

# Why We Exist As A People

The Historical and Eschatological Significance of Adventism

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It is a chilling historic fact, testified to by the inspired voice among us, that the latter rain once began to fall within the Adventist Church...and then stopped. The final phase of the eschaton had begun...and then was put on pause/circumvented. Jesus was about to come...and then, astoundingly, His coming was delayed. Speaking in the moment of that glorious potential, Ellen White penned these words:

“The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth” (*1888 Materials*, p. 1073; *Review and Herald*, Nov. 22, 1892).

But then, assessing the history that quickly followed, she said:

“Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world” (*1888 Materials*, p. 1575; *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 234).

“The Lord’s work has been hindered, the sealing time delayed. Many have not heard the truth. But the Lord will give them a chance to hear and be converted, and the great work of God will go forward” (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, p. 292).

More than one hundred years have passed since these sobering words were written. The fact that we are still in this world says something. The hour is more than late. It is well

past time that we awake and arise to fulfill our God-given mission. “Knowing the time, . . . now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed” (Romans 13:11).

“Knowing the time . . .”

Do we know the time?

What time is it, my dear fellow Adventist?

According to the prophetic record, we live in that ominous segment of history called “the time of the end” (Daniel 12:4). But *now*—think carefully Advent believer—it would seem it is *beyond* the time of the end. Yes, beyond! The whole great controversy between good and evil was intended by God to be wrapped up by now. The time of the end has actually been prolonged/extended. It has been the end longer than it was supposed to be. Such being the case, we find ourselves faced with a solemn danger, and it is this: the longer we wander in this wilderness world, the more inclined we will be to lose touch with our distinctive identity. It is potentially perilous for a people who were meant to be a short-lived, single-generation movement to become a multi-generational denomination. Jesus foretold the delay we are now experiencing, and He warned that during the delay all “ten virgins” would “slumber and sleep” (Matthew 25). And we have. A spiritual sleepiness has indeed settled upon us, and in the process of our slumbering we have nearly forgotten who we are as a people. As time goes by and our numbers increase by quick, promotion-driven evangelism, we have begun to suffer an identity crisis. Contrary to our divinely issued charter, we are starting to get comfortable with the idea that we are just one of the many Evangelical-Protestant denominations, and we are finding it quite satisfying to kind of fit in finally. And yet, our history keeps reminding us that we are called to a distinctive mission. Our identity as a people is specific, not general. We are not commissioned by our Lord to simply blend into the evangelical landscape and be a part of the colossal “Christian” parade. We exist for a very specialized purpose, and that purpose must be indelibly etched upon our consciousness “lest we forget” who we are

and merge by default into the vast spiritual confusion that surrounds us. We are a prophetically born people with a prophetic calling and mission, as I will herein demonstrate. The Advent Movement was brought into existence to push the eschatological buttons, by means of a message, that will thrust the conflict between good and evil to its end and usher in the glorious Second Coming of Christ.

Right now, as you read this book, there is an awakening movement afoot in our midst intent on calling us to be about our Father's special end-time business. Many Adventists are experiencing an intensifying sense that the suffering and evil of this world has gone on far too long, and that it lies with our God-given power, to some significant degree at least, to "hasten" (*hurry up*) the coming of Jesus (2 Peter 3:12). It seems appropriate at this time to remind us of who we are and define our mission. This book will attempt to offer just such a reminder. We will consider three key sections of prophecy that describe our identity and mission as Adventists: Revelation 18:1-2, Daniel 8:9-14 and Revelation 10-14. By so doing I in no way want to encourage denominational arrogance, but rather to simply articulate what Bible prophecy has to say about our time in history and our place in God plan as Seventh-day Adventists. If anything, we should we deeply humbled by the fact that we have not kept step with the prophetic plan.

### **The Illuminating Angel: Revelation 18**

Revelation 18:1-2 depicts the final, climactic work of God's church. We exist as a people to fulfill this prophecy:

“After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority [*power*, KJV], and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, ‘Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen!’”

Four elements are evident: (1) power, (2) glory and (3) global illumination, resulting in (4) the fall of Babylon. In brief, the angel of Revelation eighteen symbolizes a message-bearing movement that powerfully, authoritatively, effectually magnifies the glory of

God's good character as an act of theological and spiritual warfare against a colossal false religious system that has severely damaged God's reputation in the eyes of humanity. As the illuminating influence of this angel-movement advances to become worldwide, Babylon falls never to rise again. Everyone who embraces the light (truth) communicated by this angel (messenger) is liberated from the theological darkness and spiritual domination Babylon has imposed on the world. Then—hallelujah!—in chapter 19, John reveals the Second Coming of Christ, depicting the Savior returning to earth as a warrior riding on a white horse to rescue of His people.

Now let us add a little more detail.

### **Authority**

The power exercised by the angel of Revelation 18 is a *real* authority. The church possesses territorial jurisdiction over all the earth to reclaim lives for God's kingdom and expel the influence of the usurping enemy. But the angel's power is not inherent in its own achievements, but rather in the achievements of Christ. God's end-time people are called upon to wield the very authority Jesus acquired over the kingdom of darkness by virtue of His triumphant life, death and resurrection. In His parting words to His disciples Jesus spoke of this power:

“All authority [*power*, KJV] has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

Here Jesus announced a crucial and pivotal development in the great controversy between God and Satan. When the Savior said that “all power” had been given to Him in heaven and on earth, He was speaking of the fact that His death on the cross unequivocally demonstrated the truth of God's love before the entire universe, thus exonerating the divine character against the lying accusations of Satan. It was on the basis of deceit regarding the character of God that Satan instigated rebellion among the angels in

heaven. “Unselfishness, the principle of God’s kingdom, is the principle that Satan hates; its very existence he denies. From the beginning of the great controversy he has endeavored to prove God’s principles of action to be selfish” (*Education*, p. 154). Likewise, it was by means of the same deceptive portrayal of God that he caused the fall of humanity and took possession of Earth as his claimed territory (Genesis 3). Satan thus became “the ruler of this world” and “the god of this age” (John 12:31; 2 Corinthians 4:4).

