

# "Watchman, what of the night?"

*The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you,  
he hour and the end!*

*Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)*

## THE HAND OF GOD - 2

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### Postscripts

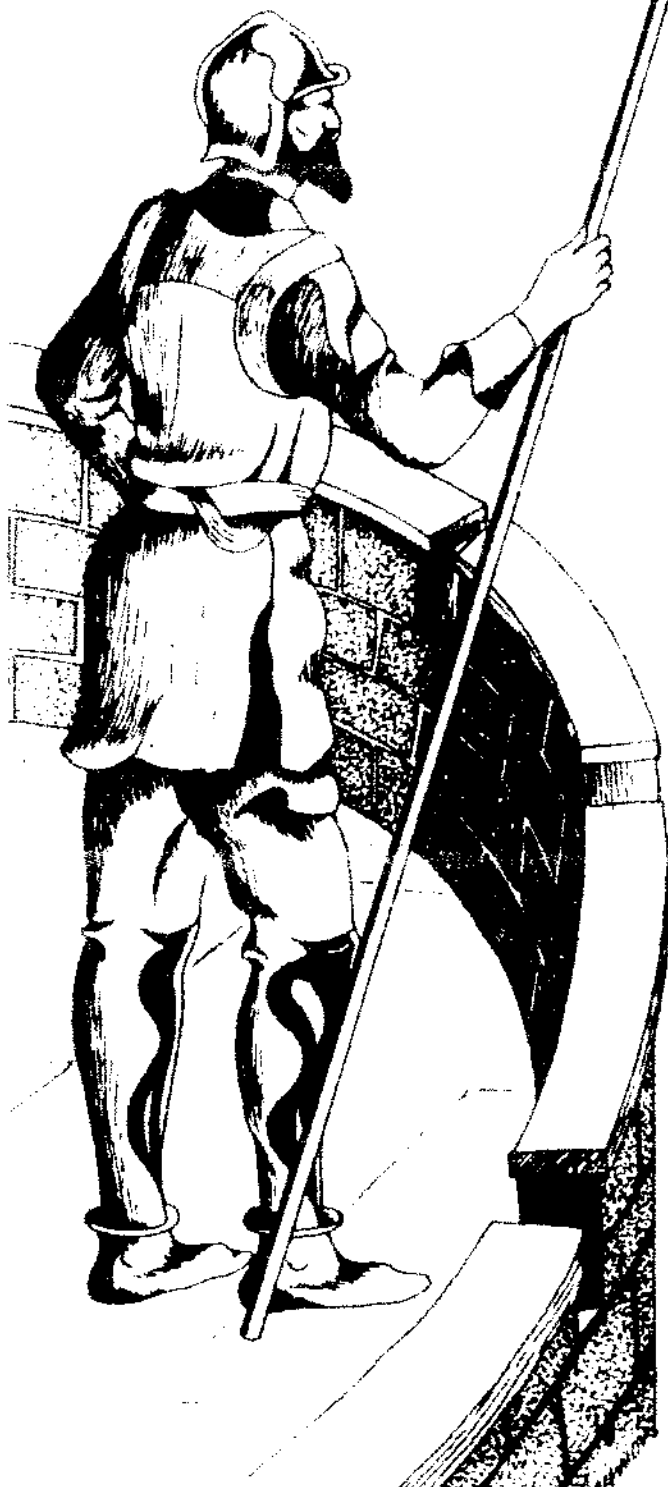
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### Editor's Preface

Not only did Ellen G. White warn the Church that it would be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary as to how it kept the trust committed to it (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 8, p. 247); but counsel was given as to what book and chapter to read which applied in particular "to this generation of the end." In 1906, in the *Australian Union Conference Record* (October 1) she advised: "Read Luke 21. This is the message for this time, and it is written to this generation of the end." Previous to 1906, in a letter to Dr. Kellogg, she wrote: "In the twenty-first chapter of Luke Christ foretold what was to come upon Jerusalem, and with it He connected the scenes which were to take place in the history of the world just prior to the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Letter 20, 1901). The fact is self evident that the synoptic gospels of Matthew and Mark were not named, and the single significant difference in Luke from the other two is verse 24.

