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Description

THE JEWS AND THE CHRISTIANSâ€™ FAITH IN THE PROPHETS

A THOUGHT FOR PRAYER

I shall read from The Mount of Blessing, page 168, beginning where we left off last Sabbath.

> â€œThe one thing essential for us in order that we may receive and impart the forgiving love of God is to know and believe the love that He has to us. Satan is working by every deception he can command, in order that we may not discern that love. He will lead us to think that our mistakes and transgressions have been so grievous that the Lord will not have respect unto our prayers, and will not bless and save us. In ourselves we can see nothing but weakness, nothing to recommend us to God, and Satan tells us that it is of no use; we cannot remedy our defects of character. When we try to come to God, the enemy will whisper it is of no use for you to pray; did not you do that evil thing? Have you not sinned against God, and violated your own conscience? But we may tell the enemy that the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. When we feel that we have sinned and cannot pray, it is then the time to pray. Ashamed we may be, and deeply humbled; but we must pray and believe. . . .

Here is seen that it is Satanâ€™s studied purpose to discourage us, to make us think that God does not love us, and that He cannot save us from our sins. We are therefore to resist the whisperings of the Enemy. When we see ourselves as sinners, then is the very time for us to come to God, and to accept His love and to fully believe in Him.

We should now pray for an absolute realization that God is in business to save sinners, of whom we are chief. That it matters not how deep in sin we may be, if we but depart from evil and choose to do good He will gladly grant us forgiveness.

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THE JEWS AND THE CHRISTIANSâ€™
FAITH IN THE PROPHETS

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Let us turn to the writings of the gospel prophet whom the Jews so maliciously sawed asunder.

> Isa. 1:18, 19â€”â€•Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.â€•

With this Divine recommendation for Godâ€™s professed people, the gospel prophet was instructed to introduce his book. And now that we are living in the present day application of his prophecies, we dare not neglect to comply with Inspirationâ€™s sound and fair recommendation. Our first step shall be to honestly and unbiasedly consider the successes and the failures of those who have gone before us.

Let us beforehand refresh our minds with the Jewsâ€™ attitude toward the prophets: Rather than going with the purpose of learning and reasoning, the Jews went to the prophets with prejudiced minds, with malice, with hatred in their hearts, and with instruments of cruelty. (We must not) This evil spirit was prevalent among the Jews throughout their history. It was manifested even against Moses although for forty Î“4 years he led the Hebrew host with Divine signs and wonders all the way from the brickyards of Egypt to the borders of the promised land.

The remnant finally crossed the Jordan only because they whole-heartedly believed that Moses was Godâ€™s mouthpiece, and because they ceased murmuring, took and obeyed orders. The Hebrews ever after deeply cherished his writings, and this reverent regard for the Pentateuch continued among the Jews even to the days of Christ. As a man of God and as the nationâ€™s emancipator and founder of its sacred ceremonies, Moses was highly esteemed by all.

Ironically, though the prophets that followed after Moses were rejected by the Jewish nation as a whole. Those who survived in the Babylonian captivity did accept the prophets Haggai and Zechariah only because they were the founders of the movement then on foot as was Moses in his day.

The Jews, according to their own way of reasoning, were honest, though blind, in concluding that they had no need of prophets, because as they saw it, Mosesâ€™ writings were complete, there was nothing lacking in them: They contained both the civil and religious laws. They, therefore, saw no need for greater light and no need of another prophet. Through their unbelief in the prophets, they failed to see that their kingdom was only a type of a greater one to come, they failed to see that Godâ€™s Truth is progressive and ever unfolding, that each generation has to have added Truth especially adapted to meet their particular needs. Their blindness to this was their basic sin that led them on to ruin.

While the Jews boasted of their faith in Mosesâ€™ Î“Ç“5 writings, Jesus reprehended them by saying: â€œ. . .had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me.â€• John 5:46. He had reference toâ€”

> Deut. 18:15â€”â€•The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken.â€•

Of the coming Messiah Zechariah also wrote:

> Zech. 9:9â€”â€•Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.â€•

Though they professed to believe in both Moses and Zechariah yet they gave no heed to any of these passages, and ever since a curse has rested upon them.

In rejecting the prophets the Jews thought they were surely keeping out of deception, and thought that they were thus actually loyal to Mosesâ€™ writings and consequently to God. This they believed as much in Jesusâ€™ day as Israel believed in Elijahâ€™s day.