As a counteroffensive maneuver of the purest form, Christ “appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Hebrews 9:26). He conquered evil by the selfless giving of Himself. Jesus achieved the redemption of humanity and reclaimed Earth as His own rightful possession by presenting the irrefutable truth of the Father’s good character, thus destroying “the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). “Having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the Cross” (Colossians 2:15, NIV). Satan was an armed foe and Jesus disarmed him. The disarming of which Paul speaks has nothing to do with physical weapons. Satan has not waged his war against God with guns and bombs, but rather with ideas and words and theological constructs calculated to distort the human perception of God and thus turn hearts away from Him. But when Jesus died on the cross, Satan’s misrepresentation of God’s character was proven wrong. The theological weaponry Satan had employed against God was rendered impotent.

Notice how Jesus explained the result of His death on the cross: “For this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name... Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself” (John 12:27-32). At the cross, as tandem events, the Father was glorified and Satan was cast out. The truth was placed on the table—infused into human history as a demonstrated reality—the truth that would, in the telling, ruin the credibility of Satan’s arguments against God. In *principle* Christ won the great controversy at the cross, in that Satan’s charges against God were effectively refuted. This is the sense in which Jesus was given “all power in heaven and on earth” by virtue of His death and

resurrection. Jesus forever proved that God is love and therefore worthy of the trust and loyalty of all rational beings. It is in the light of this achieved victory, with all its legal leverage and testifying power before both heavenly and earthly spectators, that Jesus said, “Go therefore and teach all nations.” In the most practical terms, the gospel commission sends the church forth with authority to take back the souls of human beings from the dominion of the devil by liberating minds from the falsehoods that keep them from God—first to reclaim the territory of bodies and minds, and finally to reclaim the very soil of Earth as the rightful home of the righteous. By the proclamation of the gospel the church is simply and profoundly extending the conquest Jesus gained at the cross. The victory won by the Savior *in principle* must now be won *in effect* as a practical reality in one life after another by means of the church preaching the gospel, which is, in effect, a presentation of the evidence in favor of God over against all false claims. This is how the angel of Revelation wields his “great power.”

“From the beginning it has been God’s plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to ‘the principalities and powers in heavenly places,’ the final and full display of the love of God.’ Ephesians 3:10” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9).

## **Glory**

The “glory” radiating from the angel of Revelation 18—so brilliant and beautiful that it illuminates the whole world—is “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6). He is “the brightness” of God’s “glory” and the “express image of His person” (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus is the complete and accurate revelation of the Father’s character to a world that does not know Him as He is. Into the darkness of distorted conceptions of God, Jesus came as a blazing light. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.... No one has seen God at any time. The

only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him” (John 1:14, 18). The incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ is the definitive answer to Satan’s claim that God is essentially self-centered and therefore cannot be loved, trusted and obeyed. When Jesus died on the cross, it became forever beyond dispute that God loves all other above and before Himself. He can be trusted and should be worshiped and obeyed by every rational creature, and therefore there is no legitimate reason for rebellion against Him.

What, then, is the mission of the Revelation-18 movement? Is it not to usher the world into the precious light of God’s true glory manifested in Christ?! Are we not called upon to share with the world the one paramount reality that rises above all others, namely that God is utterly selfless and perfectly good in all His attributes and ways, and by logical extension that God is not the monster He has been portrayed to be by the world’s false religions?

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth... The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 415).

### **Global Illumination**

The apostle John was shown that “the earth” will be “illuminated” by the angel of Revelation 18. By shedding the true light of God’s glory upon the world, this movement will bring about the final theological revolution of human history and thus summon the whole world to judgment. All will be brought face-to-face with the truth about God revealed in Christ, and will thereby be brought to the point of conscious decision for or against God in the light of that glorious revelation. The fact that this final movement will be global in scope will constitute it as the judgment of the living and therefore the close

of universal probation. The prophets wrote of the eventuality of this global enlightenment.

Moses: “The Lord said... ‘truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord’” (Numbers 14:21).

David: “Blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen” (Psalm 72:19).

Isaiah: “Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising” (Isaiah 60:1-3).

Ezekiel: “Behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory” (Ezekiel 43:2).

Habakkuk: “The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14).

John: “I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory” (Revelation 18:1).

There is a dual significance to this multi-prophet foretelling. Christ is the fulfillment of this prophecy in the primary sense. But His end-time church is the channel through which His glory will be made a global human encounter. With one consistent voice down through the ages the prophets foretold the inevitable rise of a powerful movement that will open the eyes of the world to the true character of God. The climactic conclusion of human history will be accomplished by a worldwide truth-telling revolution through which God will be vindicated and all the living inhabitants of earth will be thrust into a crisis of reason and conscience as they weigh the evidence presented. All will be brought

to the point of final, irrevocable decision.

### **The Fall of Babylon**

“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen!” As a result of the global enlightenment to be achieved by the angel of Revelation 18, John was shown that the delusive power Babylon has held over the minds of human beings is to be broken. The darkness enveloping the world due to the God-defaming influence of false religious systems in general, and false Christianity in particular, will be dispelled as the gospel is preached and lived.

In violent response, Satan will work through earthly powers to crush the truth-telling movement that threatens his kingdom. As persecution against God’s freedom-loving people is set in motion, the character of Satan and his force-oriented “Christian” system will stand in stark contrast to the benevolent character of God. The human race will be polarized into two distinct groups: those who stand for liberty of conscience in harmony with their faith in God as One who is wholly actuated by love and therefore only accepts a freely-rendered worship, versus those who align themselves with Satan’s end-time persecution machine and thereby act out the delusion they have loved of a god who is motivated by selfishness and uses force to attain his ends. In the final crisis everyone will act out their picture of God. All will reveal their true character-content according to what they have chosen to believe about God, just as Jesus foretold would be the case:

“Yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me” (John 16:2-3).

