



*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12

1967 - NO SIGNIFICANCE?

1974 Bible Conference Negates Alert Voiced at 1952 Bible Conference

At the 1974 Bible Conference, held in three different locations so as to accommodate a greater number of the ministry in the North American Division, Dr. Herbert E. Douglass, speaking on "Adventist Eschatology" stated - "Adventists do not see theological importance in the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948 or the annexation of Old Jerusalem in 1967." ("The Unique Contribution of Adventist Eschatology," p. 6) Five years later in a book published by the Pacific Press, Douglass reiterated this theme indicating that Seventh-day Adventists "do not see prophetic importance in the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948, or the annexation of Old Jerusalem in 1967." (The End, p. 48) In so doing Dr. Douglass has sought to negate the alert given to the ministry of the Adventist Church at the 1952 Bible Conference.

In 1952, midway in the administration of Elder W. H. Branson as President of the General Conference, a Bible Conference was scheduled from September 1 thru the 13th in the Sligo Park Church. Leaders and representatives of all the World Divisions, save one, and delegates from all the Union Conferences and institutions of the North American Division were present. In addressing the opening session of this Bible Conference, Elder Branson

declared that the conference was being called "for the particular 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) He also indicated that the ministry of the Church were "prophetic preachers - not prophets," and that our safety in preaching prophecy was to preach those prophecies which were already fulfilled and avoid prophetic speculation. Then he noted - "As prophecy fulfills more and more, and we receive an understanding of exactly how history has fulfilled the prophecy, then we can add that fulfilled prophecy to our preaching." (Ibid., p. 57)

Selected to speak on "The Imminence of Christ's Second Coming" was Elder Arthur S. Maxwell, Editor of the Signs of the Times. In one section of his presentation, he discussed, "Areas of Unfulfilled Prophecy." One area concerned developments in Palestine. In focusing the attention of the delegates on this area of unfulfilled prophecy, he noted the establishment of the Jewish State, that had occurred a few years prior, in 1948. He said:

"The recent dramatic restoration of the nation of Israel has focused the attention of mankind once more upon Palestine. Many Christians have mistakenly permitted themselves to believe that the return of thousands of unconverted Jews to their land is in fulfillment of the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not realizing that, since the death of the Son

of God on Calvary, there is no salvation, nor any eternal homeland, except for those who believe in Him and accept His sacrifice.

"However, there is one prophecy concerning Palestine that we should all be watching with special care. Said Jesus, 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.' Luke 21:24.

"For nineteen centuries Jerusalem has been trodden down of the Gentiles. Despite the amazing prowess of the Israeli troops, the ancient city of Jerusalem is still in Arab hands. A Mohammedan mosque still stands upon the site of Solomon's Temple. 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.

"What could be the reason? Only that the times of the Gentiles are not yet fulfilled.

"Centuries ago Israel was not permitted to enter Palestine for a certain time because 'the iniquity of the Amorites' was 'not yet full.' (Gen. 15:16): that is, not until the probationary time allotted to the Amorites had run out.

"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. If this be correct, how much hinges upon the fate of this ancient city and the power that occupies it." (Ibid., Vol II, pp. 230-231)

There are voices in Adventism who heeded the alert sounded by Maxwell, and have seen "prophetic importance" in the annexation of Old Jerusalem in 1967. Among these are Dr. J. R. Zurcher, now Secretary of the Euro-Africa Division. He wrote a book which was used as a special helps for the Sabbath School Lessons during the 2nd Quarter of 1980, entitled, Christ of the Revelation. In it he stated:

"We shall not linger over the numerous signs given by Jesus in this discourse. [Matt. 24, Mark 13, & Luke 21] One only will occupy our attention, the one that

especially deals with time. Even in our days it constitutes a critical point in the political world: Jerusalem. In fact, Jerusalem is both the beginning and the culmination of Jesus' prophecy. For Him, as for Daniel the prophet, the history of nations, as that of the people of Israel, is written in the tragic history of Jerusalem. The latter is the sign by which the fate of the former is determined. So having predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews 'into all nations,' Jesus declared, 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled' (Luke 21:24)

"Few today would deny the precision of this prophecy. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies in AD 70 is a historical fact commemorated on the triumphal arch of Titus in Rome. As for Jerusalem, nineteen centuries of history should provide adequate proof that it has been 'trodden down of the Gentiles' - first by the Romans, then by the Arabs, next by different Christian nations during the Crusades, fourth by the Turks up to the end of the first world war, then by the British, and finally by the Jordanians until the Six-Day War in June, 1967.