Let us now note that they fell into ruin only because they refused to give heed to the prophets who were sent to reform their ways, to correct their erroneous interpretations of Mosesâ€™s writings and to lighten the path of their feet the rest of the way clear to Paradise. Having deprived themselves of the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy by doing away with the prophets, they completely cut off Heavenâ€™s communication line and were thus left in gross darkness and led into error, fanaticism, and crime. They became self-sufficient, proud, boastful, and highminded. Î“Ç“6 They felt rich and increased with goods, in need of nothing more. Thus it was that their perversions of the Scriptures by their uninspired interpretations of them caused them to lose the way, and finally to reject and even to crucify their own long-expected Redeemer.

Of Mosesâ€™s writings the Jews made a mighty weapon against Christ and the prophets of that day. They were, however, at one time or another forced to acknowledge that their dead fathers were guilty of the blood of the prophets. The same is true today. Many admit that sectarianism is thriving on uninspired interpretations of the Scriptures, yet they expect no inspired interpreters for this day. They thus reject the antitypical prophet Elijah even before his appearance though the Scriptures definitely predict his coming before the great and dreadful day of the Lord, before the

Judgment of the Living commences.

If we accept Inspirationâ€™s counsel and come and reason together while we are examining our own standing with the prophets, then an excellent place to begin isâ€”

> Gen. 49:10â€”â€•The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.â€•

Here Moses wrote that the gathering of the people shall be unto Judah, and that when Shiloh comes, Judah shall have a king and a lawgiver of her own. Do we as Seventh-day Adventists believe in this particular part of Mosesâ€™ writings? If not, then we have no better standing with Moses than did the Jews.

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To examine our standing with the rest of the prophets, we need not depart from the subject which Moses has introduced in the scripture just quoted. Mark that between the writings of Moses and of Isaiah, the Bible contains the records of history, the judges and the kings. Isaiah, then, is the next prophet after Moses that we shall go to.

> Isa. 2:1, 2â€”â€•The word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lordâ€™s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.â€•

Not to Takoma Park, not to Mt. Carmel Center, not to some other place, but to the house of Judah and Jerusalem shall the final converts from all nations flow. Isaiah you plainly see absolutely confirms that the gathering of the people shall be unto Judah. Do you?

Jeremiah being the next prophet to Isaiah, we shall read

> Jer. 31:6â€”â€•For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God.â€•

â€œMount Ephraim,â€• you know, is the location of the ancient ten-tribe kingdom, Israel. According to this scripture, the kingdom of Israel, which is still lost among the nations, shall someday emerge from the four corners of the earth and gladly join the kingdom of Judah. So shall the gathering of the people be.

> Verses 7, 8â€”â€•For thus saith the Lord; Sing with glad- Î“8 ness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save Thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the

> woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.â€•

Jeremiah discloses that the gathering unto Judah shall be from the four corners of the earth. Indeed, Jeremiah, Moses and Isaiah, all three, speak alike on the subject. The question is, Do you believe what they say? If not, are you then better than were the Jews?

Next we are to test our standing with the prophet Ezekiel.

> Ezek. 36:17-27â€”â€•Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before Me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. Wherefore I poured My fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they judged them. And when they entered unto the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them. And when they entered unto the heathen whither they went, they profaned My holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of His land. But I had pity for Mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went.
>
> â€œTherefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Î“9 Israel, but for Mine holy nameâ€™s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify My great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them.â€•

What more could Inspiration say to make the subject clearer? God plainly and solemnly promised to recreate and to rebuild the ancient kingdom, to set it up in its own land. This He is to do after Judah and Israel are scattered among the Gentile nations, and assimilated by them after they have lost their racial identityâ€”then as Christians, not as Jews, He is to gather them from the four corners of the earth and to bring them to their own land. (And moreover, the Scriptures teach that they are as the sand of the sea for multitude.) This He is to do, you note, not because they are worthy, not because they had been good before or during their dispersion among the Gentiles, but because He is anxious to sanctify His Own name among the heathen.

Still further, after He gathers them from all countries and brings them into their own land, then it is that He promises to cleanse them eternally from Î“10 their filthiness and from their idolatryâ€”to

remove all the defects that sin has wrought upon them. Then it is that He gives them a new heart, puts His Spirit upon them and enables them to unavoidably keep His judgments. Mark carefully that regardless of our, ideas and opinions all these things take place after Godâ€™s people return to their fatherâ€™s land.