Christ here informs us that everything in the final crisis, for each individual, hinges on whether or not the Father’s true character is known. Everyone will serve the image of God they believe. Two distinct classes will form around two distinct pictures of God: the persecutors and the persecuted, all serving God in harmony with their chosen perception of the divine character. The persecutors will unwittingly serve Satan as god by accepting and acting out his coercive character in the name of God (John 8:37-47). The persecuted

will proclaim and model before the world that, “Were the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Corinthians 3:17).

“The forces of darkness will unite with human agents who have given themselves into the control of Satan, and the same scenes that were exhibited at the trial, rejection, and crucifixion of Christ will be revived. Through yielding to satanic influences, men will be transformed into fiends; and those who were created in the image of God, who were formed to honor and glorify their Creator, will become the habitation of dragons, and Satan will see in an apostate race his masterpiece of evil—men who reflect his own image” (*Review and Herald*, April 14, 1896).

We understand the Babylon of Revelation to be a biblical symbol for the Papal Church as a system of belief and practice (not individual Catholics in particular), also known in Scripture as “the Little Horn” (Daniel), “the Man of Sin” (Paul), the “Antichrist,” the “Beast rising up out of the sea” and the “Great Harlot” (John). John’s usage of “Babylon” as a symbol for false religion has deep roots in Scripture. There are three prominent characteristics of Babylon in the Bible: (1) The exaltation of human beings in place of God, (2) an appeasement or salvation-by-works picture of God, leading to (3) a coercive system of worship involving persecution for dissenters as the logical outworking of the appeasement image of God.

Our first biblical encounter with Babylon is in Genesis 10 and 11. Here we are told that Nimrod was the founder of Babel. It was a city established in a spirit of self-exaltation and distrust of God. The people of Babel attempted to build a tower for the purpose of reaching into “heaven” and sought to make for themselves a famous name. Here we see the spirit of self-ascension as the foundational characteristic of Babylon.

Abraham was a descendant of Shem, Noah’s son. He lived in “Ur of the Chaldeans,” a city of Babylon. “Ur” means *fire*, a name likely chosen for the Babylonian practice of human sacrifice in harmony with Satan’s misrepresentation of the divine character. God called Abraham out of Babylon in order to separate a people among whom a true

theology could be formed, free from pagan worship practices that instill in the human heart an appeasement conception of God (Joshua 24:2). With Abraham God founded a new nation that would hold forth the truth about the one true God and through which the Messiah would eventually come to banish all darkness (Genesis 11-12). As an intentional parallel to Abraham's experience, the angel of Revelation 18 calls out of Babylon all who will hear God's voice and embrace His true character in the end-time (Revelation 18:4).

From these infamous beginnings in Genesis, Babylon's long career of rebellion against God is chronicled throughout the Bible. In the book of Daniel we find the most detailed character profile of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon's king at its height of inglorious glory, embodied the spirit of Babylon by erecting an image as a monument to himself and forcing all to worship the image on threat of death (Daniel 3). The episode was perfectly calculated to foreshadow the final crisis of human history: a false image masquerading as God, a demand for appeasement to that false image in the form of a forced worship, and persecution for those who believe otherwise about God and refuse to worship the false image (Revelation 13).

Ancient Babylon was known for her false gods. The fall of Babylon announced by the angel of Revelation 18 is quoted from Isaiah 20:9: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen! All the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground." Likewise, eschatological Babylon is essentially a professed Christian church that has attributed the characteristics of pagan deities, and thus Satan himself, to the biblical God.

"This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of 'the man of sin' foretold in prophecy as opposing and exalting himself above God. That gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan's power—a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 50).

Therefore, the fall of Babylon must involve its false image of God being "broken to the ground." This is the work of the angel-movement of Revelation 18 that illuminates the

world with the glory of God and thus precipitates the fall of Babylon.

“The angel who unites in the proclamation of the third angel’s message is to lighten the whole earth with his glory. A work of worldwide extent and unwonted power is here foretold. The Advent movement of 1840-44 was a glorious manifestation of the power of God; the first angel’s message was carried to every missionary station in the world, and in some countries there was the greatest religious interest which has been witnessed in any land since the Reformation of the sixteenth century; but these are to be far exceeded by the mighty movement under the last warning of the third angel.

“The work will be similar to that of the day of Pentecost. As the ‘former rain’ was given, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the opening of the gospel, to cause the upspringing of the precious seed, so the ‘latter rain’ will be given at its close, for the ripening of the harvest” (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 610, 611).

Babylon will undergo the “fall” foretold by the angel of Revelation 18 when that massive masquerading system of false “Christianity” loses its influence and credibility as a direct result of the pure gospel, in all its beauty and power, revolutionizing the world’s understanding of the character of God. With this prophecy before us it our mission becomes evident: we are called as a people to construct for the world an accurate, theologically sound and irresistibly beautiful picture of the one and only true God. Our Savior and His Apostles, the Protestant Reformers and the Advent pioneers, have bequeathed to us a system of truth that contains the latent potential for lightening the world with the glory of God. We must come to know and understand the theological goldmine we’re sitting on and communicate its rich contents to our fellow human beings.

### **The Cleansing of The Sanctuary: Daniel 8:14**

If there is one text of Scripture that defines more comprehensively than any other the reason we exist as a people, it is Daniel 8:14:

“Unto two thousand three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

This prophecy consists of two elements: a *time* and an *event*.

Since I am here writing to my fellow Seventh-day Adventists, I will not work out the evidence for the *time* aspect of the prophecy. We understand that the 2300 days are 2300 years, spanning from 457 BC to 1844. The time period is marked off by four major events: (1) “the command to restore and build Jerusalem” in 457 BC as the starting point of the 2300 years; (2) the anointing of Jesus as “Messiah the Prince” in 27 AD; (3) the Messiah being “cut off” in 31 AD; (4) and the “cleansing of the sanctuary” beginning in 1844 (Daniel 8:14; 9:24-27). We will give our attention here to the meaning of the cleansing of the sanctuary. (For a more extensive treatment of the time aspect of Daniel’s prophecies, see the *Unsealing Daniel* study guides and companion time-line chart, Ty Gibson and James Rafferty, both available at [lbn.org](http://lbn.org) or 541-988-3333).

