

COMING EVENTS #1

Introduction

Understand, O son of man: for at the
time of the end shall be the vision.
Daniel 8:17

Moffatt renders it:

Understand the vision, O son of man:
for it relates to the crisis at the close.

What is this vision, and what is the crisis at the close? Before those questions are answered, here are several Bible texts which provide a bit of background.

In 1 Chronicles 12:32, we find that the men of Issachar were men that had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do. Does knowing what to do have any connection with knowing the time? Oh, yes. Suppose I wake up in the night not knowing what time it is. Do I know what to do? It may be time to get up. It may be time to turn over and go back to sleep. What do I do? I look at my watch. Otherwise, I might find myself coming down for breakfast at one o'clock in the morning. Or I might miss an appointment by going to sleep when it's time to get up.

We are told in *Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 6*, page 24: "It is the very essence of all right faith to do the right thing at the right time." The emphasis is on *knowing the time*.

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to
awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation
nearer than when we believed.
Romans 13:11

Why does Paul say it is time to wake up? Because we know the time. Again and again that thought is emphasized. There are times we would like to know what God hasn't revealed. We are warned in Acts 1:7 that it is not for us to know the times and the seasons which the Father has put in His own power.

The secret things belong unto the LORD our God:
but those things which are revealed belong unto
us and to our children for ever.
Deuteronomy 29:29

So the things we should study are the things which are revealed. When we study the subject of this chapter and this book, we should focus our attention on what God has clearly revealed, and avoid filling our minds with conjectures, speculations, and ideas of men concerning the things that God has not revealed. I don't know of anything that furnishes a more fertile field for human speculations than the future. But, thank God, the way we need to travel through the searchlight of prophecy is opened clear and plain. And we need not be as those that walk in darkness.

Jesus began to preach concerning His mission on the basis of the fulfillment of time prophecy. We are told that Jesus came into Galilee shortly after His baptism preaching the gospel of the kingdom and saying:

The time is fulfilled, and the
kingdom of God is at hand.
Mark 1:15

What time was Jesus talking about? What prophecy was He referring to? He was referring to that prophecy of our opening text — the wonderful prophecy of Daniel 8. It was that prophecy which clearly proves that our Lord Jesus is the true Messiah, the Anointed One of the Old Testament prophecies, for He came on time.

But when the fulness of the time was
come, God sent forth His Son, made
of a woman, made under the law.
Galatians 4:4

The baptism of Jesus by John in the River Jordan occurred in the fall of the year A.D. 27. That was exactly the time that Daniel had foretold, being the end of the 483 years, the 69 weeks reaching from the decree to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince. (Daniel 9:24-25) In B.C. 457, that decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem went forth. Exactly 483 years later, in A.D. 27, Jesus was baptized. Having received the anointing of the Spirit, He went forth proclaiming Himself and His mission to be the fulfillment of that prophecy which had been given through Daniel over 500 years before. He knew the time. Those who listened to His message knew the time. Knowing the time, they knew what to do; they were prepared to welcome the Messiah.

It is true that they didn't fully understand all the events to take place in connection with the coming of the Messiah. They expected a kingdom of glory to be set up at that time. But, as we know, three and a half years later, the cross was set up on Golgotha, and our Lord Jesus died in the midst of that last week. That very event was such a bitter disappointment to His followers that, for the time being, practically all of them lost faith. But Jesus appeared to them after His resurrection and comforted them, instructing them in the Scriptures. He built their faith on the firm foundation, on the prophetic word. He returned to heaven, and those same disciples

who were so bitterly disappointed were entrusted with the message to carry to the ends of the earth, which they did. And the gospel was preached to every creature under heaven in one generation. Such was the wonderful fulfillment of that prophecy which God had given in the 8th and 9th chapters of Daniel.

Note, however, that our opening text says that the vision of Daniel 8 relates primarily to the crisis at the close. When Daniel heard a certain one speaking, he heard a question asked:

How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice,
and the transgression of desolation, to give both the
sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?
Daniel 8:13

In other words, how long would the powers of the earth, dominated and inspired by the devil, trample down God's sanctuary, God's people, His truth, and His saints? The answer came:

And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three
hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.
Daniel 8:14

There was to be something about the cleansing of the sanctuary which would have to do with victory for God's people, the vindication of God's government, and the final overthrow of all the enemies of God and His truth. Those 2300 *days*, of course, were symbolic, representing 2300 *years*. Ezekiel says:

I have appointed thee each day for a year.
Ezekiel 4:6

Consequently, from that B.C. 457 date, we follow down prophetic time and focus on the year 1844 when those long 2300 years came to an end. What was so significant about the year 1844? What crisis correlates with that date? What is there about the cleansing of the sanctuary that has anything to do with that crisis? These are very important questions which will be answered in coming chapters. But let's now take a brief look at these problems.