The ancient prophet, Amos, revealed God's commitment in His dealing with men. He wrote: "Surely the Lord God will do *nothing*, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (3:7; emphasis supplied). If God committed to a people a sacred trust, and told them that they would be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary as to how they handled that trust, warning them that failure would bring the pronouncement, "Found wanting," would He not also reveal the time when the decision was made? When that "trust" involved a message "to every nation" would not a prophecy indicating the end of the probationary time of the nations be significant?

In this issue, we discuss this question and evidences which would involve the decision of heaven. We close the final "postscript" with a warning of a "signal" that was or is to be given. It has significance and needs to be carefully considered. What does it mean, "Go ye *out* to meet Him"?



## *The Hand of God - 2*

During the final week of Christ's life in our humanity, His disciples asked Him two questions about the future. One was in response to Jesus' declaration that not one of the massive stones where they were walking would "be left here one stone upon another" (Matt. 24:2). To them that had to be the end of the world, and so to the question, "When shall these things be?" they added a second, "What shall be the sign of thy coming and the end of the world?" (verse 3).

Luke's Gospel indicates that Christ answered the questions by forecasting two events which were to occur in the history of Jerusalem. To the first, which we discussed last month, He foretold the surrounding of the city by alien armies (Luke 21:20) as a sign to flee the city. To the second question, Jesus' answer was, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the nations, until the times of the nations be fulfilled" (21:24).

Both answers had to do with probationary time. The first was the judgment on Jerusalem because she had crossed the unseen line. Luke had previously written about Christ's declaration that there would not be left "one stone upon another" when alien armies would besiege and destroy the city. He quoted Christ's words as to why - "Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (19:43-44). The second answer focused on the probationary time of all nations. Both references - Luke 19:44 & 21:24 - use the word, *καιρος*, for "time" rather than *χρονος*, chronological time.

First an explanation of the translation we used for Luke 21:24 - "nations" instead of "Gentiles." The Greek word Luke used was *εθνη* which can be translated either way. It is used four times in verses 24 and 25, two times translated "nations," and two times translated "Gentiles" in the KJV. There is no way that its first use in verse 24 could be translated "Gentiles" and the sentence make sense: - "led captive into all Gentiles (*τα εθνη*)." The same is true of its use in verse 25 - "and upon earth distress of Gentiles" (*εθνων*). Jews escape? Luke is focusing on corporate bodies, "the nations," and uses the same time concept as he

used in reporting the words of Jesus concerning Jerusalem in Luke 19:44 - *καιρος* - "the time of thy visitation" - probationary time.

Another observation is in order. Nowhere in the prophetic discourse of Jesus is the focus directed to Israel, but solely on Jerusalem. It was Jerusalem which killed the prophets and stoned those who were sent to it (Matt. 23:37); it was Jerusalem to which Jesus set His face for His final witness giving as His reason, "It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem (Luke 13:33); it was Jerusalem that was to be surrounded by alien armies; it was Jerusalem that was to be trodden down by the nations till the probationary time of all nations was completed.

Not so is the picture of Israel in the New Testament. It is symbolized as a "holy" root into which wild olive branches may be grafted "so that all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:17, 26). Those who are Christ's are considered Abraham's seed and a part of the new "Israel of God" (Gal. 3:29; 6:16). Their city, the new Jerusalem, is not earthly but heavenly (Heb. 12:22).

There is a contrast in the application of the *καιρος* in the two signs which Jesus gave. The first sign drawn from the history of Jerusalem pertained to the destructive judgment upon the city. The probationary time allotted to Israel as a nation of God ended in A.D. 34 with the stoning of Stephen. (Dan. 9:24). But the event cited by Jesus, in answer to the first question asked by the disciples, heralded the judgment upon the city for "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias" slain "between the temple and the altar" (Matt. 23:35). The "times (*καιροι*) of the nations," however, signals that time which corresponds to what A.D. 34 was for the Jewish nation. The retributive judgment of God falls on the nations when gathered together by "the spirits of devils" for "the battle of the great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:14).<sup>1</sup> What then could the taking of Jerusalem in 1967 by the State of Israel, and its annexation by the Knesset in 1980 signal for those who wish to understand the answer which Jesus gave to the second question asked by His disciples? James Edson White in his book, *The Coming King* (1900 ed.) commented:

We also read that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24. Jerusalem has never again come into the possession of the Jews, and will not until the "the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This will be when the work of the gospel is finished. (p.98).

The next year in a letter to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, Ellen White would write:

The time is right upon us when there will be sorrow in the world that no human balm can heal. The flattering monuments of men's greatness will be crumbled in the dust, even before the last destruction comes upon the world. ...