### **The Content of The Question**

In order to rightly understand what is entailed in the cleansing of the sanctuary in more than a cursory manner, we must give careful attention to the immediate context preceding the foretelling of this important event. The first point we notice is that Daniel 8:14 is the answer given to a question posed in verse 13. (This is crucial. Please follow carefully. You will be richly rewarded for thinking this through.)

Verse 13: “Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, ‘How long will the vision be, concerning the daily *sacrifices* and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?’”

Verse 14: “And he said to me, ‘Unto two thousand three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.’”

We are here listening in on a conversation between two angels. The first angel wants to know “how long” a certain state of affairs is going to persist. The second angel gives the 2300-year prophecy and specifies the cleansing of the sanctuary as the answer to the question. Clearly, then, the cleansing of the sanctuary brings resolution to the adverse state of affairs lamented by the questioning angel, whatever they may be. In order to understand what is to be achieved by the cleansing of the sanctuary, we must, therefore, understand the content of the first angel’s question. What, then, is the adverse situation the angel has in view when he asks, “How long?” We need not guess. The immediate context is clear.

The subject of the questioning angel’s concern is the Little Horn and its various activities against God and His people. It is evident, therefore, that the cleansing of the sanctuary spoken of by the answering angel involves the demise of the Little Horn’s infamous career. The questioning angel inquires, “How long will the vision be?” What vision? The vision Daniel just received regarding the dastardly deeds of the Little Horn (Daniel 8:1-12), which also loops back to his earlier vision of the Little Horn (Daniel 7). The questioning angel wants to know when the horrific actions of this powerful system will end. How long will the Little Horn be able to persist unchecked in performing its crimes against God and humanity? The answering angel explains that the Little Horn’s reign will end after the 2300-year prophecy is fulfilled, or during the period of history designated by the cleansing of the sanctuary. The topic of interest is not when the Little Horn will *begin* its reign of terror; it does not do so at the outset of the 2300 years, but some time into it. But once begun, the angel wants to know “how long” until it will end? The answering angel tells him that once the endpoint of the 2300-year prophecy is reached, in 1844, “then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Therefore, the *time* for the Little Horn to be conquered is from 1844 onward, and the *event* that will achieve the Little Horn’s demise is the cleansing of the sanctuary.

Let us now proceed to examine the content of “the vision” of concern to the questioning angel. There are six specific actions of the Little Horn delineated.

1. ***Slander Against the Most High***: “He shall speak pompous words against the Most High” (7:11, 20, 25). The Little Horn exists for the purpose of defaming the character of God. Revelation 13:6 is a parallel passage: “He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name.” The opening of this power’s mouth signifies its theological teachings, its doctrines. The word “blasphemy” means to *defame, slander, malign* and at its most basic etymological root, to *blame*. The teachings of the Little Horn, which is the same power as the Sea Beast of Revelation 13, have the effect of misrepresenting “God” and His “name,” meaning, essentially, His character. Papal theology paints the character of God in the blackest hues possible and places the blame for evil and suffering upon the Creator, all while professing to be God’s one true representative on earth. In fact, the dark genius behind the papal system is that it attributes to God the character and deeds of Satan. “Though unable to expel God from His throne, Satan has charged God with satanic attributes, and has claimed the attributes of God as his own” (*Review and Herald*, April 14, 1896). Lucifer “misrepresented God, attributing to him the desire for self-exaltation. With his own evil characteristics he sought to invest the loving Creator. Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men. He led them to doubt the Word of God, and to distrust His goodness” (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 21, 22). Satan’s secret scheme in forming the colossal system of false “Christianity” is to cause human beings to imagine that his own vile character traits of cruelty, domination, tyranny, injustice, arbitrariness and self-centeredness belong to God. This is what Daniel means when he says the Little Horn “shall speak pompous words against the Most High,” and what John means when he says the Sea Beast “opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name.” Daniel was shown that the cleansing of the sanctuary will somehow serve to combat the God-defaming work of the Little Horn on behalf of the world.

2. ***Coercion in the Name of God***: He shall make “war against the saints” and “shall persecute the saints” (7:21, 25). Here Daniel foretold that the Little Horn would be a coercive power. But that fact alone is not the worst of it. Once it is realized that the Little Horn is a professedly Christian power, it becomes evident that its use of force has terrible implication for the human perception of God. The long and widespread exercise of force in the name of God and of Christ by the papal system is perhaps the single most

spiritually devastating crime ever perpetrated against the human race. To cause unspeakable suffering and massacre millions of people all the while claiming to be doing the work and will of God grossly misrepresents the divine character and shuts down the human spirit against its Maker. The use of force in matters of worship is in diametric opposition to what God is actually seeking to achieve in the plan of salvation. Our benevolent Creator desires only worship that is borne of love for Him in the light of His love for us. “The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God’s government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 22).

It is important to note that the Little Horn’s coercive deeds are simply a reflection of its theology. As image-reflecting creatures, we humans tend to act out our picture of God, and papal Christianity is no exception. The act of killing in the name of God must have as its root structure in a perception of God that would justify the killing. Not only has the Little Horn used force to advance its false teachings about God, its doctrine in and of themselves contain coercive psychological pressure. Teachings such as eternal torment, purgatory, indulgences, penance, and the mediation of Mary and saints all serve to create a theological construct that portrays God as demanding a slavish worship, thus rendering it impossible for believers to truly love God. With these conceptions of God residing in the heart, “worship,” if such may be called worship, can emerge from no higher motive than self-preserving terror.

