgmental atonement for sin to cleanse the sanctuary/temple in heaven and God's people - His spiritual "temple/house" on earth (1 Corinthians 3: 16-17; Ephesians 2: 19-22; 1 Timothy 3: 15; Hebrews 3: 6) - from all record (of confessed offences registered in heaven) and defilement (of active commission of sin by the final generation of living saints on earth), which atoning work Jesus began in 1844 A.D. (Daniel 8: 13-14; Acts 3: 19-21; Revelation 11: 15-19; 14: 6-13).

Again, these texts conclusively reveal that the death of the sacrificial victim did not, alone (of itself only), "actually" make the atonement. In the earthly sanctuary type, it was not until the priestly mediation of the blood was accomplished that the atonement was made (effected). This truth, in the strongest possible sense, *in no way* downgrades, diminishes, dilutes, marginalizes, minimizes, (etc.), the absolute importance and centrality of the sacrificial offering in the least! In fact, the type itself clearly shows that the death of sacrificial animal was the *crucial beginning* of the atonement procedure and without it the priest could never make the atonement as he would have nothing (effectual) to make the atonement with!

The New Testament also, within the framework of the Levitical ceremonial services, brings out this point in the context of Jesus being the antitypical fulfillment of the earthly sanctuary system:

"For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: *wherefore it is of necessity that this man (Jesus) have somewhat also to offer.*" (Hebrews 8: 3, emph. added).

"For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people ...

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. *It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.*" (Ibid. 9: 19, 22-23, emph. added).

Moskala, along with the other essayists of this book, above all else goes to great lengths to magnify and exalt the importance of our Lord's sacrificial offering on the cross. Certainly, *of itself*, there is nothing biblically objectionable to this whatsoever. And to be sure, much of the material in this chapter and throughout the other chapters of this volume generally does an excellent job of extolling this grand truth. Sadly, though, this is largely done in contrast with L.G.T. in order to make it appear that L.G.T. is in opposition to the doctrine of the cross. By presenting scripturally untenable and misleading information, L.G.T. is repeatedly mischaracterized (whether purposely or not) as being in serious conflict with the Bible, the Writings, and sound historic Christian teachings concerning this fundamental tenet of our faith.

However, apart from these misleading distortions, the sanctuary typology outlined above reveals L.G.T. as the true complimentary outcome of the final atonement made by Jesus in heaven at the time of the antitypical Day of Atonement. The work of Christ as our Great High Priest *during this time* cleanses not only the *record* of confessed sin (corporate and individual) by God's people registered in the heavenly sanctuary, but also cleanses the last generation of *living* saints on earth ("the hundred and forty and four thousand") from *the defilement* of ongoing continuance in acts of sin - by the indwelling of the fullness of the Holy Spirit given to them without measure (Revelation 14: 1-5) - and thus prepares them for translation when Jesus returns "the second time *without sin unto salvation.*" (Hebrews 9: 28, emph. added).

Finally, in closing out this aforementioned section of the chapter, on page 203, under (point #) "7. *It holds an anthropocentric view*" - the author concludes:

"The activities of the last generation, as presented by the defenders of LGT, seem to be self-centered, focused on the accomplishments and perfect characters of that group. Last generation theology language is very anthropocentric (human centered); in the moment of the last generation's ultimate victory, Jesus is actually 'hiding.' The achievements of the last generation, as portrayed by LGT, seem to put the life and death of Jesus and its merits to the periphery; God's crucial actions seem secondary in importance."

This point under the "Critique of the LGT view" could well epitomize the overarching objection that the opponents of L.G.T. have with the two areas of concern that surfaces multiple times throughout this book - the

sinlessness of the last generation and any active participating role of the last generation that contributes in any degree to the vindication of God in the great controversy. It is all interpreted as being "self-centered ... focused on the [works] of that (final) group ... [and therefore] ... is very anthropocentric." Consequently, "as portrayed by LGT ... the life and death of Jesus and its merits" are relegated "to the periphery ... seem secondary in importance." Clearly (again), this depiction of L.G.T. has the final generation doing most of the salvific work of vindicating God, through *their* "activities," *their* "accomplishments," *their* "perfect characters," and *their* "achievements." "In the moment of ... [their] ... ultimate victory," the winning of the great controversy by *their* defeat of Satan, "Jesus is actually 'hiding.'" And incredibly, as so depicted, all of this is said to be "portrayed by LGT" itself! Of course, what is actually "portrayed" by these assertions is little more than an unbalanced, near-total, human centered righteousness by one's own legalistic works to earn merit with God. This in turn begs the question - what is behind this unwarranted misrepresentation of L.G.T. that has caused its detractors to rouse such an aversion to it?

