

Ezekiel 16 – Three Sisters and Their Mother

Description

EZEKIEL 16

THREE SISTERS AND THEIR MOTHER

A TALE OF WOE AND LAMENT

WE HAVE JUSTIFIED OUR SISTERS

Though that does not atone for, nor excuse their sins.

PREFACE

Part of this study was originally written in 1995, and was given a very limited circulation – mainly to those persons who are mentioned herein, or those who were most directly affected by their actions, or lack thereof. Such was done for the purpose of bringing all to repentance. As the situation has not changed for the better, and as the spheres of influence of those people have greatly expanded, there is the need for this update, bringing to light the additional facts which support the representations made herein.

Moreover, as the matter was not circulated to all of those the prophecy includes, and as the character representations therein have become more apparent, this current presentation is, indeed, meat in due season. Therefore,

“Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow.” Jeremiah 14:17.

“Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people. For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord GOD of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains.” Isaiah 22:4, 5.

“Hear ye, O mountains, the LORD’S controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the LORD hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.” Micah 6:2

GEM THOUGHTS

“Never are we absent from the mind of God. God is our joy and our salvation. Each of the ancient prophets spoke less for their own time than for ours, so that their prophesying is in force for us.

‘Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come’ (1 Cor. 10:11). ‘Not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into’ (1 Peter 1:12).” 7 Manuscript Release 417.

“Not one cloud has fallen upon the church that God has not prepared for; not one opposing force has risen to counterwork the work of God but He has foreseen. All has taken place as He has predicted through His prophets. He has not left His church in darkness, forsaken, but has traced in prophetic declarations what would occur, and through His providence, acting in its appointed place in the world’s history, He has brought about that which His Holy Spirit inspired the prophets to foretell. All His purposes will be fulfilled and established.” Selected Messages, Vol. 2, p. 108.

STUDY AIM

To show that God foreknew the major developments and defeats, not only in ancient Israel, but in the Advent movement, and that He has had his prophets write of them – be they good or bad. This 16th chapter of Ezekiel presents a sad view of the backslidings of God’s Covenant people from the time of Abraham’s calling, through the falling away of the early church, and to the final establishment of the “everlasting Covenant” with the repentant remnant.

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What is most significant about this prophecy is that it brings to view four different major characters – a mother, her daughter, and the daughter’s two sisters. While those three sisters are also said to have daughters themselves, our main purpose herein is to identify the mother and the three sisters, for only one of them is said to have the “everlasting Covenant” established with her (Ezekiel 16:60, 62).

But what is really notable about this chapter is how it cannot be fully understood by applying only the standard historical, literal, method of interpretation – that being that the names used to identify the three sisters refer only to those people who were historically, literally, known by said names, and the prophecy applies to past situations. This is due to the fact that some of the symbolism in the chapter is specifically contrary to the known historical facts, as we shall see. Therefore, let us proceed with our investigation of this chapter, keeping in mind that,

“It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.” Proverbs 25:2

INTRODUCTION

As Adventists, we understand that this movement is the remnant to whom all of the Covenant promises will be established. One of our fundamental teachings had been that all of the Covenant promises to ancient Israel were conditional – that is, God was not going to force His Covenant blessings upon them. As God says, “I am the LORD, I change not” (Malachi 3:6), then we must accept the fact that there are still conditions which must be met in order for the church to secure

the promised blessings. Christ stated one of these conditions –

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.” John 8:31.

Therein we see the all-encompassing condition given to those “which believed on him.” In this chapter we will see the results of God’s people failing to meet that condition, not only in the distant past, but also in this very day.

Throughout the Old Testament, there is ample evidence to the fact that despite the sins and rebellion of God’s chosen people (Israel), God is going to restore them to the Covenant. The question, then, is, are there to be two Covenants, one for Israel, and one for the church? Many Bible students understand that the church is Israel because those upon whom it was built were the faithful of Israel in their day. Taking into consideration the truthful statement that “Each of the ancient prophets spoke less for their own time than for ours, so that their prophesying is in force for us,” then when we read of a latter-day congregation with whom God will establish His everlasting Covenant, we must accept the fact that it is referring to the Advent movement.

But here in this chapter of Ezekiel we are shown something which complicates the matter. That is, the one to whom the everlasting Covenant will be established is said to have two sisters. Moreover, not only does this Covenant-receiving daughter have two sister, but it is written that God will give this daughter those sisters “for daughters” (Ezekiel 16:61). This indicates that all three sisters will continue on in a close family relationship.