"This prophecy of Jesus was a sign for the Christians of the Apostolic Church, who lived at the beginning of the times of the Gentiles, and it remains a sign for us who live at the end of the times of the Gentiles. Again, we must know how to discern its meaning.

"It is not a matter of our seeing in the return of the Jews to Palestine and in the Israeli conquest of Jerusalem a sign of the approaching conversion of the Jews, as so many Christians think. Nothing in Jesus' prophecy allows such an interpretation. However, if we cannot see that Jerusalem is an exceptional sign of the times, then might we not be placing ourselves in the same position as the religious leaders who knew how to 'discern the face of the sky' but could not discern the obvious 'signs of the times'?

"In order for us to understand Jesus' statement, three questions need answering. First, what exactly does the expression 'the times of the Gentiles' mean? Then

what should be understood by the fulfillment of the times of the Gentiles? Finally, what connection is there between the retaking of Jerusalem by the Jews and the fulfillment of the times of the Gentiles?

"As I understand the Biblical language, the times of the Gentiles is the period set aside by God for the evangelizing of the heathen nations. It is not the time needed for them to be converted to Christianity, as some think, but for them to hear the gospel. It is in this sense that Jesus said: 'This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.' (Matt. 24:14).

"I believe that the times of the Gentiles began in AD 34, when the prophetic seventy weeks that God set aside for the people of Israel ended. The baptism of the first 'heathens' - the Ethiopian eunuch and the centurion Cornelius - as well as the conversion of Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles mark the beginning of these new times when the gospel would be preached to the nations. And if I understand the prediction of Jesus properly, this time will be 'fulfilled' when Jerusalem will cease to 'be trodden down of the Gentiles.' The fact that since 1967 Gentiles no longer have occupied Jerusalem means, therefore, that we are now living at the end of 'the times of the Gentiles.'

"Jerusalem here constitutes the last sign of the times by which the Lord shows us that the history of this world is coming to its climax and that the restoration of all things is at hand." (pp. 71-72)

We even find in the evangelistic material of the Church a recognition of the fact that this prophecy is not only saying something, but also that it has been fulfilled in our day. In Lesson 5 of the 20th Century Bible Course, we find these questions and answers:

"2 What sign did Jesus give that would when the destruction of the city was at hand? Luke 21:20

"The city of Jerusalem was surrounded by the Roman armies in AD 66. After a period of time the army withdrew and the Christians, recognizing the sign given by Christ (Matt. 24:15-20) fled the city and did not return. In AD 69 the Romans

returned, and destroyed the city in AD 70. Nearly a million people died or were sold into slavery at that time, but not a single Christian died. They watched for the sign Christ had given and obeyed His instructions. The temple was burned to the ground as Christ had foretold (even though the soldiers had orders not to destroy it). Christ foresaw the future and outlined it to His followers so that they could be saved.

"3. How long did Christ say that Jerusalem would be trodden down? (verse 24)

"Old Jerusalem and the temple site has been occupied largely by the Gentile nations until 1967 when the Jews took possession of it in a 'lightning victory.' This portion of Christ's prophecy was fulfilled in our day!"

In the light of all of this recognition in the publications issued from the presses of the Church, it is no longer necessary to submit evidence of the fulfillment of this prophecy though much could be given. There remains only one question with which we must come to grips, that is, what does this prophecy mean in application? Zurcher has well suggested - and note again one of the paragraphs from his book - "As I understand the Biblical language, the times of the Gentiles is the period set aside by God for the evangelizing of the heathen nations." Keeping in mind that the Greek word for "nations" and "Gentiles" is the same - ethné - what Zurcher is saying is simply that when the times of the Gentiles was fulfilled, the period of evangelization is ended for the nations of earth. The implications of this fulfilled prophecy we are not willing to accept and thus we seek to nullify what Jesus said by stating Seventh-day Adventists see no importance in the event which fulfilled it. It is true from our viewpoint on earth, we cannot see how this can be - the evangelization of the nations ended - but fulfilled prophecy does reveal heaven's viewpoint. By faith we accept it and act there upon. Righteousness - right doing - by faith will accept what God is saying in fulfilled prophecy whether our natural perceptions tell us it is so.