The answer lies, at least partially, with the testimony regarding *their* personal experiences that some of these critics have had with *their* past attempts to become perfect/sinless in order to effect God's favor and the corresponding pressures, frustrations, anxieties, and guilt that accompany all such efforts of self-induced righteousness.

Chapter 7 of this volume, entitled: *Inside the Mind of a Struggling Saint: The Psychology of Perfection*, by H. Peter Swanson, is particularly devoted to an analysis of this very issue, "discussing how we should understand

our struggle with sin and how might it affect our mental health." (page 20).⁴

Moskala himself, who also authored Chapter 12: *Misinterpreted End-Time Issues: Five Myths in Adventism*, in the untitled introductory section of this chapter, chronicles the fact that because of a righteousness by works induced experience, which he grappled with in his "youthful years," his life at that time was "a very sober struggle of faith and full of fear and anxiety." He further explains:

"I was profoundly frustrated. I wanted to be saved, have the assurance of the forgiveness of my sins, experience the joy of salvation, and receive the seal of God, but this complete uncertainty led me to an unhealthy self-examination ...

"I was scared of God, afraid of His judgment, and fearful of the time of the end. I was concentrating on myself, my performance, and my achievements and lived in spiritual schizophrenia. It was a very unfortunate situation because my attitude toward God was not built on gratitude or motivated by love for what He had done and was graciously doing for me" (pages 236-237).

Certainly we can empathize with those who are involved in such spiritually unfulfilling and damaging situations. And while such experiences can have an adverse affect on us in an objective (material/physical) manner personally, we must not allow such personal experiences to subjectively influence our reading, interpreting, and understanding of the biblical/inspired texts. Regarding L.G.T. and related doctrines, it must always be borne in mind that simply because faulty and erroneous characterizations of it have personally resulted in negative experiences with those so involved, this provides no reason to reject this truth based upon those experiences.

Even experts, scholars, and academics, as knowledgeable and objective as they generally appear to be, are not free from the bias and subjectivity that involvement and participation in unhealthy situations can exert upon them.

Regretfully, by continuing to allow experience based emotions and feelings to lead us into a subjective approach to the word of God, the theological deceptions in Adventist circles are only deepening. The growing attacks among us on this and like teachings are only indicative of the growing, stealthy encroachment of falsehood that pervades the Church today. And the fact that our higher institutions of learning are steadily embracing and endorsing it gives it an air of respectability and authority. The admonitions of both the Apostle Peter and Jude are especially applicable at this time:

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust ...

"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things,

though ye know them, and be established in the present truth." (2 Peter 1: 4, 12).

"Beloved ... it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3).

» *To be Continued*

1. Seymour, *Here's What Happened: The Final Generation Symposium in Sacramento* (Piqua, OH: Fulcrum 7 - Your Scriptural Pivot Point, March 29, 2019), <http://www.fulcrum7.com/blog/2019/3/29/heres-what-happened-the-final-generation-symposium-in-sacramento>

2. Gary L. Patrick, *"Watchman, what of the night?"* (Nora Springs, IA: Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Iowa, Inc., Issue # 32 - Dec. 2018/Jan. 2019, "God's Character and the Last Generation - 1 -"), 5. https://www.alfiowa.com/IOWA-BACK-ISSUES/WWN_Issue_32.pdf

3. Larry Kirkpatrick, *Cleanse and Close: Last Generation Theology in 14 Points* (Highland, CA: GCO Press, 2005), 94. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56a433da0e4c11b9a8d2cca3/t/5c86917d4785d32088d2745c/1552322942929/Cleanse+and+Close+Text_watermark.pdf

4. John C. Peckham, [summation of Chapter 7], pg. 20 – column 2, paragraph 2).

* 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	William E. Caloudes

WEBSITES

www.alfiowa.com
www.adventistlaymen.com

E-MAIL

Editor - alfia@myomnitel.com

Webmaster - webmaster@adventistlaymen.com

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