Furthermore, we have in this prophecy the introduction of a few terms and comparisons which are seemingly odd and somewhat mystifying, considering the condition of things at the time Ezekiel wrote them. Two of those terms are “Samaria” and “Sodom” (verse 46, among others). Others are the terms “mother” and “daughter” (verses 44 & 45), both of which are applied to “Jerusalem,” as she is the main subject of the chapter. Added to these is the fact that both “Samaria” and “Sodom” are said to be the “sisters” of this “daughter” (verses 45-61). What is curious about the use of these terms is the relationships they are said to have to each other as set forth therein.

At the time Ezekiel wrote, the ten tribes, who are commonly referred to in Scriptures as “Samaria” (it being the place of their capital), had been taken captive by the Assyrians a couple of hundred years before, and had been so assimilated into the countries where they had been taken that

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they had greatly lost their tribal and national distinction. These people are known today as “the lost tribes of Israel.”

Likewise, at the time Ezekiel wrote, “Sodom” had also been totally destroyed well over 1,000 years previously. Yet she is declared to be a “sister” of the “daughter” of Jerusalem, and of “Samaria.” Moreover, the prophecy declares that

“And thine elder sister is Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand: and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, is Sodom and her daughters.” (verse 46).

Here is another complication in the matter. Though it cannot be rightly said of Jerusalem, the “mother,” that “Samaria” is “elder” to her, such can, evidently, be said of Jerusalem the “daughter.” But it cannot be rightly said of the “daughter” that “Sodom” is “younger” than her – unless these titles are symbolical. The symbolism of these terms is further seen by the fact that both of these “sisters” (Samaria and Sodom) are also said to have “daughters,” as is likewise said of the “daughter” of Jerusalem (verse 46, 55). Thus we see that the language in this chapter is highly figurative, and we will, therefore, not attempt to explain it all, but only comment on the prominent points.

Accordingly, with these things in mind, let us proceed, by the grace of God, and by His Holy Spirit, to look into these mysteries with the knowledge that

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” 2 Timothy 3:16.

“And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick? For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

“If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

“And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.” Mark 4:21-25.

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” Revelation 2:17.

JERUSALEM, THE “MOTHER”

“Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.” (Ezekiel 16:1, 2)

In this chapter, as in much of prophecy, “Jerusalem” is referred to here not in a geographical sense, but, in the sense that it represents the leadership, the ruling city of God’s people. The prophet is to cause her to know her “abominations.” It is written,

“whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Romans 14:23.

Therefore, the “abominations” which Ezekiel was to relate to Jerusalem are those that concern her failure to exercise faith in the Lord. The prophet is commanded to give the Lord’s testimony in this regard from her very beginning, as we read,

“And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite.” (verse 3)

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Though more recent archeology has discovered that the ancient peoples who were the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, and, thus, Jerusalem (before it was called such), were actually the descendants of Heth (a son of Canaan, a son of Ham – one of Noah’s three sons), from whom came the Amorites and Hittites, such is not the case with the Israelites, as they are descended from Shem, another of Noah’s sons. Records, both Biblical and secular, show that the Amorites and Hittites were among the most idolatrous and wicked (the most unfaithful) of those dwelling in the land of Canaan. Thus, the Lord is here comparing Jerusalem’s unfaithfulness to that of the former wicked inhabitants of the land, and is saying that she is of the same character.

While the nation of Israel’s entrance into the land of Canaan actually followed her exodus from Egypt, and her gaining possession of the place which became known as “Jerusalem” did not occur until around 40 years after she left Egypt, the above quoted text is referring to her very birth. From that which follows this verse, we will see that the nativity spoken of here actually precedes the Exodus.

As Bible students know, it is Abraham who is called “the father of all them that believe” (Romans 4:11, 12, 16). It was he who had left his homeland when the word of God had called him to. It was he with whom God had made His everlasting Covenant. It was he, our father, who was the first of those who were to eventually inherit the spiritual title of Jerusalem (the leadership – ruling city). And it was he who was the first of those who believed in the Covenant to have actually entered the land of Canaan. Of his time in Canaan we read,

“Now Sarai Abram’s wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abram’s wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.” Genesis 15:1-4.

