



“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 TRUE BIBLICAL
DOCTRINE CONCERNING
THE INCARNATION OF
JESUS – REVISITED # 2”**

Editor’s Preface

This issue of WWN continues with the second installment of our ongoing presentation of the biblical doctrine concerning the humanity that Christ assumed in the Incarnation. Because this topic is so vital to an accurate teaching of the entire divinely revealed plan of salvation found in God’s Word, it is of the utmost importance that we maintain a scripturally sound understanding of it.

With this write-up of the thought paper, the focus will be primarily on events that have transpired since the year 1950; the year that chronicles the most recent “of the great words which the (little) horn spake” since the beginning of the judgment hour in 1844 (Daniel 7: 9-11; Revelation 14: 6-7) – the canonization of the Dogma of the Bodily Assumption of the Virgin Mary into heaven. On November 1, 1950, invoking his dogmatic authority, Pope Pius XII defined the dogma as follows:

“By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.”¹

Moreover Vatican Council II, which was convened on October 11, 1962, over the course of the next 4 years would serve to further reaffirm the so-called “Marian Dogmas” while at the same time appearing to make them more “palatable” to the outside world and especially to non-Catholic Christians. In the Council’s aftermath, the post-



Vatican II pontiffs have all been enthusiastic devotees of Mariology and associated teachings.

In 1993, Marian apparition authors Ted and Maureen Flynn wrote a book entitled The Thunder Of Justice – The Warning, The Miracle, The Chastisement, The Era Of Peace – God’s Ultimate Acts Of Mercy. This work claims to outline the special revelations (supposedly) given by the “Virgin Mary” to prepare the world in this final age for the end times. Interestingly enough, the book’s “Forward” was written by Vatican insider Malachi Martin (author of the 1990 volume The Keys Of This Blood) in which he gives a hardy endorsement to this “special role of the Blessed Virgin Mary.”²

“ The Incarnation In The Final Conflict And The Restitution Of All Things ”

The Conflict Within The Seventh-day Adventist Movement, From 1950 And On (resumed) —

In the study of Bible prophecy, one finds prophecies which are either fulfilled at the end of a time sequence, or by events. For example, in the book of Daniel, the prophet wrote that he heard ‘holy ones’ in heaven conversing, the question asked, and the answer given for him to write down: – “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” (Daniel 8: 14). This is a “time” prophecy. Jesus in His eschatological discourse stated – “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.” (Mark 13: 24-25). This is a prophecy of events to occur. However, from those prophesied events, when they did occur, we have dates. The Dark Day was May 19, 1780; and the Falling of the Stars occurred on November 13, 1833.

There have been three dogmas promulgat-

ed by the “little horn” since 1844:

- 1). The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception – 1854.
- 2). The Dogma of Papal Infallibility – 1870.
- 3). The Dogma of the Bodily Assumption of the Virgin Mary into heaven – 1950.

The last of these “great words” which impacts 1950 should provoke serious study and comprehension as we parallel the great controversy between Christ and Satan. They reach back to the beginnings of the Second Advent Movement and to the very first dogma in 1854. Relative to the “Marian” Dogmas, the chain of events has been listed in the book, The Thunder of Justice:

“The current Marian times had their beginning in 1830, when Our Blessed Mother appeared to Catherine Laboure in the convent at Rue de Bac, in Paris, France, as the Mediatrix of all Graces, and gave the Miraculous Medal to the world. One side of the medal had an image of two hearts: the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus.” (pg. 7).²

Sixteen years later, Mary supposedly appeared to young children in the French Alps telling them about things which upset her Son. The Roman Church approved this revelation in 1851, and in 1854 Pius IX proclaimed the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Four years later another apparition of Mary confirmed this Dogma. The accounting reads:

“In 1858, Our Blessed Mother appeared to a peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes, France, announcing herself as the Immaculate Conception — confirming the dogma proclaimed by Pius IX (in 1854). Bernadette had never heard the term until told by Our Blessed Mother. (Ibid.)²