God has given His object lesson. If the world will not heed, will not the people of God take heed? In the twenty-first chapter of Luke, Christ foretold what was to come upon Jerusalem; with it He connected the scenes which are to take place in the history of this world just prior to the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (MR #1102, pp. 148-149)

The question as to the meaning of Luke 21:24 was again addressed at the 1952 Bible Conference. Arthur S. Maxwell speaking on the "Imminence of Christ's Second Coming" observed that "there is one prophecy concerning Palestine that we should be watching with special care" and quoted Luke 21:24. He then commented on the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948:

Victorious as were the forces of Israel in every other part of Palestine, they failed to take the most dazzling objective of all. Mysteriously they were held back from achieving this most cherished goal, this culminating triumph, as by an unseen hand. (*Our Firm Foundation*, Vol. 2, p. 230).

Then Maxwell asked - "What could be the reason?" and answered, "Only that the times of the Gentiles are not yet fulfilled." Citing what God told Abraham in regard to the Amorites, Maxwell observed:

It may well be that the same principle applies today, on a wider scale. If so, then Jerusalem is to remain trodden down by Gentiles till the probationary time of all Gentiles has run out. (*ibid.*, pp. 230-231).

That was in 1952, and today, 1967 and 1980 are now history. Jerusalem is now under Israeli control. It should be noted that both Edson White and Maxwell used *τα εθνη* in the individual sense, "the Gentiles," rather than its corporate sense, "the nations." This must be given due consideration. In the events connected with the fulfillment of the answer Jesus gave to the first question that He was asked, there was a time difference between the close of probation for Israel as the chosen nation of God, and the destruction of Jerusalem as a city. Between 34 and 70 AD, the Jews of Jerusalem, and those in the Diaspora were confronted with a decision.

On his very first missionary tour, Paul set before the Jews in the synagogues a choice - either Jesus was the Messiah whom "they that dwell at Jerusalem and their rulers" desired Pilate to kill (Acts 13:27-28), or to approve the Sanhedrin's decision and action for having done so. Those who chose to disapprove of what their Sanhedrin (Read, "General Conference") had done, were organized into churches with elders appointed to minister to their needs (14:21-23). This procedure was followed throughout his ministry. See Acts 18:4-8; 19:8-10. Paul not only "as his manner was" (17:2) observed the Sabbath in worship in the synagogue, but also followed the same basic format in the presentation of truth in each synagogue: Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah whom the religious leadership of Israel caused to be crucified. A choice had to be made; either the Truth or the Sanhedrin.

A similar situation confronts us today with "the times of the nations fulfilled." Both Edson White and Arthur Maxwell recognized that this prophecy was related to the giving of the gospel. The Church was commissioned with the responsibility of giving "the everlasting gospel" to "every nation" (Rev. 14:6). (Read carefully *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, p. 19, paragraphs 1 & 2.) The first angel's message carried two corollaries: 1) "Fear God" and 2) "Worship Him who made." We are to fear God "because the hour of His judgment is come." This concept cannot be separated from the vision given to Daniel that "the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (7:10). The worship of God as the Creator is associated with the Sabbath.

The commandment enjoins such worship because God not only "made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water," but He also himself rested on that day, blessed and hallowed it. (Ex. 20:8-11). The two concepts, to "fear God because" and to "worship Him who made," are set on a par as a part of "the Everlasting Gospel" committed in sacred trust for a Chosen people to proclaim. You cannot proclaim the one and crucify the other.<sup>2</sup>

Now let us turn our attention to some historical data. In 1952, a Bible Conference was held in the Sligo Park church with the avowed purpose "of reaffirming those great and fundamental truths that have most certainly been believed among us throughout our history." (*Our Firm Foundation*, Vol. I, p. 45). Of the twenty doctrinal presentations three were devoted to aspects of the sanctuary teaching - the sacrificial and mediatorial ministry of Jesus Christ. In these studies it was plainly stated:

The sanctuary and the Sabbath are the two foundation pillars upon which this Advent message rests. (*ibid.*, p. 336)

Further:

The atoning sacrifice was made certain upon the Cross, when Christ uttered the words, "It is finished." This sacrifice became effectual for individual sinners by the priestly ministry of Christ in heaven. (p. 334).