Therein we have the record of the beginning of the leadership of God’s people being in Canaan, and of them (Abram, our father, and Sarai, our mother) acting in an unfaithful way. Both the father and mother of Israel had doubted God’s promise that they would have a son of their own who would be heir to all of the Covenant promises, and had agreed that Abram was to have a child by Hagar. In this, they were no better than the Amorites and Hittites – for “whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Romans 14:23. The Lord’s testimony through Ezekiel continues –

“And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to

the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born.” (verses 5, 6)

This is the very thing which happened to Abraham and Sarah’s descendants, as was prophesied –

“And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years.” Genesis 15:13.

This “lothing of thy person” began “when they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it [the land of Canaan]. When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people.” (Psalms 105:12, 13).

It was during this time that Jacob was in contention with his unfaithful brother, Esau, who had sold his birthright, and that some of Jacob’s sons were acting in abominable ways towards their

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neighbors, and even toward their own brother, Joseph, selling him into bondage. Of these times the Lord says –

“And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.” (verse 6)

Of this time of affliction and loathing, when Israel was “polluted in [her] own blood,” and “when they went from one nation to another,” eventually ending up in Egypt, the Lord, by the hand of Ezekiel, declared that

“I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare.” (verse 7)

Thus it was that when Israel was in bondage in Egypt that they “increased and waxen great,” so much so that the Egyptians feared their numbers (Exodus 1:8-12). Describing the time when the period of their affliction was to end, and what He did for them then, the Lord say –

“Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a Covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.” (verse 8)

This happened when the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and wedded them unto Himself by means of the Covenant He delivered at Mt. Sinai. The Covenant with them was,

“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my Covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” Exodus 19:5, 6.

Of His efforts to accomplish this, the Lord says –

“Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I

anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD." (verse 9-14)

Such it was through the setting up of David's kingdom, and the early part of Solomon's reign. It is not that there were not times of sin and rebellion between the time when the Israelites entered into the Covenant, and the time of David and Solomon's reigns, for there were many. But the Lord here is focusing on the highlights of His work for the people during that time. But then, again, sins of unfaithfulness overcame the leadership, bringing shame upon Jerusalem (the leadership), as we read –

"But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was." (verse 15).

Such it was in Israel, beginning with the latter part of Solomon's reign. His true faith in the Covenant was corrupted by vanity. Of more of this falling away from God's graces, we read in the following verses:

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"And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours, and playedst the harlot thereupon: the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so." (verse 16).

[Note: The last part of this verse is obscure in its context. Other translations read, "... the like has never been, nor ever shall be." Revised Standard Version.

"... which should never come about nor happen." New American Standard.

"... they shall not be brought back, neither shall they be yours." The Holy Bible From Ancient Eastern Manuscripts – Lamsa]

This listing of abominations is not restricted to Solomon's times, but is symptomatic of the whole period of the divided kingdom, through the time of Ezekiel's writing, and beyond.

"Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them, and tookest thy broidered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them.

"My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour: and thus it was, saith the Lord GOD.

“Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured.

“Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, that thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them? and in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, and wast polluted in thy blood.

“And it came to pass after all thy wickedness, (woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord GOD;) that thou hast also built unto thee an eminent place, and hast made thee an high place in every street. Thou hast built thy high place at every head of the way, and hast made thy beauty to be abhorred, and hast opened thy feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredoms. Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke me to anger.

“Behold, therefore I have stretched out my hand over thee, and have diminished thine ordinary food, and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee, the daughters of the Philistines, which are ashamed of thy lewd way.

“Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet couldest not be satisfied. Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith.

“How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord GOD, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman; In that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, and makest thine high place in every street; and hast not been as an harlot, in that thou scornest hire; But as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband! They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom.

“And the contrary is in thee from other women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary.” (verses 17-34).

After listing the faithless works which many of the leaders in Jerusalem had brought into Israel, and that He had already stretched out His hand upon them to diminish their food and deliver them into the hands of certain of their enemies, and how they still continued to be unfaithful, God now pronounces another judgment upon them –

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“Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD: Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them; Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round

about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness.

“And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy. And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare.

“They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords. And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more.

“So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry.

“Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast fretted me in all these things; behold, therefore I also will recompense thy way upon thine head, saith the Lord GOD: and thou shalt not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations.” (verses 35-43).