Paul makes it clear in Hebrews 8 and 9 that the sanctuary is in heaven. The cleansing of the sanctuary is the blotting out of the sins of God's children from the record books above, at the close of the investigative judgment. But keep in mind that while the sanctuary is in heaven, God also has a sanctuary on earth. His people are called His temple, His sanctuary. And the blotting out of sins in the sanctuary in heaven is the bookkeeping record of the actual blotting out of the sins of God's people from their hearts and lives down here below. And God will never blot out the sins in the books up there unless they are blotted out down here. God will never have

an angel make an inaccurate or false entry in the books of heaven. And when the sanctuary is cleansed up there, you may be sure that it is because the sanctuary is cleansed down here. Jesus is going to purify His church today as He purified the temple of Jerusalem at the beginning and ending of His ministry. And it is on that cleansing of the sanctuary, along with the great cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven, that we want to focus.

Revelation 14 contains the message for this judgment hour. When the time comes for the sanctuary in heaven to be cleansed, and for a cleansed people to be developed here in this world, three mighty angels will fly in the midst of heaven with a message to those who dwell on the earth. In verse 6 comes the angel that we speak of as the first angel.

Notice his message in verse 7:

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him;
for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made
heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.
Revelation 14:7

Here is a message which indeed relates to the crisis at the close — a message which is present truth in the judgment hour. And so, at the time that Jesus was about to enter that most holy place in heaven to cleanse the sanctuary, and to enter into the work of investigative judgment preparatory to the blotting out of those sins, this message must go to all the world — “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.” That message could be given only to this last generation.

Paul, in reasoning before Felix, spoke of righteousness and temperance and “judgment to come.” Jesus pointed His hearers forward to the time when every idle word must be given account for in the day of judgment. But here, in Revelation 14, we have a message going to all the world, saying, not that the judgment *will* come but that the judgment *is* come. This message is the counterpart of the Daniel 8:14 prophecy. Daniel 8:14 gives us the *time*; Revelation 14:6-7 gives us the *message* for that time. The time is 1844, the time for the cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven and on earth. The message is Revelation 14:7, “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

As the result of such a message, a group of people are pictured in the 12th verse. What kind of people are they?

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that
keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.
Revelation 14:12

These people are ready for Jesus to come. The 14th verse presents Jesus coming on the clouds with a sharp sickle in His hand. And the angel says to the Saviour:

Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for
Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.
Revelation 14:15

In Matthew 13:38, Jesus says that the good seed are the children of the kingdom. In verse 39, He says that the harvest is the end of the world. Then, at harvest time, with the crop fully mature, with God's children like Him in every way, Jesus comes. This is the message which draws those people out from every nation and kindred and tongue and people, and develops them and perfects them and presents them at the coming of Jesus "without fault before the throne of God." I want to be in that company, don't you? Knowing the time, we know that we have come to that hour. It is the prophetic time given us in Daniel 8 and 9 that shows us that we are in that hour. It can't be much longer. Jesus is finishing His work in heaven; He is finishing it on earth. And knowing the time, it is high time to wake out of sleep and share in these closing movements.

Note this carefully. Revelation 14 depicts a great struggle, a great issue. The first angel speaks positively of the true worship, but the second and third angels speak very definitely of the *false* worship. The second angel says:

Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city,
because she made all nations drink of the
wine of the wrath of her fornication.
Revelation 14:8

Babylon represents today the great worldwide combination of error and falsehood — false religion claiming to speak for God but really speaking for Satan. Against that we are warned by this message. The third angel follows with a loud voice, saying:

If any man worship the beast and his image, and
receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the
same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.
Revelation 14:9-10

These judgments are coming upon those who worship the beast and his image, and on all who receive his mark. Here indeed is a crisis at the close. The beast and his image seek to enforce their mark upon the minds and consciences of men, and God warns us against that. That crisis is more fully pictured in Revelation 13 where the leopard beast that came from the sea is clearly presented. It is evident that the leopard beast is a symbol of the papacy, the great power that rules from the Vatican. We also know that following in the footsteps of the papacy is the image of the beast,

which represents the power of apostate Protestantism, now developing, which will soon unite with old papal Rome in a persecution against the people of God to the point that:

... no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark,
or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.
Revelation 13:17

Will that be a crisis? Yes, that is the crisis at the close. And there will be a death decree:

... the image of the beast should both speak,
and cause that as many as would not worship
the image of the beast should be killed.
Revelation 13:15

Do you see that all hell is moved against the development of the people who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus? This is indeed a crisis — a crisis in the government of God, and a crisis in the government of hell. This vision relates to the crisis at the close — the crisis just before Jesus comes — and every soul in this world will either be one of that little company who keeps the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, or they will be numbered among those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark in their right hands or in their foreheads. Have we truly come to grips with that crisis? We have often been told that it's typically true that trouble is greater in anticipation than it is in reality. But we're also told that this is not true concerning the time of trouble ahead.

The most vivid presentation, according to *Great Controversy*, page 622, cannot equal the magnitude of the ordeal through which we must pass. All hell will be turned loose to prevent the development of that group of people who have the seal of God in their foreheads, who keep the commandments of God, and whose sins are blotted out. The devil does not want a clean sanctuary. He does not want a clean heart in any soul. He does not want a clean church. He does not want sin to be eliminated and put away forever. No, the devil doesn't want that. He is going to do everything he can to prevent it.

Do we know anything about the sequence and order of the events in this last battle? Of course we do. There are some things we don't know. If you were in God's place, which ones would you reveal to God's people — the things they need to know or just the things they would like to know? Occasionally, somebody asks me a question concerning coming events, and the answer I have to give is, "I don't know." But we aren't completely ignorant about the future. We can know all we need to know, and we need to know all we can know.

When Jesus was on earth, fulfilling prophecy and calling attention to the fulfillment of prophecy, hundreds of His followers were bitterly disappointed. Although Christ's crucifixion was an exact fulfillment of prophecy, His followers lost hope when they saw Him hanging on the cross. Why? They had not fully studied the prophecies. Their minds were filled with the traditions of the religious leaders of that time. Christ's disciples thought they knew the Bible. In fact, the 12 apostles were ordained ministers of Jesus Christ. But they were bitterly disappointed and lost hope when the Lamb of God was slain on Calvary. You and I look back at it now and wonder why they couldn't see it.

Here is an interesting quote concerning them and us. It's in *Great Controversy*, page 594: "Before His crucifixion the Saviour explained to His disciples that He was to be put to death and to rise again from the tomb, and angels were present to impress His words on minds and hearts. But the disciples were looking for temporal deliverance from the Roman yoke, and they could not tolerate the thought that He in whom all their hopes centered should suffer an ignominious death. The words which they needed to remember were banished from their minds; and when the time of trial came, it found them unprepared. The death of Jesus as fully destroyed their hopes as if He had not forewarned them. So in the prophecies the future is opened before us as plainly as it was opened to the disciples by the words of Christ. The events connected with the close of probation and the work of preparation for the time of trouble, are clearly presented. But multitudes have no more understanding of these important truths than if they had never been revealed."

Multitudes today are going to be surprised by the coming events when they *could* know all they need to know — all that has any bearing on their preparation. The last quotation speaks about the close of probation and the work of preparation for the time of trouble. Does the close of probation take place *before* the coming of Jesus, *at* the coming of Jesus, or *after* the coming of Jesus? All three of those stands are being taught in the world today. They can't all be correct. Which one is *true*? Does it make any difference? Absolutely. Knowing the time, we know what to do.

Does the time of trouble occur *before* or *after* the coming of Jesus? Does it come *before* the close of probation or *after* it? All those different positions are being taught by various churches in the world today, and all claim to teach out of the Bible. They can't all be right. Do you know which one of *those* is correct? Do you know how to *prove* it? What the angel said relates to the crisis at the close. Let's see what Jesus said about the prophecy of Daniel:

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation,
spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place,
(whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them
which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.
Matthew 24:15-16

In Luke, we get a clearer idea of what Jesus meant:

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

Luke 21:20-21

When those Roman armies came against Jerusalem nearly 40 years after Jesus spoke these words, the Christians who had remembered and cherished the words of Christ saw in that approach of the Romans the sign that they should flee to the mountains. Why? Because Jesus said that when they saw that sign then they should know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

The Roman army under Cestius came and encamped around the city and laid siege to it. But just at the moment when it seemed that the Jews must surrender, Cestius, for no reason in the world, started a retreat to the sea; and the Jews, sallying forth after him, left the gates open; and the Christians, remembering the sign that Jesus had given, fled.