On Calvary, Christ is the substitute accepted in the sinner's stead. In the holy place in the heavenly sanctuary Christ ministers His blood on behalf of the penitent believers. In the most holy place the sins of all the truly penitent are blotted from the books of heaven. Then the sanctuary is cleansed from the record of all sin (p. 347).

The death of Christ on the cross paid the redemption price, but His blood must be applied to the repentant sinner through His own mediation, in order that the atonement or reconciliation may be complete (p. 373).

Three years later the SDA-Evangelical Conferences began. The compromises which the Adventist conferees made with the Evangelicals are set

forth in the book, *Questions on Doctrine*. We will note only those which apply to the Sanctuary teaching of the Church. On page 390 we read an emphasized statement:

*Adventists do not hold any theory of a dual atonement. "Christ hath redeemed us" (Gal. 3:13) "once for all" (Heb. 10:10).*

On a prior page in the same chapter, under a section captioned, "The Redemption Absolute by the Victory of Christ," it is stated:

How glorious is the thought that the King, who occupies the throne, is also our representative at the court of heaven! This becomes all the more meaningful when we realize that Jesus our surety entered the "holy places," and appeared in the presence of God for us. But it was not with the hope of obtaining something for us at that time, or at some future time. No! *He had already obtained it for us on the cross.* (p. 381; emphasis theirs).

A comparison between these quotations from the book, *Questions on Doctrine*, and the statements made at the 1952 Bible Conference reveal that they are not in agreement. The position set forth at the Bible Conference has been denied. Instead of a dual atonement - first at the cross by Jesus as the Lamb of God, and then a completed atonement as High Priest after the Order of Melchizedec in the Heavenly Sanctuary - there is emphasized a single atonement completed at the Cross. It was a crucifixion of the truth committed to the Church in sacred trust.

In fact, Donald Grey Barnhouse, the editor of *Eternity* in reporting the conferences, declared that he and Mr. Martin "heard the Adventist leaders say, flatly, that they repudiate all such extremes" that Christ "had a work to perform in the Most Holy before coming to this earth." Also, Barnhouse reported that the Adventist conferees "do not believe, as some of their earlier teachers taught that Jesus' atoning work was not completed on Calvary but instead that He was still carrying on a second ministering work since 1844. This idea is also totally repudiated." (*Eternity*, September 1956).

Further, it must be kept in mind that the book, *Questions on Doctrine*, as published in 1957 for

the laity of the Church, was a revision of the answers which the Adventist leaders gave the Evangelicals to the questions they asked at the Conference.<sup>3</sup> One revision can be checked by comparing a statement quoted by Walter Martin in his article, "What Seventh-day Adventists Really Believe" (*Eternity*, (November, 1956) with the same statement as given in *Questions on Doctrine*. The answers as given to the Evangelicals read "the death of Christ (was) the complete atonement for sin;" the revision read: "the death of Christ (was) the complete sacrificial atonement for sin" (*QonD*, p. 30, par. 2; also page 31, par. 4).

There was opposition to the book. The most notable was that of M. L. Andreasen who wrote in response to the apostasy, *Letters to the Churches*. The hierarchy of the Church waged "war" against those who opposed the publication. In Andreasen's case he was "defrocked" and his sustentation cut off. Others were fired. It was a decade of turmoil in the Church, but God spoke in warning in 1967. Jerusalem was once more under the control of Israel in a Six Day War that again revealed His hand as in the Roman siege in 66 AD.<sup>4</sup> In 1980, at the General Conference Session in Dallas, Texas, a new Statement of Beliefs was voted by the Church in session. The date was April 25. On July 30, the Knesset of Israel annexed Jerusalem as a part of Israel, voting "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel." The second phase of Jesus' prophecy had met fulfilment. One step more was to follow.

In 1985, Walter Martin published a revised and updated edition of his book, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, with an appendix section discussing Seventh-day Adventism. He wrote:

During the last ten years (since the early 1970s) the Seventh-day Adventist denomination has seen turbulence, both administratively and doctrinally, that is more extensive than any turmoil in the denomination's history. ...

Since I have always stressed the importance of doctrinal integrity in my evaluation of religious movements, the doctrinal upheaval in Adventism is of special concern. Consequently, on February 18, 1983, I wrote the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Washington, D.C.), calling for the

Conference's public and official statement reaffirming or denying the authority of the Adventist book, *Questions on Doctrine*, which was the representative Adventist publication on which I based my earlier evaluation and book. (p. 410).