The 144,000 descendants of Jacob, whose fathers were assimilated by the Gentile nations and who thus down through the centuries lost their racial identity, are the first fruits, the first to be gathered unto Judah. They are those who stand on â€œMount Zion with the Lamb.â€• Rev. 14:1. The faithful descendants of the Jews who composed the early Christian church, and who also lost their national identity by naming themselves Christians (Acts 11:26), are also to be gathered from everywhere and brought unto Judah.

Finally, if these prophecies are not to be fulfilled, as the angel of the Laodicean church supposes, and if Godâ€™s people are not to return to their homeland, then how will they ever be cleansed from their filthiness since the cleansing is to be done there only? How will they ever have their hearts changed? And what is to make them keep His statutes and judgments unless, as promised, beforehand receive His Spirit in the Promised Land? Indeed, if these prophecies fail, then how will Godâ€™s people ever be able to stand before a pure and holy God? And how will they ever obtain immortality and be on schedule for translation if they do not comply with the prophecies, with His expressed will and plan for His people? And if they ignore these prophecies, the fulfilment of which is during the Judgment for the Living, the harvest, the gathering time, what chance do they then stand to survive that great and dreadful day of the Lord?

Î“11

To be more specific, if the denomination fails to recognize and accept these promises, then where are the laity to be led from here on? Certainly not to the Kingdom if their leaders do not believe in It. Do you now believe in Moses, in Isaiah, and Ezekiel? Or do you rather still believe in fables devised by men?

Next to Ezekiel is the prophet Daniel. Incidentally, let us remind ourselves that to begin with, Daniel did not prophesy to the Jews, but to the Chaldeans and to the Medes and Persians. The Jews accepted him as Godâ€™s servant only as they saw his prophecies fulfilled. The great question before us, however, is, Do we fully believe in the prophet Danielâ€™s writings? Let us see.

> Dan. 2:44, 45â€”â€•And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God bath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.â€•

On Danielâ€™s own word, the stone is symbolical, not of something else, but of the Kingdom, the which in the parable of the wheat and tares Jesus calls â€œbarn,â€• the place into which He is to

put the wheat (saints) after it is separated from the tares (Matt. 13:30). Now mark carefully that according to Danielâ€™s interpretation the stone depicts the Kingdom, the which God shall set up not after the days of these kings, but in their days, and that the stone Kingdom Itself, not Î“12 something else, shall break the great image. If our interpretation of the stone contradicts Danielâ€™s interpretation of it, then we do not only reject Danielâ€™s inspiration, but even misconstrue the Word of God! We better not. We now come to the prophet Hosea.

> Hosea 1:11; 3:5â€”â€•Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days.â€•

Can one believe Hosea on the subject of the Kingdom if he does not believe in the former prophets who taught exactly as he? â€”0f course not.

We are now at Joelâ€™s prophecies.

> Joel 3:1, 2â€”â€•For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My people and for My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted My land.â€•

When God frees the antitypical children of Judah and of Jerusalem, the church of today, and takes them back to their own land, then it is, you note, that He gathers all nations into the valley of Jehoshaphat. There He is to judge themâ€”to separate the good from the bad, (Matt. 13:47, 48), the sheep from the goats (Matt. 25:32). And this work you must know is the work of the Judgment for all the living. Are we to Î“13 reject Joel along with the prophets before him, and consequently the message of the Judgment for the Living after having for over a century preached the Judgment for the Dead? Ponder over what the Scriptures say and thus make up your mind to forsake all other voices. And what about your belief in the prophet Amos? Let us read

> Amos 9:9-15â€”â€•For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by My name, saith the Lord that doeth this. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine

thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land, which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.â€•

Since Amos with even greater emphasis bears the same testimony as all the prophets before him, and since the language on the subject is crystal clear as is the language of all the prophets before him, so much so that it needs no comments, what shall we do with him? We are now to read

Î“14

Obad. 1:15-18â€“â€•For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon My holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been. But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the Lord hath spoken it.â€•

In harmony with all the prophets before him, and in perfect clarity, Obadiah, too, relates that in the day the Lord destroys the heathen, in the day of harvest, or judgment, otherwise called the cleansing of the Sanctuary (Dan. 8:14) and the purification of the church (Mal. 3:1-3), and also the great and dreadful day of the Lord, there shall be deliverance upon Mount Zion, and the house of Jacob shall possess the wealth of the heathen. Do you now believe in the testimony of Jesus through His prophets? If not, then how can you say that you speak according to the â€œlaw and to the testimonyâ€• (Isa. 8:20)? Ever remember that the law and the testimony always go hand in hand.