What then is this prophecy telling us? To put it simply, the commission given

to the Church - to give the Gospel as a witness to all nations - has been withdrawn. In permitting the prophecy of Jesus to be fulfilled, Heaven has so revealed its viewpoint. Why? Either we have finished our work gloriously as did Jesus (See John 17:4); or else we have been set aside. We know the first alternative is not correct, and we are not willing to admit the latter. What we need to do is to get our heads out of the sand and face reality, instead of continuing in Laodicean blindness.

Zurcher quoted Matthew 24:14 in illustrating what he meant when he said that the "times of the Gentiles" was the period set aside by God "for them to hear the gospel." Then shall the end come. We have understood this to mean, the close of all human probation, and thus there is much perplexity in accepting a fulfilled prophecy of Jesus, and yet see time continuing on. Interestingly, we have been given in the Writings knowledge of what will happen as soon as the truth which had been committed to our trust had been proclaimed as a "witness" to all nations. We would disgrace ourselves in spiritual harlotry. The prophecy reads thus:

"After the truth has been proclaimed as a witness to all nations, every conceivable power of evil will be set in operation, and minds will be confused by many voices crying, 'Lo, here is Christ, Lo he is there. This is the truth, I have the message from God, he has sent me with great light.'

"Then there will be a removing of the landmarks, and an attempt to tear down the pillars of our faith." (R&H, Dec. 13, 1892)

If this revelation means anything, it is telling us that once the truth has been proclaimed as a witness to all nations, then the battle scene shifts to the Church itself with internal confusion and chaos. No one who is in the least bit knowledgeable of events within the Church since 1967 can deny this has been and is being fulfilled. Like the Jews of old to whom Jesus declared - "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" - the hierarchy of the Church with their puppets would like to take anyone who

proclaims the fulfilled prophecy of Jesus out and push them over the edge of the cliff. Re-read the experience in Luke 4:16-30. What Jesus was telling those church-goers of Nazareth was that being the supposed favored people of God was conditional upon their acceptance of the Revealed Truth of heaven. This they did not, and three years later, Jesus, that Truth, declared to them - "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. 23:38) It was no longer His house.

We, likewise, have been warned decades ago that if we were not true to the trust given to us, on us would be pronounced the sentence - "Found Wanting" (8T:247), and our house would be left desolate. (See 5T:210) Further we are told in unmistakable language, that should we be involved in unfaithfulness, the divine Instructor would view the once "faithful city" as "an harlot." (8T:250)

Now let us face the facts squarely. A once faithful city who has become a harlot can no more go through to the kingdom than the harlot of Revelation 17. And this isn't saying the two are identical. The "Jewish church became a harlot" but this did not make the Jewish church, Babylon. (See GC, p. 382) Unless we can get our thinking straight, we will willingly reject a message given by Heaven through fulfilled prophecy, and in so doing be led into a fatal security that the Church is going through. Much more dangerous is the influence of men who while professing to uphold historic Adventism encourage the laity in such a deception. Compounding the situation is the fact that this is the last time.

The prophecy of the Times of the Gentiles is the last prophecy Jesus gave in the series of future events that night on the Mount of Olives. As a summary statement to this outline of future history, Jesus declared:

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake unto them a parable: Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye

that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." (Luke 21:28-33)

#

"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 THIS WORLD JUST PRIOR TO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY." (Counsels to Writers, pp. 23-24)

---+---

WHAT CAN I DO?