3. ***Self-exaltation in the Name of God:*** “He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the hosts” (8:11). The self-exaltation of the Little Horn perfectly mirrors Satan’s original illicit aspiration as recorded in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. The Adversary launched his war against God by pursuing a course of self-exaltation under the lying pretext that God occupies His high position by means of self-exaltation (Isaiah 14:12-15). From the outset of his daring rebellion the enemy projected his own image onto God in order to justify his self-aggrandizing course. When the deceiver came to Adam and Eve it was with the

claim that God operates from a motive of self-centeredness and that He was, therefore, cruelly holding them back from rising to equality with Him (Genesis 3:1-5). Daniel was shown that the Little Horn system would operate on the same principle of action that forms the foundation of Satan's war against God. The Papacy is a system of self-exaltation that claims to represent God. The effect has been to affirm in the human mind Satan's claim that God is essentially self-centered. To conduct religion in a self-serving manner gives the distinct impression that the God behind such religion must be self-serving in character. Daniel 8:11 is most likely the text from which John derived the idea of "antichrist" (1 John 2:18, 22; 2 John 7). It is self-exaltation *in place of* Christ that constitutes the essence of the antichrist system. When men lift themselves up to occupy the place of Christ in the minds of the people, that action is antichrist. While popular Christian novels and movies have put forth the idea that the antichrist will be an overtly evil individual who will openly oppose Christianity, the biblical portrayal of the antichrist is that of a human system of religion masquerading as Christian while rejecting the clear truths of Scripture that rightly portray the character of God.

"Unselfishness, the principle of God's kingdom, is the principle that Satan hates; its very existence he denies. From the beginning of the great controversy he has endeavored to prove God's principles of action to be selfish, and he deals in the same way with all who serve God. To disprove Satan's claim is the work of Christ and of all who bear His name. It was to give in His own life an illustration of unselfishness that Jesus came in the form of humanity. And all who accept this principle are to be workers together with Him in demonstrating it in practical life" (*Education*, p. 154).

4. ***Casting Down the Daily***: "By him the daily shall be taken away" (8:12). Historically there has been much dispute in Adventism over the meaning of the "daily." The word itself simply means *continual*; something that is *perpetual* or *ongoing*. One view says the word refers to the pagan religion as it existed under the Roman empire, and therefore the taking away of the daily refers to the papal priesthood absorbing and displacing paganism by setting up a false Christian system of worship in place of the pagan system while retaining pagan theology and practice. The other view says the daily is the continual

mediation of Jesus as our true High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, and therefore the taking away of the daily was accomplished by the papacy setting up its system of mediation in place of the mediation of Christ.

The fact is that both of these things have happened under the reign of the papacy. The pagan system of worship was taken up into and replaced by the papal system, and in so doing the true ministry of Jesus as our heavenly High Priest has been obscured. The bottom line in both interpretations is that the papal system has interposed itself between human beings and their Savior. Satan “is a deceiver, and through his serpentine sharpness, through his crooked practices, he has drawn to himself the homage which man should have given to God, and has planted his satanic throne between human worshipers and the divine Father” (*Review and Herald*, April 14, 1896). This inspired insight articulates the essence of what Satan has achieved in the papal system and, for that matter, in all false religion. Both interpretations of the daily have merit, and a strong case may be built for each. I favor the second interpretation due to the additional points that follow.

**5. *Casting Down the Sanctuary*:** He shall “cast down” the “place of his sanctuary” (8:11). If the first interpretation of the daily (above) is true, then the sanctuary that is cast down is the pagan system of worship. If the second interpretation (above) of the daily is true, then the sanctuary that is here cast down is the sanctuary of the Messiah; that is to say, a false sanctuary or system of salvation has been erected on earth to divert the focus of humanity from the true sanctuary in heaven.

**6. *Casting Down the Truth*:** He shall “cast truth down to the ground” (8:12). Here is where I come to my conclusion of favoring the second interpretation of the daily. The casting down of the daily occurs as the first of a trilogy of items that are cast down, and the casting down of “the truth” is the third. Daniel says that the Little Horn will cast down (a) the daily, (b) the sanctuary and (c) the truth. Therefore, the daily and the sanctuary that are cast down are associated with “the truth” that is also cast down, and paganism would not qualify for being placed in the category of truth. The casting down

of the truth is a summary description that includes all the damage done by the Little Horn. But either way you go with the daily, the bottom line is the same—the papal system has obscured the mediation of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary by putting a pagan-like priesthood in its place.

### **The Answer To The Question**

With all of these actions of the Little Horn delineated, it is at this point that the questioning angel asks, “How long will the vision be, concerning the daily and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?” (8:13). Now that we see the broader content of the angel’s question, the meaning of the cleansing of the sanctuary begins to come clear. The questioning angel wants to know when there will come an end to the Little Horn’s success at misrepresenting the character of God, using force in the name of God, persecuting the true saints, exalting itself above the Savior in the minds of human beings, and shifting the world’s focus away from the one true Mediator in the heavenly sanctuary onto a false system of salvation centered in man that defies the character of Satan as a veil that hides the true character of God. “How long,” pleads the angels, will this deceptive system continue causing spiritual “desolation” by its “transgression” against all that is holy and true? How long will the world be held hostage to this darkness? Then the answering angel pinpoints a time in history when the power of the papacy will begin to be broken by the arrival of a new movement on the scene of action: “Unto two thousand three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

In this context it becomes clear that Daniel 8:14 foretold that in 1844 there would come a massive historical shift of focus away from the false system of salvation created on earth by the Little Horn onto the true system of salvation that centers in Christ alone transpiring in the heavenly sanctuary. Adding force to this interpretation, later in Daniel 8, both the success and the eventual demise of the Little Horn are foretold with these words:

“Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt

himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of the princes; but he shall be broken without human means” (verses 24-25).