Another series of events parallel these dates:

- 1). “The public labors of Mr. Miller, according to the best evidence to be obtained, date from the autumn of 1831.” (Memoirs of William Miller, pg. 97).³

Though faulty in certain biblical exegesis, the Second Advent Movement led by Miller in the States directed attention to the prophecy of Daniel 8: 14; the study of the sanctuary types; and consideration of the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14. After the passing of time in 1844, there came from the shattered and disappointed believers, a small "remnant" who would later become known as Seventh-day Adventists. However, prior to the adoption of a name, God committed in trust to this remnant the doctrine of the Incarnation in direct contradistinction to the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

2). In 1858, the first volume of Spiritual Gifts was published, which discusses the Great Controversy "between Christ and His angels, and Satan and his angels."

The very first paragraph sets forth the issue which ignited the rebellion which had been seething in the heart of Lucifer – the design of God for and in the creation of man. The key sentences read:

"And I saw that when GOD said to his SON, Let us make man in our image, Satan was jealous of JESUS. He wished to be consulted concerning the formation of man. ... He wished to be the highest in heaven, next to GOD, and receive the highest honors. Until this time all heaven was in order, harmony and perfect subjection to the government of GOD." (pg. 17).⁴ (See also Isaiah 14: 12-13).

In passing, it might be well to note that had this concept been understood, the formulation of the doctrine of the "investigative judgment" as an explanation for 1844 would have been modified to conform to the vision given Daniel in chapter 7.

And (again) in the third chapter on "The Plan of Salvation" is to be found two direct statements indicating the nature that Christ would assume in the Incarnation. They read:

"JESUS also told (the angels) that they should have a part to act, to be with him, and at different times to strengthen him. That he should take man's fallen nature, and

his strength would not be even equal with theirs." (pg. 25; emph. added).⁴

"Satan again rejoiced with his angels that he could, by causing man's fall, pull down the SON of GOD from His exalted position. He told his angels that when JESUS should take fallen man's nature, he could overpower him, and hinder the accomplishment of the plan of salvation." (pg. 27).⁴

This position, that Christ took upon Himself, man's fallen nature, was consistently held for the next seventy years. Although not singled out in the listing of the "pillars" of the faith (Ms. 13, 1889),⁵ documentation has shown that this concept was a part of the very fiber of Adventist teaching. (See the research by Dr. Ralph Larson, The Word Was Made Flesh,⁶ which surveys one hundred years of Seventh-day Adventist Christology from 1852 onward, or An Interpretative History of the Doctrine of the Incarnation as Taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, by Elder William H. Grotheer⁷).

In 1950, the administration of the Church changed hands. To the new General Conference Committee, two young missionaries to Africa, home on furlough, Robert J. Wieland and Donald K. Short, presented their concern that the Church had never fully repented of the rejection of the 1888 Message nor had fully accepted it, as brought by the two "messengers," Jones and Waggoner. These two 1950 "messengers" wrote out the basis for their findings in a manuscript known as 1888 Re-Examined.⁸ From Heaven's viewpoint, this one event may be viewed as the prime event in 1950 in the purposes of God for His Church. Wieland and Short took a firm stand in regard to the doctrine of the Incarnation reflecting the original position of the Church. (See A Warning and Its Reception, [White Section], pp. 186-189⁹). Based on the same basic premise as set forth in the manuscript, that there "is a True Christ and there is a false christ," D. K. Short published in 1991 a paperback, Made Like ... His

Brethren."¹⁰ Whatever reaction may be taken to some of the positions expressed by Short, he clearly set forth Jesus as accepting the fallen nature of man in the Incarnation.