In the light of the crisis and chaos within the Church, what can one who sees what is taking place do to alert his fellow church members? Counsel has been given. It reads:

"Those who walk in the light will see signs of the approaching peril; but they are not to sit in quiet, unconcerned expectancy of the ruin, comforting themselves with the belief that God will shelter his people in the day of visitation. Far from it. They should realize that it is their duty to labor diligently to save others, looking with strong faith to God for help." (5T:209:2)

You will observe that the counsel is to those "who walk in the light." This group is also spoken of as "a little company who are standing in the light" and whose prayers "arise in behalf of the church, because its members are doing after the manner of the world." (Ibid., pp. 209-210) Moreover, these "faithful few" hold forth "the words of life" in reproof and entreaty. Such earnestness is sure to be interpreted as criticism and fault finding. But "some" respond, re-

pent and humble their hearts before God. "But the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel; although many still continue the forms of religion, His power and presence were lacking." (Ibid, p. 210)

In order that this important message can be given to your fellow Church members, the Adventist Laymen's Foundation has devised a plan in which we both share mutually. The tract - The Seal of God - a facsimile reproduction of Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, pp. 207-216 with Notes, has been reprinted and the Notes revised in a new format so as to fit a #10 envelope. We will furnish free, the tract, envelope, and do the addressing. You will finish first class postage for each name to whom you want the tract to be sent. This will be 20¢ per name in US and Canada, and 30¢ for all other countries. (US funds) This offer will remain in effect so long as the postal rates are as they are. We ask that the name sent be carefully screened so that the address is not only correct, but complete with the proper Zip Codes.

If you wish to see and read the tract prior to your entering into this project, we will send you one free even as it will be sent to the names you send us. When you decide to participate in the plan, just include the postage necessary for the total number of names you send. We will do the rest. Time is short - "The crisis is fast approaching." It is even now upon us. We must act quickly. How do you respond?

#

AN OPENING ON THE CAMPUS

We have a need for a couple - or a single young person - who can carry certain key responsibilities as well as regular mundane tasks. We furnish a house, subsidize the utilities, and provide a modest missionary salary. If interested, send for a job description. Write to Executive Secretary, Adventist Laymen's Foundation, P. O. Box 178, Lamar, AR 72846.

#

A PERSONAL NOTE

Several weeks ago, Ron Renk, our Business Manager, came to me and said - I need to go into the field with you. To merely stay here all the time and look after 'the stuff' does not give us the spiritual experience we need." I replied, "What plans do you have to suggest to meet the need?" He suggested selling his house (He lives off the campus) and his car, and from these means get out of debt, and purchase travel equipment to go on the major yearly trips East and West. (This would eliminate my driving, and thus save me much tiring fatigue in meeting appointments. It would also enable us to bring more material with us, plus music.)

The next question to arise was - What kind of travel equipment? A mobil home? This would be an expensive route, and since he planned to include his car, would not solve transportation locally. A pick-up with a "fifth wheel" trailer? This, too, would be expensive, and not meet all the needs. So Ron and Nancy explored a van combination with a pop-up trailer. Here in the area, a dealer had a loaded new, last year's model van he wanted to unload. One could not believe the deal he offered them. Now there remains only the pop-up trailer to find, and we trust for a similar blessing.

The result - it looks like this Spring and Summer as we come East, North, and West, we will come as a group to share with you the blessings that the Lord has given us in Word and Song.

‡

AMPLIFICATION

In the January Thought Paper (XVI-1) in the article - "Truth Under Attack" - I listed a number of persons who profess to uphold "historic" Adventism, but who in their allegiance to the hierarchy give consent to the 1980 Statement of Beliefs voted at the Dallas General Conference Session. These men either did not know of the Ankerberg Show, or knowing made no attempt to speak-up for the true faith.

++++++

One of these individuals, I was advised took exception to the statement - "They would have the laity believe that the only 'bad guys' are Ford and Rea." It appears on the local level, this person has spoken out in regard to neo-Adventist teachings held by local Conference officials. However, we in the East have seen no such documentation. All we have available are books which have been published under his name and circulated with the blessing of the hierarchy.

The book - Omega - while naming neither Ford nor Rea is but a thinly veiled attack upon them. That which these men have voiced is represented as a harbinger of the coming omega. The omega is pictured as something in the future. Walton wrote: "The omega: a mysterious danger that waits for the church at the end of time." (p. 86) Thus he with others are not willing to face the facts that Ford is merely the fruitage of the compromise made at the 1955-56 SDA-Evangelical Conferences. The Church entered the Omega Apostasy at that time.