Two and half months later, Martin received a reply from W. Richard Leshar, who at the time was serving as a General Conference vice-president, and who would the next year become president of Andrews University. Leshar stated in his reply:

You ask first if the Seventh-day Adventists still stand behind the answers given to your questions in *Questions on Doctrine* as they did in 1957. The answer is yes. You noted in your letter that some opposed the answers given then, and, to some extent, the same situation exists today. But certainly the great majority of Seventh-day Adventists are in harmony with the views expressed in *Questions on Doctrine*. (*ibid.*).

Here we have an interesting parallel which must receive due consideration. The Sanhedrin, the Jewish General Conference of 31 A.D., never repented nor changed their decision in the crucifixion of Him who is the Truth (John 14:6). Today, the General Conference of the Church to which God in sacred trust committed the "Everlasting Gospel" will not repent and change their decision in their crucifixion of the Truth regarding the High Priestly ministry of the One who is the truth. They will not seek the blessings of the final atonement, because they have concurred with the Evangelicals that it was all completed at the cross, and that He receives nothing for us as High Priest after the Order of Melchizedec. There is *no* difference between the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the way, the truth, and the life, and crucifying the truth as it is in Jesus.

In 1903, when the progressive steps taken in 1901 were reversed, Ellen White warned:

In the balances of the sanctuary, the Seventh-day Adventist church is to be weighed. She will be judged by the privileges and advantages that she has had. If her spiritual experience does not correspond to the advantages that Christ, at infinite cost, has bestowed upon her, if the blessings conferred have not qualified her to do the work *entrusted* to her, on

her will be pronounced the sentence, "Found wanting." By the light bestowed, the opportunities given, will she be judged. (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 8, p. 247; emphasis supplied).

Note the emphasized word - "entrusted" - and compare this with the sentence in Vol. 9, p. 19 - "The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given us to proclaim to the world." The single truth which made Seventh-day Adventism unique, and placed on a par with the Sabbath truth in the First Angel's Message was crucified in the SDA-Evangelical conferences. We must face the fact that in the fulfilled sign Jesus gave regarding the nations, not only was signalled the close of their probation, but also the withdrawal of the commission entrusted to the Church which indicated that it had been weighed in the balances of the heavenly sanctuary and found to be wanting of that trust.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To correctly understand the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation, one must separate between the plague and the reason for the plague. For example, the 1<sup>st</sup> plague - "a noisome and grievous sore" - fell upon those "which had the mark of the beast, and upon them that worshiped his image" (ver. 2). But both the reception of the mark, and the worship of the image occurred during probationary time. The plague - the "sore," God's judgment - followed the close of probation. This is the same relationship in all the plagues, except the third. Thus the gathering together for the final confrontation by the "the spirits of devils" to the place called in the Hebrew tongue - Har-Mo'ed - comes before the close of probation, and God's response, "the drying up of the great river Euphrates" (16:12), follows. We need to carefully consider what place is meant by Har-Mo'ed.

<sup>2</sup>The Bible Sabbath Association's *Directory* indicates that there are 400 different Sabbath observing groups. In other words, the keeping of the Sabbath is no longer a unique mark of Seventh-day Adventists; however, only those in the community of Adventism teach, or give lip service to, the sanctuary doctrine which would reflect the meaning of "Fear God and give glory to Him because the hour of His judgment is come." The uniqueness of the sacred trust rests in the Sanctuary truth rather than the Sabbath.

In a recent report of the dialogue between the BRI and Roman Catholic theologians, one of the justifications for such a conference emphasized the fact that the Adventist theologians were able to

present the Sabbath truth to the Papists. Dr. Manuel Rodriguez gave a thorough defence of the Sabbath almost to the point of an "over-kill." But when Dr. George W. Reid presented a review of the 27 Statements of Fundamental Beliefs, he muted #23 which covers the Ministry of Christ as High Priest after the Order of Melchizedec. See January issue of *WWN*, page 7, "Dialogue with Rome."