Someone might have said, "What is the use of fleeing now? The Romans are gone." But Jesus had told them that when they saw those armies around Jerusalem then know that her desolation was nigh. They knew it. They knew the time. They knew the signal. They acted; they fled to the mountains. It wasn't long before the Roman army, under Titus, came back. This time it came quickly by forced marches. A great army surrounded the city. And before that siege was over, one million Jews perished by crucifixion, starvation, inner conflicts within the city, and many other ways. In the fate of that city, we may behold the doom of the world. But not one Christian perished in the siege of that city. And not one of God's children upon whom is the seal of God is going to perish in the doom of this world. Not one. Why? Because they know the time, they watch the prophetic signals, and they move under the leadership of Jesus. We need to know what is soon coming to pass, and we need to know the signals.

As far as dates are concerned, the last prophetic date is 1844. At that time, the angel took his place, with one foot on the land and one on the sea, and with his right hand to heaven swore that there should be prophetic time no longer. Why? Because God's prophetic clock had struck the hour of the final movements. From 1844 on, it is not a matter of days or weeks or months or years but, rather, a development of a people. And when those people are developed, when their characters are perfected, then the crisis at the close breaks with all the force of a great hurricane or tornado. There is something which is about to take place which inspiration has said is to be to us a sign just as definite and clear and plain as was the Roman armies around

Jerusalem. And there are some things that we're to know when we see that happening. This is what we need to be studying.

People today are spending so much time trying to keep up with current events. They have the newspaper, radio, television, and other ways of keeping up. But every one of those means can tell you something only *after* it has happened. Anything else is merely human guesswork and speculation, liable to error of all kinds. Even the reporting of the news is sometimes tainted, whether accidentally or on purpose. But in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, the events are revealed *before* they come to pass! Isn't it a pity that multitudes are paying no more attention to these prophecies than if they had never been written? The prophecies are the timetables, the "schedule of events" with which you and I want to be familiarizing our minds. We want to have them so fixed in our minds, that if perchance in some lonely cell we are left without our Bibles in print, we shall have so much stored away in our memories that we shall suffer no loss because of the lack of the printed Word. Let's fill our minds with Daniel and Revelation. Let's know the events that are coming to pass.

Someone may say, "Oh, I already know what is coming." But we must not be too confident. As we study further, we may find that some things that we thought were so, aren't so. Or we may learn some things that we didn't previously know. I would rather know five things about coming events, and know them well, than to know ten things and be hazy and uncertain and incorrect. We must learn what is true and be able to recognize what isn't.

How many messages are there in Revelation 14? Three! The work of those messages is to get people ready. Are they getting you ready? In the Spirit of Prophecy, these three messages are presented as three steps. In the first vision that was given the servant of the Lord, she saw a narrow path cast high above the world (see *Early Writings*, page 14). The three steps are at the beginning of that path; they are the first, second, and third messages. We need to know exactly what those three messages are, when they rose, what they did for the people in the 1800s, and what they are designed to do for us today. If we allow these messages to do their work, to speak to our hearts, and we listen and do something about them, we shall be among those who are pictured in the latter part of Revelation 14 — golden grain, ready to be gathered for the kingdom of God, a people who are without fault, who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

The only thing which can cleanse the sanctuary in heaven or earth is the blood of Jesus Christ.

Without shedding of blood is no remission.
Hebrews 9:22

The reason that these people who are developed by this three-fold message are ready to meet the Saviour is that they have yielded their hearts and lives fully to the cleansing power of that blood. They have allowed it to do a completed work. Therefore a great program of education goes with this message to point out sin, exalting the law of God, that we may know what is wrong and put it away. But never think that by our human efforts alone we shall arrive either at an understanding of His will completely, or a complete cleansing from the sins that light brings to view. The angel who flies in the heavens has the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, the gospel that in Adam and Enoch and Noah's day brought comfort to those hearts that were bowed down under the weight of sin, the gospel that the Holy Spirit preached before unto Abraham and to Moses, and the everlasting gospel that Jesus preached, is being heralded today, pointing men and women to the cross of Christ as the place where sin may be repented of.

Knowing the time, we must wake out of sleep and hasten to get that work done. Knowing the time, we realize that we have little time left to prepare. Knowing the time, we shall want to be quick in our movements. So I trust that the Spirit of God may speak to our hearts right now. If sin is discovered by the searchlight of the Spirit in the heart, let us put it away and claim the covering blood of Jesus so that we may be under the shadow of the Almighty, protected by the covering righteousness of Christ.