The prophet Jonah is next in line, but we shall consider his prophecies when we come to the prophet Nahum.

We shall now see what is to be done with the prophet Micah.

Micah 3:12; 4:1, 2â€”â€• Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become Î“15 heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest: But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. Ana many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.â€•

As emphatically as all the prophets before him, Micah declares that after the destruction of the Lordâ€™s ancient â€œmountain,â€• (the kingdom), comes the reestablishment of it in the last days, and that peoples and nations shall flow unto it because the Law and the Word of the Lord shall go forth from Zion and from Jerusalem. Shall you now close your ears and eyes against this promise? or do you as servants of God intend to get there with the first fruits? I hope it is the latter. We now come to the prophecy of Nahum:

> Nah. 1:12, 13, 15â€”â€•. . . Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder. Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! 0 Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.â€•

Nahumâ€™s burden is concerning the restoration, and the fall of Assyria, the powers which rule them in the day He restores the latter-day Kingdom of Judah; in the day He breaks the Assyrian yoke, in the day He bursts asunder the bands that bind His people. In that Î“16 day He sends His messenger to bear good tidings to His people, tidings of peace while the world is upset with wars. Through His messenger He is urging His people to perform their vows, for He is to take away the wicked from among them. Assyria is to vacate and give room to Judah. â€œFor through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod.â€• Isa. 30:31. Now He pleads:

> â€œTurn ye unto Him from Whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted. For in that day [in the day Assyria falls] every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin. Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited. And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, Whose fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem.â€• Isa. 31:6-9.

The purification (Judgment), here you see, is conducted from Zion and Jerusalem. And through Malachi asks the Spirit, â€œBut who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refinerâ€™s fire, and like fullersâ€™ sope: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi [the ministry], and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.â€• Mal. 3:2,3. Do you accept Nahum? And since Jonahâ€™s prophecy is a counterpart of Nahumâ€™s, then if you reject Nahum, you automatically reject Jonah, too.

The prophet Habakkuk was told to â€œwrite the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run who Î“17 readeth it.â€•

> Hab. 2:3â€”â€•For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.â€•

Then Habakkuk prayed, saying,

> Hab. 3:12,13â€”â€•Thou didst march through the land in indignation, Thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. Thou wentest forth for the salvation of Thy people, even for salvation with Thine anointed; Thou woundest the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah.â€•

Can we in faith pray for the same thing Habakkuk prayed? â€”That the Lord go forth for the salvation of His people, that the vision be fulfilled without delay, and that we run to proclaim the good tidings? If not, then truly we spurn Habakkuk also.

Let us see what Zephaniah has to say concerning the latter day house of Judahâ€“the mountain of the Lord.

> Zeph. 2:5-7â€”â€•Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the Lord is against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant. And the sea coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks. And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening: for the Lord their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity.â€œ

Î“18

Since Zephaniahâ€™s prophecy is also definite that the Lord is to re-establish the kingdom of Judah, and since it, too, needs no comment, we shall quickly pass to Zechariahâ€™s prophecy.

> Zech. 1:20, 21â€”â€•And the Lord shewed me four carpenters. Then said I, What come these to do? And He spake, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it,â€•

Once God raised â€œhorns,â€• nations, to scatter His people throughout the Gentile nations, but those â€œhornsâ€• in the restoration of â€œall things,â€• are seen to become â€œcarpenters,â€• so that while they as horns at long last cast the Gentiles out from the promised land, they are as carpenters to build for Judah. Thus Zechariah, as do all the prophets before him, prophesies of the restoration of the kingdom of Judah. Now we shall read from Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets.

> Mal. 3:1-3â€”â€•Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refinerâ€™s fire, and like fullersâ€™ sope: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.â€•

Î“19

If, in the face of the plain and unquestionable teachings of all the prophets, we as Seventh-day Adventists fail to give heed to the truth of the Purification of the church (the Kingdom here dealt with), the message of the Judgment for the Living and of the restoration of the kingdom of Judahâ€”the sanctuary for the purified ones, then certainly others will have to take our places in proclaiming it. Then along with the Jews we will have to bear the guilt of rejecting all the prophets since the world began. Why?â€”Because unless we actually believe all that they have written, our merely pretending to believe in them means as much to Heaven as the faith of the Jews in the writings of Moses meant to the Lord. What! Preaching the gospel of the Kingdom but denying the Kingdom Itself!