In the book - Omega - a comparison is made between the history of the Church during the Alpha apostasy, with other deviate concepts mixed in for good measure whether related or not - and the present crisis in the Church because of the attack on the sanctuary teaching [by Ford] and on the Spirit of Prophecy [by Rea]. As far as I have been able to read - and I have read the book carefully - there is not a single reference to the Barnhouse-Martin dialogue which led to the book, Questions on Doctrine, and its follow-up, Movement of Destiny, a book which in its second printing still carries the nihil obstat of Neal C. Wilson.

In the light of the counsel which has been given in regard to the Alpha Apostasy, one can understand the reluctance of any of the men named in the January Thought Paper to place the Omega where it ought to be placed. Ellen G. White told the laity at the time of the Alpha: "'Come,' I call, 'come ye out and be ye separate from him [Kellogg] and his associates whom he has leavened.' I am now giving the message God has given me, and

to give to all who claim to believe the truth: 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate,' or else their sin in justifying wrongs and framing deceits will continue to ruin souls. We cannot afford to be on the wrong side." (Special Testimonies, Series b, #7, p. 64)

This being true in the time of the Alpha, how much more so in the present time of the Omega. But if men can place the omega as future, then they need not come to grips with the responsibility which would be theirs if they should call the omega for just what it is - the compromise of the hierarchy in the SDA-Evangelical Conferences. If these men did so, they could not be telling their captive audiences that things are going to work out alright, therefore, continue to sit comfortably in your pews. This is not what the servant of the Lord advised when confronted with the Alpha of apostasy! Do these men really believe the Spirit of Prophecy, or are they like Rea - whom they condemn - really making of none effect the testimonies of the Spirit?

‡

NEW POLICY FOR THE ADVENTIST REVIEW

In the January 20, 1983 issue of the Adventist Review, the new Editor, through a planned interview for himself by an Assistant Editor, and in an editorial sets forth the new policy which the paper will assume as "the voice of the church." Editorially, Dr Wm. G. Johnsson stated - "The ADVENTIST REVIEW holds that the church is best served by keeping its members abreast with developments. Even when the news is bad, it is better that members hear it through the REVIEW than from rumor or some other source." (p. 13) This aspect of the new policy was emphasized. It was listed as "a major objective." (Ibid.) It was noted as a "high priority" by the Editor. (p. 8)

While the question of "managed news releases" will ever lurk in the thinking of an informed reader, it is a breath of "fresh air" to be promised that the staff of the Review will be printing some realistic news. However, there is an interesting change which has taken place

in the relationship of the Review with the General Conference. "At the General Conference's Spring Meeting, it was voted that the General Conference would assume responsibility for the editorial functions of the Adventist Review." (Ibid.) Prior to this the staff of the Review gave an account to the Publishing Board of the R&H, now they are answerable to an "Editorial Board" chaired by Neal C. Wilson. While Dr. Johnsson is confident that it will not happen, he suggested in his interview that under the new arrangement "the potential for the Review's becoming an Adventist Pravda, as it were, is greater." Let this be remembered.

Since such an open policy is in the making, the cause could best be served if the Editor would be open with his readers. It would be well if he would reconcile his position on the book of Hebrews as given in his dissertation for his doctorate at Vanderbilt University, and the historic teaching of the Church. This dissertation takes a position as contrary to the truth which fundamental Adventists hold as anything Ford has ever written. Yet Dr Ford is dismissed - and he should have been long before he was - but Dr. Johnsson is exalted to a place where he becomes a "mouth piece" for the hierarchy.

There is another fearful aspect to the new policy. The Editor stated - "The second feature in this issue is a new column Perspective. From time to time Adventist wonder what sort of people are guiding the church, what is their vision of the church, what motivates them. Perspective will attempt to give the answers." (p. 13) Wilson was featured first and is scheduled for the second. This strikes directly at the message of righteousness by faith as set forth in 1888, and is Satanic in origin. Ellen G. White wrote: "Now it has been Satan's determined purpose to eclipse the view of Jesus, and lead men to look to man, and trust to man, and be educated to expect help from man. For years the church has been looking to man, and expecting much from man, but not looking to Jesus, in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. Therefore God gave to His servants a testimony that presented the truth as it is in Jesus, which is the third angel's message, in clear, distinct lines." (TM, p. 93)