First, take note again of the chief characteristic of the Little Horn—“deceit,” which can only refer to the complex and dark system of theological deception by means of which the Little Horn has distorted the world’s perception of the character of God. Secondly, we see here that Daniel’s prophecy anticipates a day when there will come an end to the God-defaming exploits of the Little Horn. If theological deceit is the power wielded by the Little Horn, then certainly it will be by means of theological truth that the Little Horn is defeated. Therefore, Daniel was shown that “he shall be broken without human means,” which is a parallel prophetic declaration to the cleansing of the sanctuary back in verse 14. These prophecies expect that God will raise up a movement on earth that will bring ruin to the Little Horn and thwart its influence over the world, not by fighting back with the same tactics the Little Horn uses—namely deceit and force—but rather by the proclamation of truth.

Adding additional weight to this interpretation, the book of Daniel closes with this prophecy: “News from the east and from the north shall trouble him...he shall come to his end, and no one will help him” (11:44-45). Then Daniel says, “Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever” (Daniel 12:3). These Scriptures, like others we have already noted, foretell a powerful truth-telling movement to arise at the end of time. A message will come to the world that will “trouble” the antichrist and finally bring to an “end” its deceptive system of theology and worship.

The “news from the east” foretold by Daniel finds its parallel in Revelation as the “kings of the east” who wage spiritual war against the “the dragon,...the beast...and the false prophet” in the “battle” of “Armageddon” (Revelation 16:12-16). Earlier in Revelation God’s true followers are said to be “kings and priests” to God (1:6). They are “a royal priesthood, a holy nation” of spiritual warrior-mediators who “proclaim the praises of Him who called” them “out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). These are

the “kings of the east” who vanquish the antichrist in the battle of Armageddon. This is the same movement Ezekiel and the other prophets foretold would illuminate the world with the glory of God from the symbolic east: “Behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory” (Ezekiel 43:2).

### **The Judgment**

The cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 is the same event described in Daniel 7 as “the judgment.” The evidence for this parallel is easily discernable on the surface of the texts. In 1844 the final era of salvation history opened with the birth of a prophetic movement whose reason for existence would be to flood the world with the truth about God and thereby summon the antichrist, her allies and the whole world to judgment. Daniel saw three main effects of the judgment:

1. ***The Utter Destruction of the Little Horn***: “The court was seated, and the books were opened. I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame... He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time. But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever” (Daniel 7:10-11, 25-26).

Take careful notice of the fact that in the judgment the Little Horn is overcome by the saints. Daniel says that the little Horn “shall persecute the saints” for 1260 years, but then, when the “court shall be seated,” from 1844 onward to the Second Coming of Christ, “they shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy it forever.” The saints of the end time are God’s spiritual warriors through whom He will take down the antichrist. John offers a counterpart description to Daniel’s vision of the saint’s victory over the Little Horn: “I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and the number of

his name, standing on the sea of glass” (Revelation 15:2-3). These are the ones in Revelation 16 who fight and win the war over the character of God in the battle of Armageddon.

2. ***The Absolute Dominion of Christ:*** “I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13-14).

During the judgment Christ receives full dominion as Satan and his Little Horn system are fully exposed by the proclamation of the good news of God’s true character. Again, the context here is that a truth-telling movement, post 1844, will overcome the influence of the kingdom of darkness and prepares the way for Christ to assume His fully functional role as King over all. The parallel passage in Revelation is the transfer of all earthly power to Christ that occurs under the seventh trumpet: “Then the seventh angel sounded. And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’” (Revelation 11:15). These voices from heaven are simply acknowledging new and unprecedented developments unfolding on earth. God’s end-time people have finally risen to their calling; they have made the indisputable case in favor of God and against the antichrist; they have taken the gospel to all the world as a witness, and as a result Christ can now assume complete dominion of the earth. “The mystery of God” that was to be “finished” after the end-point of the 2300-year prophecy—when there shall be prophetic “time no longer”—has now come to fruition (Revelation 10:6-7). This is “the mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:26-27). The self-giving character of Jesus is finally reflected to the world through His people. He can now come to claim them as His own and establish His everlasting kingdom with them. This brings us to the next effect of the judgment brought to view in Daniel seven.

3. *The Saints Receive Eternal Dominion as Coregents with Christ*: “I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom... Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High” (Daniel 7:21-22, 27).

As the judgment brings ruin to the Little Horn by virtue of the message that emerges through God’s truth-telling church of the end-time, “judgment” will simultaneously be “made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time” will arrive “for the saints to possess the kingdom.” As “the court was seated” (7:10), Daniel saw the heavenly tribunal decide in favor of the representation of God given by the saints as it also rules against the misrepresentation of God the Little Horn has palmed off on the world. God will then perform an astounding act. He will give “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven” to the saints. They are not merely saved—that would be more than enough—but they are exalted to become coregents with the eternally reigning Christ Jesus. The Savior promised, “It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:31-32). Paul said we shall be “joint heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:16-17), and He is “heir of all things” (Hebrews 1:2). “We shall also reign with Him” (2 Timothy 2:12). “In our union with Christ Jesus He raised us up with Him to rule with Him in the heavenly world. He did this to demonstrate for all time to come the extraordinary greatness of His grace in the love He showed us in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6-7, TEV). “The exaltation of the redeemed will be an eternal testimony to God’s mercy” (*The Desire of Ages*, p.26). Jesus promised through John, “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (Revelation 3:21). As the judgment is accomplished, these unimaginable and undeserved promises will come to pass.

### **The Advent Movement: Revelation 10-14**

Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the apostle John beheld in vision the birth and mission of a revolutionary end-time movement in the historic line of the Protestant Reformation, subsequent to the French Revolution and the rise of modern atheism. As the prophecy unfolded before him, John saw a door opened to the movement into the Most Holy Place of God's heavenly sanctuary offering its as yet undiscovered contents. The Ark of the Covenant enshrining God's holy Law and covered with the mercy seat was encountered. As a result, powerful discoveries of truth were made until these heaven-led Bible students became a message-bearing force in the world, symbolized by three angels proclaiming the everlasting gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. John saw the movement deliver its trilogy of messages as an act of spiritual warfare against Satan's kingdom in its final and most sophisticated form, headed up by the Sea Beast in league with Land Beast, until they emerge victorious over the God-defaming system. All symbols aside, the Advent Movement was born to start into motion an end-time theological revolution devoted to the task of undoing the damage to God's reputation forced upon the world by the truth-suppressing career of the Papal Church.