In closing I shall read from Early Writings, in the chapter entitled â€œThe Loud Cry.

â€œThis message [that is the message that makes the Loud Cry] seemed to be an addition to the third message, joining it as the midnight cry joined the second angelâ€™s message in 1844.â€• E.W., p. 277. And on page 118 we read:â€”â€•I then saw the third angel. Said my accompanying angel, â€˜Fearful is his work. Awful is his mission. He is the angel that is to select the wheat from the tares, and seal, or bind, the wheat for the heavenly garner. These things should engross the whole mind, the whole attention.â€•

The author of these statements makes clear that the Loud Cry is not made by a lot of noise, but by an additional message, and that the third angelâ€™s message in the end of the world, not the end itself, selects the wheat from the tares. Who among you would be foolish Î“20 enough to close his eyes and ears to the testimony of the prophets, and at last in consternation cry out, â€œThe harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.â€• Jer. 8:20.

Now, if we as a church do not even so much as expect an additional message, besides rejecting the former prophets, then how much better is our attitude toward God and His prophets of today as well as of yesterday?

The Jews wanted a kingdom of their own, a kingdom of this world (saint and sinner in it). Yes, they wanted a kingdom on earth, but none in Heaven. What is more, they wanted it two thousand years ahead of schedule. Now, ironically, in the time of the restoration of the Kingdom, the Denomination takes an opposite attitude: It wants a kingdom in Heaven, but none on earth. Indeed, it wants to board the â€œchariotâ€• from Takoma Park. And besides while the Lord says He is to save

nations, the Denomination says â€œHe is to save only 144,000 living sons of Jacob,â€• and consequently none of the sons of other nations!

The Jews wanted nothing but what they wanted, and nothing is just what they got. So it will be with the Denomination if this clear cut and extra Biblical Truth, and the example of the Jews does not help her see that she has drifted â€œto sea without chart or compass.â€•â€” Christ Our Righteousness, p. 37 (1941 edition). If she continues to want nothing but what she wants, it is certain that nothing is what she can expect.

Pray tell, what more should one expect to get from partial belief in the prophets, from private human interpretation of the Scriptures, from a system Î“21 of explaining away the Scriptures, of making mysteries of simple passages by the use of unknown manuscripts and sectarian translations? Let us hold to â€œthe book of the Lordâ€• which His mouth hath commanded, and which manuscripts His â€œSpirit . . . hath gathered . . . . Isa. 34:16.

Say anything you wish against the Jews, but my study tells me that we as Seventh-day Adventists are outdoing them in mischief.

Moreover, it is now seen that our study of this afternoon is a summary of the message to the Laodiceans, who think that they are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing more, though they have need of everything. They had better awake to their poverty.

To be sure, the present state of affairs does appear gloomy. Yet seeing that this dark and cloudy day holds forth a future of unsurpassing glory, let us with the prophet Habakkuk say: â€œAlthough the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.â€• Hab. 3:17, 18. Thus, just as the apostles defeated the enemy of the church in their day, likewise shall we defeat him in our day.

Î“22

THE EXODUS OF TODAY

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V. T, HOUTEFF,
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This afternoon we shall study Zechariah 8. The first thing we need to know in the study of this chapter is whether its promises are made to the people of Zechariahâ€™s time or to the people of our time. To find this out, it is necessary for us to read a few scattered verses. We shall begin with

> Zech. 8:7, 8â€”â€•Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Behold, I will save My people from the east country, and from the west country; and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, in Truth and in righteousness.â€•

In these verses we see that God is promising to save His people not from the land of ancient Babylon, where Zechariah then was, but from the east and from the west, and to bring them to Jerusalem. They are to be His people, not by virtue of their ancestry, or by some other, but in Truth and righteousness. Now, since the promise in these verses did not meet its fulfilment in Zechariahâ€™s day, nor at any time thereafter, it stands to reason that it must meet its fulfillment sometime in the future. Let us read

> Verse 13â€”â€•And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and Î“23 house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: tear not, but let your hands be strong.â€•