In 1952, a revised and greatly enlarged "Answers to Objections," by F. D. Nichol, editor of the official organ of the Church, The Review & Herald, with a foreword by the new General Conference President, W. H. Branson, was published. In it Nichol wrote:

"Adventists believe that Christ, the 'last Adam,' possessed, on His human side, a nature like that of the 'first man Adam,' a nature free from any defiling taint of sin, but capable of responding to sin, and that that nature was handicapped by the debilitating effects of four thousand years of sin's inroads on man's body and nervous system and environment." (pg. 393).¹¹

In 1952, Branson called a Bible Conference to refute the challenge made in 1950 by Wieland and Short. In this Bible Conference, the doctrine of the Incarnation was not discussed. A change had begun in the thinking of the Church's leadership which would alter the truth committed to it in contrast to the Roman dogma of the Immaculate Conception. They dared not bring it out into the open at the Bible Conference. However, the confusion was already visible to those who had eyes to see. W. H. Branson, who penned the foreword to Nichol's enlarged and revised tome, also wrote a book, Drama of the Ages, which was given wide circulation. In it he wrote, alluding to the significance of Jacob's ladder:

"The Catholic doctrine of the 'immaculate conception' is that Mary, the mother of our Lord, was preserved from original sin. If this be true, then Jesus did not partake of man's sinful nature. This belief cuts off the lower rungs of the ladder, and leaves man without a Saviour who can be touched with the feeling of men's infirmities, and who can sympathize with them in their temptations and sufferings. By this teaching Jesus is made out to

be altogether and wholly divine. Thus the ladder does not reach to the earth where men are." (2nd ed., pp. 88-89).¹²

It should be obvious that Nichol's book with its preface by Branson does not agree with what Branson wrote in his publication. Confusion was beginning to set in. The final denial of the Church's primitive faith came in the compromise made with the Evangelicals in 1955-1956. In the published answers to the questions asked by them, the Adventist conferees responded:

"Although born in the flesh, [Christ] was nevertheless God, and was exempt from the inherited passions and pollutions that corrupt the natural descendants of Adam. He was 'without sin,' not only in His outward conduct, but in His very nature." (Seventh-day Adventists Answers Questions on Doctrine, p. 383; *emph. added*).¹³

The very word used, "exempt," appears to be borrowed from the explanation of the Roman dogma in Cardinal Gibbons' book, Faith of Our Fathers, where he wrote speaking of Mary, "She alone was exempt from the original taint" (pg. 171, 91st Edition; *emph. added*).¹⁴

The force of the statement in Questions on Doctrine rests upon the fact that in the "Introduction" to the book is found this affirmation – "This volume can be viewed as truly representative of the faith and beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church." (pg. 9).¹³ Let it be noted that the Adventist leadership, as Branson, cited above, were as much aware of the meaning of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception in the 1950s as was E.J. Waggoner in 1901. The only difference was that in the 1950s, Adventist "voices" speaking for the Church were embracing, at least in principle, this Dogma.

Two other events occurred just prior to 1950 which would have a decisive impact on the decades following.

In 1948, the World Council of Churches began to function, and the State of Israel was

reborn. It was this latter event which jolted the Church into a restudy of its prophetic understandings. In 1944, the Pacific Press published a paperback entitled, Palestine in Prophecy. It was used as a "book of the month" by the Voice of Prophecy radio program. The final paragraph of this book reads:

"The apostle Paul speaks of Jerusalem as being 'in bondage with her children.' (Galatians 4: 25). Had the Jews been faithful, Jerusalem would have been enlarged and beautified to become the center of the whole earth, beautiful for situation. But throughout the generations (from) the fall of that city in AD 70, Jerusalem has been 'a burdensome stone' and 'a cup of trembling unto all people' (Zechariah 12: 2, 3); and it will be so till the end of time. Palestine and Jerusalem do not have a bright future in this present world, and those who are holding the hope of a national restoration for the Jews are following a theological will-o'-the-wisp."¹⁵

Then in 1947, with rumblings in the ancient land of Israel itself that something was on foot, another paper-back was published by the same Press which stated:

"The God of heaven who overthrew the city and the nation and who because of their apostasy dispersed the inhabitants to the ends of the earth, forever settles the question of a complete return and restoration in old Canaan (of a nation of Israel) by asserting that it 'cannot be.'" (The Jews and Palestine, pg. 61).¹⁶