We notice the progression of eight historical developments in Revelation 10-11.

1. ***Time No Longer*** (Revelation 10:1-7): Revelation 10 opens with John encountering the same angel who told Daniel hundreds of years earlier that his time prophecy visions were "*closed up and sealed till the time of the end*" (Daniel 12:4-10). But on this occasion the angel "had a little book *open* in his hand," obviously the previously "closed" book of Daniel. In this manner the angel informed John that a movement would arise from the study of Daniel's sealed prophecies and open them to the understanding of the world. Daniel had been given one large-frame time prophecy and three smaller time prophecies that fit within the larger one: the 2300-day/year prophecy encompassing the 1260, the 1290 and the 1335. Now the angel explained to John that during the rise of this new movement there would be "time no longer," a direct reference to Daniel's time prophecies reaching their end. It is expected, therefore, that the movement John saw would arise around the time when the 2300-day/year-period would be reaching its fulfillment. The Advent Movement of the mid 1800's stands alone in meeting the

criterion of this prophecy.

2. ***The Birth of a Movement*** (10:8-9): Then John was told by a voice from heaven to act out the birth of the new movement by taking the little book from the angel's hand and eating it, representing the study of Daniel's prophecies. Hundreds of years earlier the angel who communicated with Daniel had also foretold this end-time study movement: "Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4). In both instances, in Daniel and in Revelation, it was anticipated that during the end-time segment of human history the prophecies of Daniel would become the focus of study and produce a truth-telling movement. Again, only one historic phenomenon fulfills this prophecy—the Advent Movement of the mid-1800s. It is astounding to realize that this movement, of which we are now heirs, was actually foretold nearly two thousand years in advance; that this movement into which God has brought us was birthed from the womb of Bible prophecy; that God planned for our existence as a people and has specifically addressed us in Scripture with specific instruction as to our mission.

3. ***A Bittersweet Experience*** (10:9-10): As instructed by the heavenly voice, John enacted the experience of the Advent Movement by consuming the little book. It was sweet to his taste but bitter in his stomach. In this way the angel communicated to John that a bittersweet experience would result from this investigation of Daniel's prophecies, which we know to be "the great disappointment" of 1844. William Miller and the early Adventists cherished the sweet expectation that Jesus would return to earth as the fulfillment of Daniel 8:14. When the Savior did not come, they were bitterly disappointed. But they were also now prepared to make some crucial theological discoveries that would begin to cast God in a whole new light for a world that had been enveloped in darkness for centuries.

4. ***A Prophetic Commission*** (10:11): With the future work of the Advent Movement in view, the angel said to John, the enactor of the Advent Movement's experience, "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings"

(Revelation 10:11, KJV). The disappointed movement was not over, but had, in fact, just begun. There was a worldwide work of prophesying yet to be done post 1844.

5. ***The Two Witnesses*** (11:1-6): At this point John's visions took him back before the birth of Adventism to give historic setting and rationale for the new movements existence. He was shown the endurance of the truth during the dark ages and also the anti-God revolution that would sweep through Europe in revolt against the papal misrepresentation of the divine character. The testifying of the two witnesses during the "one thousand two hundred and sixty days" symbolizes the testifying of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments among a faithful few during the dark ages of papal supremacy and the eventual restoration of the Scriptures to the masses during the Protestant Reformation. The Bible was preserved by such groups as the Huguenots, the Albigenses and the Waldensians, and finally given back to the people by reformers such as Wycliff, Luther and Tyndale.

6. ***The Birth of Modern Atheism*** (11:7-10): However, while the Protestant Reformation did give the Bible and a newfound liberty of conscience to the nations of western Europe, the oppressive theological darkness so long imposed upon the freedom-loving human spirit by the papacy inevitably had its backlash. While the two witnesses were setting the people free to think for themselves contrary to church dogma, at this point John was also shown the emergence of "the beast from the bottomless pit," symbolizing the birth of modern atheism as an ill-conceived reaction against the papacy's false picture of God. While the Protestant Reformers had begun the task of redefining the character of God according to biblical truth, heavy damage had already been done to the human capacity for faith. Resulting from that damage, the French Revolution produced a blunt atheism on the premise that no such God as Catholicism had advocated could possibly exist. It was easier to banish God from existence than to continue attempting the impossible task of worshipping an image the human heart could not revere and love as God.

7. ***The Most Holy Place Revealed*** (11:19-14:12): John's attention was then returned to God's end-time movement. Having seen the beast rise out of the bottomless pit, which we

understand to be the emergence of modern atheism beginning with the French Revolution, John now saw a door opened into the heavenly Most Holy Place. The contextual trajectory leading up to this point is clear: the students of Daniel's prophecies who were brought to view in Revelation 10, now find that their biblical investigation has led them to center their attention in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary. Once the Most Holy Place with its hidden treasures was opened to their investigation, new truths were discovered that had been lost sight of during the dark ages of the papal supremacy. In the prophetic timeline, the work begun by the Protestant Reformers was now to be accelerated to its logical conclusion—a complete recovery of apostolic Christianity, as well as a formulation of biblical truth in the eschatological context that Revelation foresaw it must ultimately take. Therefore, this people, whose faith and study is directed to the Most Holy Place, emerge in John's unfolding visions as a message-bearing movement symbolically represented by three angels flying in mid heaven crying out with a loud voice to the inhabitants of earth (Revelation 14:6-12).

8. *Here Are They* (12:17-14:12): As we follow Revelation's storyline through to its conclusion, we see that the Advent Movement, having encountered the Ark of the Covenant containing God's Ten Commandments and covered with the Mercy Seat, becomes a "remnant" people who "keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus" (Revelation 12:17); "who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12); and "who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name" Revelation 15:2). John's attention-arresting declaration, "Here are they" (14:12), emphasizes that a movement has indeed been born in God's prophetic plan due to an enlightening encounter with the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. The world, indeed the onlooking universe, is called upon to take notice of this movement. "Here are they!" The testimony they bear in message and living demonstration is the death knell of Satan's God-defaming campaign.