Besides promising to save His people from the east and from the west, the Lord promises to save also the house of Judah and the house of Israel, both of the scattered ancient kingdoms. You are well acquainted with the fact that the ten-tribe kingdom constituted the house of Israel. And since these two kingdoms have never yet been united and brought back to Jerusalem, there is but one logical conclusion to be reached: The promises of this chapter are to be fulfilled in the time of the â€œgathering of the peopleâ€• from the four corners of the earth. In view of this great and grand work the Lord expects our hands to be â€œstrong.â€• Next we shall read

> Verses 20-22â€”â€•Thus saith the Lord of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.â€•

Since we know that no nation aside from the Jewish nation in Zechariahâ€™s day went to seek the Lord and to pray before Him in Jerusalem, there is no alternative but again to admit that the promises of Zechariah 8 belong to the people in the time of the final harvests, in the gathering time.

Having completed our analysis of the time this chapter meets its fulfillment, we can, I am sure, now study the prophecy itself with much greater interest than we could have otherwise. Let us begin with

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> Verses 1-3â€”â€•Again the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her

with great fury. Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of Truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain.â€•

Yes, wonderful things are spoken of Zion and Jerusalem. At one time the Lord forsook the city and scattered the people. But at the time these scriptures are being revealed, He is to return, to gather His elect, and to bring them to Zion and Jerusalem. When this great work shall have been accomplished Jerusalem will then be called â€œa city of Truth, . . .the holy mountainâ€•â€”a people well versed in Godâ€™s whole Truth and without a sinner in their midst. This great wonder evidently takes place during the Judgment of the Living, the righteous are taken there while the wicked are being bound in bundles as it were for to be destroyed. And while the Lord dwells in Zion, His Truth shall then emanate from Zion and Jerusalem. Then it is that â€œmany people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.â€• Now is our greatest chance to work and pray â€œThy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.â€•

Verses 4, 5â€”â€•Thus saith the Lord of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. â€œ

Jerusalem shall be a city of joy, too. There shall Î“25 be no fear or accident; even the children shall safely play in the streets. There shall be no â€œlong faces,â€• and no worried looks. So shall it be for both young and old.

Verse 6â€”â€•Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in Mine eyes? saith the Lord of hosts.â€•

Just because the fulfillment of this prophecy might seem too marvelous and impossible, must it necessarily seem impossible to the Lord, also? Indeed not.

Verses 7, 8â€”â€•Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Behold, I will save My people from the east country, and from the west country; and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, in Truth and in righteousness.â€•

Zechariah predicts the gathering of the saints out of all nations into Godâ€™s purified and Truth-filled church, the Kingdom, just as the parable of the harvest teaches, only the wheat is to be put into the barn, church. There is to be no mixed company of saints and sinners in the â€œholy mountain of the Lord.â€•

Verse 9â€“â€•Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, which were in the day that the

foundation of the house of the Lord of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built.â€•

God here counsels us to let our hands be strong, and stable.

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We, too, should hear the words of the prophets and though we be not building the temple which they were building, yet that is the only way that our work can prosper. We cannot afford to close our ears to what the prophets say, or to sit down in an unconcerned attitude.

> Verses 10-12â€”â€•For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction: for I set all men every one against his neighbour. But now I will not be unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the Lord of hosts. For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.â€•

How thankful and glad we ought to be that the days of our affliction are almost at the end, that now if we hear His prophets, and brace ourselves for the work, the Lord assures us of peace and prosperity. This may soon be ours if we but steadfastly cling to the Truth, and thus to the Lord.

> Verse 13â€”â€•And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong.â€•

Though we have been great sinners and a great curse among the heathen, yet even far greater will our blessings be if we let Him give them to us. Our hands should be strong to hasten that glad day.

> Verses 14, 15â€”â€•For thus saith the Lord of hosts; As I Î“27 thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked Me to wrath, saith the Lord of hosts, and I repented not: so again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not.â€•

Again and again we are assured that as great as has been His peopleâ€™s punishment, just that great shall be their joy and comfort now in the gathering time.

> Verse 16â€”â€•These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the Truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of Truth and peace in your gates.â€•

Everyone of us is admonished to teach the Truth to his neighbour, to do whatever he finds close to his hand. We are to execute judgment of Truth rather than waste breath and time talking about the

sins of others lest we fail to see the knotty â€œbeamâ€• in our own eye. Let us, as this scripture instructs, speak the Truth, execute judgment and peace in our homes and in our midst. Never should we busy ourselves with other peopleâ€™s concerns. We should do well if we manage our own.