A year later in 1948, our prophetic interpretation was blasted by reality. From "it cannot be" we were confronted with, "it is!" From the Jewish viewpoint, it was a stupendous event. Menachem Begin, in his published memoirs, The Revolt, stated:

"There is no doubt that the revival of Hebrew national independence in our generation has no precedence in human history. A nation had been driven out of its country and after the loss of its liberty and the utter

failure of its uprisings. It had wandered about the face of the earth for nearly 2,000 years. Its wanderings had been drenched in blood. And now, in the 71st generation of its exile, this wandering people had returned to its Homeland. The global tour was ended. The circle of wanderings was closed and the nation had returned to the Motherland that bore it."¹⁷

Let it be clearly understood that the restoration of Israel as a nation, though an unprecedented event in all human history as Begin asserts, was not a fulfillment of any Bible prophecy. Coming events were but casting their shadows before.

Reeling from the impact of a faulty prophetic interpretation, and confronted by the 1888 challenge by Wieland and Short, the Church replied by a Bible Conference in 1952. Near the close of the conference, W. H. Branson, president of the General Conference, spoke on "The Lord Our Righteousness." As he finalized his study, he said – "The message of righteousness by faith given in the 1888 Conference has been repeated here. ... And this great truth has been given here in this 1952 Bible Conference with far greater power than it was given in the 1888 Conference" (Our Firm Foundation, Vol. 2, pg. 616).¹⁸ While an analysis of the presentations given would fail to substantiate Branson's conclusion that the one subject of righteousness by faith "swallowed up every other," it is indicative of the impact the manuscript by Wieland and Short had on the General Conference Committee.

The correction of the prophetic interpretation was assigned to A. S. Maxwell, editor of the Signs of the Times. In his presentation, he cited three areas of unfulfilled prophecy, one of which was, "Developments in Palestine." (Ibid., p. 230).¹⁸ He began by saying – "The recent dramatic restoration of the nation of Israel has focused the attention of mankind once more upon Palestine." Then he called attention to the prophecy of Jesus

which he said "we should all be watching with special care," and quoted Luke 21: 24. Why? Maxwell noted that while the nation of Israel was restored, Jerusalem was still in alien hands, "the times of the Gentiles are not yet fulfilled." Then he commented that "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.*, pg. 231).¹⁸ He failed to distinguish between "Gentiles" as individuals, and "Gentiles" as nations which the linguistics of the text indicate.

In taking the position he took, Maxwell returned to the Church's previous understanding of Luke 21: 24, the exposition first given by James Edson White in his widely circulated book, The Coming King, published in both America and Australia. The first American edition in 1898 read:

"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 possession of the Jews, and will not until 'the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.' This will be when the work of the gospel is finished." (pg. 98).¹⁹

Three years later In a letter to Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, Ellen White commented, – "In the twenty-first chapter of Luke, Christ foretold what was to come upon Jerusalem; 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." (Letter 20, 1901).²⁰

When this prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled in its first phase in 1967, Jerusalem recaptured by Israel, that year, the General Conference made its final rejection of the conclusions drawn by Wieland and Short in 1888 Re-Examined. Commenting on this final meeting, Wieland wrote to Short:

"To sum it all up, as I see the meeting (June 27-29, 1967) in retrospect: the 1951

report said the MS was unworthy of serious consideration because it was 'critical;' the 1958 report said it was unworthy of such consideration because it used EGW statements out of context; the 1967 hearing concludes it is likewise unworthy because its fruitage is evil. When we are not able to say anything effective to clarify misunderstandings, I do not think that the last charge is really fair; but I believe the time has come to 'let go and let God,' and to keep still. The Lord Jesus gave everybody, good and bad, an excellent example – as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. Whether I am right or wrong, I believe I must from hereon be 'dumb.'" (A Warning and Its Reception, [Buff Section], Fnd. Ed., Letter to D. K. Short, pg. 8).⁹

» *To be Continued.*

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

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