### **Our Distinctive Prophetic Mission**

After he enacted the experience of the Advent Movement by eating the bittersweet book, the angel told John, "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and

tongues, and kings” (Revelation 10:11, KJV). What *must* we prophesy? What *is* the message we must bear to the world? What *is* Adventism?

As we begin to answer this question, it is crucial to keep uppermost in our minds the historic context in which the Advent Movement was called into existence by the prophetic word of God. We exist on a particular stage with a particular backdrop and therefore have a particular mission. The history leading up to the birth of Adventism and running forward to the very present is dominated by a God-defaming religious system masquerading as Christianity. That system has had its adverse effect upon humanity on two counts: first, holding under its spell countless worshipers of the untrue picture of God it projects and, second, eliciting a reaction of incredulous atheism from the many others it repulses. On the one hand, papal “Christianity” holds in its powerful psychological grip a large segment of the human population as frightful worshipers of the idolatrous false image of God with which it has threatened the world. On the other hand, the papal church has so grossly misrepresented the character of God that the human spirit, repulsed by the oppressive picture, has violently rebelled to the point of denying the very existence of God (carefully read the chapter in *The Great Controversy* entitled, “The French Revolution” for this historic background). Which of the two is the worse predicament is hard to say. But one thing is absolutely certain: the world must hear the truth about God and thereby be delivered from the tyranny of the false image.

Enter Adventism.

Adventism is a new thought entering the world, but a thought that was destined to arise in the redeemed consciousness at some point in the stream of time. Adventism is not a new thought in the sense of being wholly original, but new in composition and structure, as well as in its eschatological setting and relevance. In other words, Adventism has something to say to the world that portrays God in a light that is almost completely foreign to human thinking. The uniqueness of the Adventist message is due to the historic backdrop against which the movement prophesies, a history in which the Adversary has flooded the world with images of God that run counter to His true identity. Jesus’

diagnosis of the condition of the world in His day is no less true of the end-time: “O righteous Father, the world has not known You” (John 17:25). Adventism’s doctrinal structure presents a chain of truths that collectively lift the dark veil Satan has thrown over the divine character through the various and similar false theological systems that pervade our world. In essence, Adventism exists to proclaim the vindication of God’s character achieved in Christ, and thus make Him attractive to the longing eyes of the deceived masses.

Adventism is not one Christian denomination in a lineup of many, with a few distinct doctrines and no essentially different understanding of the gospel and the character of God. To the contrary, our distinctive beliefs significantly inform our understanding of the gospel and the character of God. While we are a Protestant Christian church, and we do hold certain vital beliefs in common with the general body of Christianity, there are specific areas of theological conviction that we hold so completely divergent from mainstream Protestantism as to render us a distinct people with a distinctive message. Moreover, our various doctrines as a collective whole create an overall picture of God that is significantly different from the picture of God presented to the world by popular Christianity. It is absolutely crucial to our own spiritual health and our witness to the world that we maintain a correct perception of ourselves as Seventh-day Adventists. We are a people vested with authority in the great controversy to “trouble” the antichrist with the good news of the gospel, to refute the God-defaming theology of the little horn and her allies, to illuminate the world with the glorious knowledge of God’s true character, to usher all who are willing into the Most Holy Place to receive final and full atonement with God, and to hasten the second coming of Christ.

The historic succession unfolded in Revelation 10-14 reveals that the Advent Movement was intended by God to constitute the completion of the Protestant Reformation, achieving the defeat of the Sea Beast and its blasphemy against God. Adventist theology is the only doctrinal arsenal with sufficient perspective on the character of God and the needed explanatory power to gain “the victory over the beast, over his image and over his

mark” (15:2). Ours is a mission of exoneration, of clarification and magnification of God’s good character. Adventism holds within its doctrinal chain of truth the raw theological materials with which to construct the most accurate and beautiful picture of God the world has ever seen apart from Christ Himself. We have within our intellectual possession the pieces of the puzzle with which to assemble a portrait of God the world longs to see and must see before Jesus can, in all fairness, complete the judgment and return to earth to receive all who have “loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8).

### **In Conclusion**

The point of this book has been to remind us from the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation that the Advent Movement was called into existence by God to fulfill a specific eschatological mission.

First we noted that Revelation 18 foretells that the church of the end-time will ignite a global God revolution that will illuminate the world with the true glory of God’s character as revealed in Christ, resulting in the final and complete fall of Babylon.

Then we looked at Daniel 7 and 8 for some vital historic background and detail. We saw that Daniel foretold the long, dark papal reign under the symbol of the Little Horn. In Daniel’s vision, one angel asked when the God-defaming work of the Little Horn would be come to an end. An answering angel specified the *time* and the *event* that would mark the beginning of the Little Horn’s demise and the liberation of the world from its deceptive misrepresentation of God. The *time* would be at the endpoint of the 2300-year prophecy in 1844, and the *event* would be the cleansing of the sanctuary. In 1844 a process of judgment would begin by which the God-defaming work of the Little Horn would be overcome, God’s true people would be vindicated and the eternal kingdom of Christ would be ushered in.

Finally we looked at Revelation 10-14 as a parallel passage to Daniel 7-8. Here we saw that John foretold the birth of the Advent Movement in the historic line of the Protestant Reformation after the rise of modern atheism. The movement would emerge from the

study of Daniel's prophecies, go on to discover new truths as their attention would be directed to the Most Holy Place, become a "remnant" who keep God's commandments and have the faith of Jesus, and stand forth in the world as a prophesying people symbolized by three angels flying over the earth preaching the everlasting gospel to every nation, tribe and tongue.

What an incredible calling!

What a sobering responsibility!

What an awesome privilege!