> Verse 17â€”â€•And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord.â€•

Of all the things Christians need to learn, this one thing is most urgent: That they be honest with themselves and with others, that they always speak the truth, that they cease imagining evil against one another. Remember, when you repeat hear-say you most likely are speaking falsehood, either wholly or in part. This you cannot afford to do, for â€œthere shall in no wise enter [the city] anything that. . . .maketh a lieâ€• Rev. 21:27. Evil speaking and evil surmising Î“28 are things which the Lord hates.

> Verses 18, 19â€”â€•And the word of the Lord of hosts came unto me, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the Truth and peace.â€•

These ancient and typical fasts shall turn to be antitypical feasts of joy and gladness.

> Verse 22â€”â€•Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.â€•

It is interesting to envisage the expansion of Godâ€™s Truth as outlined in this chapter: First, one individual speaks the Truth to another individual. Then one city communicates It to another city. Finally, one strong nation invites another nation to join the Lord. Thus will the harvest continue until the gospel work is finished, until Godâ€™s faithful people stand on the Lordâ€™s right side (in the Kingdom), and the hypocrites with the heathen stand on His left side (in the condemned Gentile world that is ready to perish).

> Verse 23â€”â€•Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you â€œ

It is logical to conclude that the ten men who take hold of all the languages of the nations in the time of this great ingathering are figurative of a group of people (the church freed from tares in the harvest Î“29 time), just as the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1) are figurative of the church while the tares are still commingled with wheat. The ten servants (Luke 19:13), and the ten horns (Rev. 12:3; 17:3) are numbers of universality. These ten men will speak all the languages as did the Apostles on the Pentecost.

Obviously, the â€œJewâ€• whose skirt the people will take hold of must be the one through whom the Lord is working to reveal Himself and His Truth to the people. Having discovered this fact, naturally they will say, â€œWe will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.â€• This particular Jew, of course, is not of the present-day identified Jews, but most likely a descendant of the Christian Jews, perhaps of those who in the apostolic age lost their identity by naming themselves Christians (Acts 11:26). Again, he may be a descendant of any of the Jews who were driven from their homeland, scattered throughout the nations, and assimilated by them, then converted to Christianity.

> â€œAnd in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. . . . And there shall be an highway for the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.â€• Isa. 41:10-12, 16.

Î“30

Thus shall the gathering of the people be in the final exodus of today.

This ends the eighth chapter of Zechariah, and now we shall in a brief summary consider some of the things which we have learned in this study:

First and most important of all, we have learned that the promises contained in Zechariahâ€™s prophecy are to be fulfilled in our day, and that very shortly wonderful things are to happen; that at one time the Lord had to forsake Jerusalem and scatter His people throughout the world, but now He is to return and gather His elect from the four corners of the earth; that Jerusalem is to be called a city of Truth and of joyâ€”no fear, no accidents, no sorrow there; that Godâ€™s people are to enjoy peace and prosperity; that they are to speak well of everyone, no longer will they waste their breath or time talking of the sins of others; that never will they busy themselves with other peopleâ€™s concerns; that they are to manage their own, and execute judgment and peace in their homes; that Godâ€™s Truth is to expand rapidly: at first one individual speaking the Truth to another; then one city communicating It to another city; finally one strong nation is to invite another nation to join the Lord.

I agree with you that these promises do seem incredible and even fantastic. But the more they so appear, the brighter the prospect, for God does not do what seems possible to man, but He does the things that seem altogether impossible to them. Think of Godâ€™s marvelous work in the Exodus Movement: He led them out of Egypt, while they marched through the Red Sea, through the desert, and through the Jordan. He brought down manna from heaven, and continued to do so for forty long years. Visualize, if you can, Î“31 Pharaohâ€™s brick slaves becoming prophets, priests, and kings! The three Hebrews comfortably standing in the midst of the fiery furnace; and of

Daniel in the lionâ€™s den; of Mordecaiâ€™s victory over Haman; of Davidâ€™s victory over the giant; of Joseph feeding the world; of Moses surviving the Nile; of Samson pulling down the temple by bare hands. Countless are the wonders of Godâ€™s mighty power all through the ages. All these deliverances, and many others were absolutely impossible with men, but very much possible with God. These mighty miracles bring us face to face with the fact that God is in the business of making â€œpossiblesâ€• out of discordant â€œimpossibles.â€• Therefore, â€œlet your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these wordsâ€• of the Lord.