<sup>3</sup> On one occasion in passing through Takoma Park, I made contact with Elder R. J. Wieland who was also there at that time. He had an appointment with one of the associate editors of the *Review and Herald* and invited me to go with him. After a lengthy discussion of the manuscript, *1888 Re-Examined*, the conversation turned to the book, *Questions on Doctrine*. The editor said, "You know that it is a revised edition of the actual answers?" We didn't. He had a copy of the original answers in his desk that morning. I pled with him at that time and later by letter to release those answers so that we might know in fact the full extent of the compromise. He responded:

"I still feel it would be unethical to make available copies of those original answers sent to Martin and Barnhouse. I received them in confidence and would have to have the permission of the people involved before I could make them available to others. I hope you do not mind."

I did mind, and still do mind. Somebody needs to do so, so that the whole truth and all the truth about the compromises may be made known.

<sup>4</sup> We look in total dismay upon the fact that a group of religious leaders could lead a crowd of professed believers to shout in unison, "Crucify Him," - the very God they professed to worship there in flesh before them. But they did. They denied that the "Word who came to be flesh" was divine. They justified and maintained their judgment against Him to the very destruction of their Temple, and beyond, and the city which housed it. But how can one separate Him who is the Truth from the Truth as it is in Him? Is there any difference between rejecting the atonement of the Cross, and the final atonement that the same Lamb of God will provide as High Priest forever after the Order of Melchizedec?

## *Postscript - 1*

The dual prophecy which Jesus gave involving Jerusalem presents some problems of application. The city was to be trodden down by the *τα εθνη* (the nations) until the probationary time of those nations would be fulfilled. There are two

perspectives from which to view these words of Jesus: 1) from the view point of the disciples to whom Jesus was speaking, and 2) from our viewpoint as we see things today.

First, let us note the disciple's viewpoint. To them, the world was composed of but two groups of people, Israel and the *Goyim* (the Gentile nations). It was very simple to understand what Jesus meant. Jerusalem would be trodden down of the *Goyim* until their probationary time was fulfilled. From our perspective, because Israel was set aside as God's nation, we perceive it as a part of the *Goyim*, and thus have difficulty with the interpretation. It can be said simply from our time in history that Jesus' prophecy is saying that the same people who controlled it when Jesus gave the prophecy would be the same people who would regain control of that city when the time of the nations was fulfilled. That did occur in 1967, and was confirmed in 1980.

Then there is another factor that can be introduced. The sign foretold in the answer Jesus gave to the disciple's first question was for the new Israel of God. Can the same be true for the sign given in answer to the second question asked? If so, the question is, what is the fulfillment of Luke 21:24 saying to the spiritual Israel of God today? This requires that we face squarely the trust committed and the betrayal of that trust.

## *Postscript - 2*

A similar military order marked the answers to both questions which the disciples asked Jesus. When the first prophecy was being fulfilled, Josephus tells us that Cestius "retired from the city, without any reason in the world" (*Wars of the Jews*, Bk. II, Chap. XIX, # 7). This permitted the Jews to open the gates of the city, and the Christians who had remained in Jerusalem to flee.

In a book published last year, *Six Days of War*, the author, Michael B. Oren, a recognized Hebrew scholar and historian, after noting the destruction inflicted on the Egyptian air force by the Israeli pre-emptive strike, wrote:

Yet, for all this destruction, the Egyptian army in Sinai was far from vanquished. Over half of Nasser's forces were still intact, and important elements - the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Divisions, and the Shazli Force - had yet to fire a shot (p. 113).

Then Dr. Oren notes "Egypt's leaders ordered a wholesale and wildly disorganized retreat" (p. 214). This was only Day Two of the war; however it freed up Israeli troops, and permitted action on the Jordanian front which resulted in the old city of Jerusalem being brought again, after 19 centuries, under Jewish control on Day Three. On that day General Gur would radio General Narkiss "three words - seven in English - that would resonate for decades afterward, 'Har ba-Bayit be-Yadenu' - 'The Temple Mount is in our hands'" (p. 242). "Eshkol, the prime minister wasted no time in placing the Holy Places under the jurisdiction of their relevant clergy" while General Narkiss worked to achieve "the security needed to establish Israeli governance of the city" (p. 246) Luke 21:24 was fulfilled!

The Divine Intervention which caused Cestius to call a retreat was not for the sake of Jerusalem, nor for the Temple, but for the Christians still in Jerusalem. The Divine Intervention which permitted Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount, to come again under the control of Israel was not for the sake of Israel, but was signalling something to God's spiritual Israel. Could it be connected with the message given in 1896:

My mind was carried into the future, when the signal will be given, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." (*R&H*, Feb. 11, 1896).

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