[Note: the Revised Standard Version of this last clause reads, “Have you not committed lewdness in addition to all your abominations?]

This section of the chapter ends with the fact that when God brings “all” of Jerusalem’s lovers, and “all” them she has “loved,” with “all” them she has hated; against her and discovers her nakedness unto them, and they then execute God’s judgments upon her, that it is then that He will cause His fury and jealousy to depart from them, and He then “will be quiet, and will be no more angry.”

At the time Ezekiel wrote these words, he was in captivity in Babylon, and Jerusalem lay in ruins. Yet this was not to be the last time Jerusalem was to be destroyed because of the unfaithfulness of her leaders. A few centuries later the Romans would again destroy Jerusalem because of her unfaithfulness. It should also be noted that in neither of the cases of the Babylonian or Roman destruction were “all” of Jerusalem’s “lovers” brought against her.

“Zechariah gives the answer to what God means when He says He will bring against Jerusalem all that they have loved and all that they have hated. ‘Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of olives.’ Zech. 14:1-4.” The Stone, p. 6.

Also of note is that in these words of the Lord to this “Jerusalem” (the mother) there is no word of her restoration to the Covenant relationship, but only that He will cease to be angry at her after she receives her final punishment. Yet further on in this chapter there is a promise of the restoration of the Covenant relationship (verse 62), but not to this “Jerusalem,” the “mother,” but, rather, to her “daughter,” as we shall see.

JERUSALEM, THE “DAUGHTER”

“Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter.” (verse 44).

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In this verse reference is made to the “daughter” of Jerusalem, as though there is only one. As the “mother” represents ancient Jerusalem, the “daughter” would represent her offspring – a modern Jerusalem. Yet in the following verses we find that this “daughter” has “sisters.”

“Thou art thy mother’s daughter, that loatheth her husband and her children; and thou art the sister of thy sisters, which loathed their husbands and their children: your mother was an Hittite, and your father an Amorite.” (verse 45)

It is also revealed therein that this “daughter” (modern Jerusalem) is said to have “children,” and that her “sisters” are also said to have “children.” By this we see this matter involves a fairly large family – though a dysfunctional one, for these three “sisters” “loathed their husbands and their children.”

Furthermore, we see that her lineage goes all the way back to that of her “mother” – for it says, likewise, of this “daughter,” “your mother was an Hittite, and your father an Amorite.” Thus the same unfaithful characteristics that were applied to the “mother” also apply to this “daughter.”

[Note: In the language of the Bible, there are no words for “grandfather” or “grandmother.” All of one’s forefathers and foremothers are called “father(s)” and “mother(s),” respectively.]

Now we come to some of the more complicated symbolism of this chapter –

“And thine elder sister is Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand: and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, Sodom and her daughters.” Ezekiel 16:46

“The fact that the kingdom of Judah had a sister – the ten tribe Israel (Samaria) – and since this Scripture was written long after the ten tribes were dispersed among the nations, if the text has reference to them, Ezekiel could only be pointing back to the time when they were a nation. But the scripture says that Jerusalem is a sister of her sisters. If sisters, plural, could mean the other cities of Judea, then Ezekiel could be pointing back to Jerusalem in the time of the kingdom of Judah. However, logic and reason disallow this for at the time of ancient Jerusalem the other towns of Judah were not considered as sister churches.... Therefore, we conclude that the text has its more direct fulfillment when Jerusalem has sister churches. As we study some of the following verses of this chapter, we will see the application.” The Stone, p. 6, 7.

“If one stood in Jerusalem looking eastward, the location of ancient Samaria would be to the left or north and the place where ancient Sodom stood, the Dead Sea, would more or less be on the right. Jerusalem is almost in line geographically with the upper end of the Dead Sea, with the remainder of the Dead Sea lying to the south or, as the Scripture says, on the right. So far, the text is perfect, but a second glance at the Scripture tells us that there is something wrong, for

Inspiration says that Sodom is younger than Samaria, even younger than Jerusalem. History tells us that Sodom was destroyed long before the kingdom ever came into existence. Sodom was a city of Gentiles and Lot, a Gentile, was its mayor. Logically speaking, then, Sodom could not be called Jerusalem's sister. But we believe that this Scripture was divinely inspired as well as all other Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16). Therefore, we must sink the shaft of thought (Truth) deeper into the Word of God that we may know the full meaning of this scripture and, therefore, receive a present Truth lesson." Ibid., p.7.

