

Overwhelming Surprise 4 of 8

The Sabbath

#0420

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—November 1965

I want you to notice the issue that prophecy puts the searchlight on. There are many things that enter into this final crisis, but prophecy deals with the great issue.

“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And 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 13:16–17.

Here is a clear prediction that a mark will be enforced, and you and I know what that mark is. It's the mark of apostasy, the false rest day, the change of the Sabbath from Saturday the seventh day, to Sunday the first day. That will be the issue.

“The Sabbath will be the *great* test of loyalty; for it is the point of truth especially controverted... While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God” *Great Controversy*, page 605.

Everybody's going to receive either the seal or the mark. That's the issue. And while the *day* in each case is the sign, the sign represents an experience of total allegiance to God on the one hand or total submission to man on the other. And as we noted in our opening study, the way to prepare for this overwhelming surprise is to get into the habit of looking heavenward to Jesus rather than depending on men.

Now, I want you to notice what's going to happen to the people who depend on men. “That no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark.” Those who are depending on men will be *forced*, literally forced, into submission.

This is a very interesting passage because it's quite in harmony with the present generation. It would be quite unpopular in the United States to have a death decree against people who keep the Sabbath. At the moment, the whole atmosphere is one of the ecumenical spirit of pulling together for peace. But on the other hand, economic sanctions, as they're called, are looked upon as proper coercive weapons in this generation.

The United Nations has been called upon at various times to enforce sanctions. The League of Nations tried it a generation ago. The minds of people are

prepared for the idea that if there are those who will not cooperate and will not abide by the law of the nations, perhaps the best way to deal with them is just to cut off their bread and butter; cut off their means of trade. Let them find out that they cannot live by themselves, and of themselves, and to themselves.

That's the picture here. The prophet wrote it down nearly two thousand years ago. He causeth all to receive this mark, and "that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark."

If we, God's children, are to be prepared for that, there are two things that we need to get settled. One is that we are willing for God to provide for us in as meager or generous a way as He sees best, and the other is that we will do our best to work *with* Him to provide in preparation for that day. We are told that we should move out of the city into the country in preparation for that time. We're told that those who will establish homes in the country will be able to raise their own fruit and vegetables when the problem of buying and selling will be a very serious one. Those who believe God's instructions will, of course, try to do this now. Notice:

"The Protestant world have set up an idol sabbath in the place where God's Sabbath should be, and they are treading in the foot steps of the Papacy. For *this* reason I see the necessity of the people of God moving out of the cities into retired country places, where they may cultivate the land and raise their own produce" *Selected Messages*, Book 2, page 359.

Now, that's as plain as language could be. Over this issue of the Sabbath-Sunday question, comes the last great crisis. And for this *reason*, the Lord's messenger says:

"Thus they may bring their children up with simple, healthful habits. I see the necessity of making haste to get all things ready for the crisis" *Ibid*.

This was written way back in 1897. This is one of the early calls to get our people out of the cities into retired country places, where they can raise their own produce and bring their children up with simple, healthful habits. *This*, says the prophet, is a part of making haste to get all things ready for the crisis. Remember, the keynote of this series of lessons is that God's people, children of light, are not going to be *overtaken* by an overwhelming surprise as the world is. We're to be *preparing* for what is to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise.

Noah did that. The people back there were just as surprised as if there had been no warning. They ate and drank and married and gave in marriage until the day of Noah entered the Ark and "knew now until the flood came, and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matthew 24:39).

So the world is going to be just as surprised today with what's going to happen as though they'd never been warned. And yet God is warning them and will continue to warn them until *every* soul gets the warning just as it was in Noah's day.

But the people who *heed* the warning, God's remnant people, along with keeping the Sabbath, will *break* loose from the confederacies. They'll break loose from the situations that will make it impossible for them to obey God's law. They will establish themselves out in the country in retired places where they can raise their own produce and bring their children up with simple, healthful habits.

You see, there are two great reasons for getting out in the country. One is because of this pressure over the Sunday law. The other is that we may have the spiritual health of contact with nature, and being away from crime and vice. Thank the Lord that He's warned us.

"We are not to locate ourselves where we will be forced into close relations with those who do not honor God... A crisis is soon to come in regard to the observance of Sunday... We are to place ourselves where we can carry out the Sabbath commandment in its fullness, and we are to be careful not to place ourselves where it will be hard for ourselves and our children to keep the Sabbath... There are troublous times before us" *Ibid.*

One of the *great* agencies that's going to have a part in bringing about this boycott over the Sunday law is the labor unions. In recent years we have seen the churches, both Catholic and Protestant, linking up with the labor unions in this drive for Sunday laws. It has manifested itself openly in a number of places and will continue to do so. Notice this statement:

"The trades unions will be one of the agencies that will bring upon this earth a time of trouble such as has not been since the world began" *Ibid.*, page 142.

There's going to be a time of trouble, and the trade unions are going to help bring it about. That fits into the prophecy of Revelation 13. It's an economic pressure. Later there will be a death decree, fulfilling Revelation 15. But the world will think that it can bring Seventh-day Adventists to their knees in submission by simply refusing to let them buy and sell. So we have much to learn along that line.

One thing is to disassociate ourselves with the associations of this world. We have been given warning after warning.

"The work of the people of God is to prepare for the events of the future, which will soon come upon them with *blinding* force. In the world gigantic monopolies will be formed. Men will bind themselves together in unions that will wrap them in the folds of the enemy. A few men will combine to grasp all the means to be obtained in certain lines of business. Trades unions will be formed, and those who refuse to join these unions will be marked men... The trades unions and confederacies of the world are a snare. Keep out of them, and away from them, brethren. Have nothing to do with them" *Ibid.*

I know a man who was *literally* a marked man because he wouldn't join the union. His legs were shot full of buckshot. I don't know whether they missed a higher aim or just decided to cripple him rather than kill him. He was a marked man, literally, and only for this—that he wouldn't join the union. He was a Seventh-day Adventist. I read on:

“The trades unions and confederacies of the world are a snare. Keep out of them and away from them, brethren. Have nothing to do with them” *Ibid.*

That's clear, isn't it? And notice, looking into the future:

“Those who claim to be the children of God are in no case to bind up with the labor unions that are formed or that shall be formed” *Ibid.*, page 144.

Isn't that interesting? And there've been a great many formed since that was written. There will doubtless be more. The endeavor is to get everybody in a union that's working, in any line of activity. Then a few men at the top by pulling the wires, pulling the strings, can control vast groups. Those who claim to be the children of God are in no case to bind up with the labor unions that are formed or shall be formed.

“This the Lord forbids. Cannot those who study the prophecies see and understand what is before us?” *Ibid.*

Now I want you to notice how the different parts of the world's program all fit together, and the different parts of God's program fit together. If you were the Devil and you were trying to get people into these confederacies, where would you have people live? In the cities, right? But if you had Heaven's point of view, and you were trying to keep people away from these confederacies, where would have them live? [In the country]. Don't you see how simple it is? It's just as simple as that.

Here's a part of the threefold message:

“And there followed another angel, saying, 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.

The same message is repeated:

“And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich

through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” Revelation 18:2, 4.

Where does a person have to be that says come out? He has to be out. If we’re *in* the spirit of this world, we can never say to people, “Come out of the spirit of this world.” If we’re in the unions and combinations of this world, we can never give the message, “Come out of the unions and combinations of this world.” And if our hearts, like Lot’s poor wife, are in Sodom, it’ll be very hard for us to urge anyone to leave it, won’t it? That’s the thing. “Come out of her, my people.” *Come* out! Now, someone might stand in Babylon and say, “Go out,” but to come out—the very word “*come*” indicates, *leave* where you are, and come where I am. That’s what *Jesus* is saying, and that’s what His *people* are saying in the Loud Cry.

It’s true that we may visit the cities to give them that message, but it will be to say, “Come home with me.” That’s what Enoch did. Oh friends, get that spirit to say, “Come out.”

We will never be able to give that message as we should unless we have a true understanding of the values of country living and a real appreciation of the values of country living.

Now you see, that was the trouble with Lot. How many converts did he get as he preached there in Sodom? He didn’t get a one. Yet he’s called a preacher.

He wasn’t *enthusiastic* about leaving Sodom. He went down there because of pressure from his family. He pitched his tent toward Sodom. He probably had no intention of moving in. But it seems more convenient as time went on. He’d have greater advantages politically, commercially, and socially. And it worked out that way. It did. He became one of the judges. He sat in the gate. He was a respected and honored man in Sodom.

I suppose Lot thought that it was a fine thing to have that influence that he could use for God. But it didn’t accomplish anything as far as the people in Sodom were concerned. *Not* a thing. Why? Because Lot had the city mind. He didn’t have the country mind.

Now Abraham had *influence* with Sodom. He was respected and honored as he lived out there in the country under the oaks at Mamre, *away* from all that sin and vice of which Sodom had even then become proverbial. Oh friends, do you see how vital it is that we cherish the *royal* privileges of living in the country rather than thinking it’s a sacrifice?

When Lot was called out of Sodom, the angels of God literally pulled him out. And when they got him outside, the Lord said, “Lot, see that mountain? Get going, and get there fast.”

Lot said, “Oh, I can’t go up there. Some evil would overtake me.” He’d become so used to city conveniences that he was afraid that something would

happen to him if he went out there. So he picked out a little city and said, "Couldn't you let me go there? Won't you spare that one?" And the merciful Lord said, "All right."

You see what I mean, friends? Lot didn't understand. He didn't appreciate the goodness of God in making it *possible* for him to live in the country. He had lived so long in Sodom. You know the sad result. He went there. But soon he was so impressed with the wickedness of that that he moved up into a cave, and Zoar was destroyed as Sodom had been. And you know the awful story of the conduct of his daughters and the immorality and all that they had learned down there in the city, just as young people are learning it in the cities of today. Oh, what a terrible story! But it's written there for *us*. Because Jesus says:

"Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" Luke 17:28, 30.

That's the great problem today, friends. People are so wedded to these conveniences, these advantages: socially, politically, commercially, educationally, and *all* the rest, that it's *hard* getting them to break loose. I want to read you something:

"But ere long there will be such strife and confusion in the cities that those who wish to leave them will not be able. We must be preparing for these issues. This is the light that is given me" *Selected Messages*, Book 2, page 142.

Notice that again and again in these references, from different places, we catch that repeated refrain of the prophet, that we should be preparing. And one of the greatest things we need to do to prepare to resist these pressures is to get our *minds* in shape so that we think as God thinks instead of the way the world thinks.

Jesus came down here and took our poverty that we might share Heaven's riches. And those who get the spirit of this message will be willing to be poor in order that they may be saved themselves, and save their children, rather than be rich in this world for a few days.

"Who will be warned? We say again, 'Out of the cities' Do not consider it a great deprivation, that you must go into the hills and mountains, but seek for that retirement where you can be alone with God, to learn His will and way... I urge our people to make it their lifework to seek for spirituality. Christ is at the door. This is why I say to our people, 'Do not consider it a privation when you are called to leave the cities and move out into the country places'" *Ibid.*, pages 355–356.

Now, *why* should we not consider it a privation? I'll *tell* you why, friends. If we do, we won't stay there long. Sooner or later, we'll be back; back in the whirl, back in

the swim, back in the rat race. We will have paid our dollar down, and so much a month for who knows how long in order to get this and this and this.

We'll have to get into the harness. We'll have to be driven by the lash. We'll have to be chained like the galley slaves to the oars, and work away for our bread and board, and all these marvelous advantages and conveniences that modern life offers.

But all the while, out in the country with God are rich treasures in contact with nature. The *glow* of the sunrise, unobscured by the city's smog, the glories of the flowers, the trees, the lake, the mountains; oh friends, and working with God instead of just working with machines.

Shall we count our blessing? Shall we rejoice in the privileges of royalty?

And meanwhile, not as hermits, but as Enochs, as evangelists, let's reach out and say to the weary multitudes, to all who will listen, "Come out."

Dear Lord, put in our hearts such a view of what's ahead as shall stir us to do our best to gather in Thy remnant while the hour awaits. For Jesus' sake, amen.

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