It's easy to understand how the "daughter" could inherit the name "Jerusalem" from her "mother," as ancient Jerusalem ceased to be the center of Jewish civil life when the Romans destroyed it in 70 A.D., and thus any remanifestation of her might be considered her offspring – her "daughter." As the Jews have been enabled to return to the land of Palestine, and have partial control of the place called Jerusalem, the question arises, Are they the "daughter" referred to in this chapter?

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While that may seem to be the most obvious conclusion, there is one difficulty with it. That is, What about the "mother" – who is she? It is written of her that there will come a time when she will "cease from playing the harlot," and at that time He will no longer be angry with her, and will be "quiet." This only happens after she has received a final punishment from the Lord by means of "all" of those she has loved and hated. Has there been a time since the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. when the leaders of the Jews, as a body, have ceased "from playing the harlot," and the Lord has caused His fury against them to "rest?"

Can it be honestly said that such a condition of "rest" from the Lord's anger existed for the Jews during World War II?" The fact is that God only protected relatively few of them during that time, and turned His eyes away from a great many others. Moreover, those Jews who are currently in possession of a portion of Jerusalem are yet to receive one last punishment from the Lord (Isaiah 10:5-7), which is on the very doorsteps. Furthermore,

"Zechariah gives the answer to what God means when He says He will bring against Jerusalem all that they have loved and all that they have hated. 'Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of olives.' Zech. 14:1-4." The Stone, p. 6, 7.

So, instead of the current day Jews being this "daughter" of Jerusalem, she is actually Jerusalem the "mother." Who, then, is this "daughter" of Jerusalem, and when did she become such?

As Jerusalem, in this prophecy, refers to the leadership of God's people, and not the geographical location, then the only change in the leadership of God's people has been when the Christian leadership took the place of the Jewish Sanhedrin after the death and resurrection of Christ. That the Christian leadership has taken the place of the Jewish leadership in God's eyes, and thus has inherited, as the true "daughter," the title of "Jerusalem" we see from the following.

In Hosea, chapter 1, we see the birth of three children to the prophet by means of a "wife of whoredoms." The first was named Jezreel – meaning, "God sows" (verse 4). The second was named Loruhamah – meaning, "no mercy" – and referred to the ten tribe Israel (verse 6). Verse 7 reveals that while God was no longer going to have "mercy" on ten tribe Israel, He was going to continue to have mercy on Judah while she remained faithful. Yet, in the following verse the prophet's wife conceived again. This third child was named Loammi – meaning, "not my people" – and referred to the two tribe Judah (verse 9) after she became as unfaithful as the 10 tribes.

This takes us through the history of the Jewish nation and through the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. It shows how they, as nations (Israel and Judah), were cut off from the true "olive tree" of the faithful. The ten tribes, Israel, were first cut off when they were taken captive by the Assyrians in 721 B.C., and the two tribes, Judah, were cut off at the crucifixion of Christ. Yet the prophecy in Hosea declares that,

"Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." (verse 10).

How this could be (that their numbers would be so great after they had been cut off) is revealed in Hosea 2:1 where we see that the names of those two children, Loruhamah ("no mercy"), and Loammi ("not my people") are changed to Ruhamah ("mercy") and Ammi ("my people"). That is, as Paul puts it,

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"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.... What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." Romans 11:5, 7.

Therefore, we see that by works of unrighteousness, unfaithfulness, the Israelites (ten tribes) and the Jews (Judah), as nations, were cut off from the true "olive tree," while an elect number of them were saved by the grace they received through believing in Christ. That is, while at one time it was said of the ten tribes (Israel), "no mercy," the prophecy shows that they later were to receive "mercy" through Christ. Likewise, while at one time it was said to Judah (two tribes) "not my people," through Christ, those who accepted him were said to be "my people." Thus, that elect remnant continued to be the true "olive tree" that was rooted in Abraham, even though some of the branches thereof were broken off (Romans 11:17).

To that true “olive tree” many Gentiles have been grafted in, thus making the number of Israel, the true, the faithful, so great that it “cannot be measured nor numbered.” Yet, even in this, the mercy of God towards the last days remnant of ancient Israel (all of the tribes), “for the fathers’ sakes” (Romans 11:28), will be seen in the grafting into the true “olive tree” a great number of the descendants of those who did not obtain mercy (the ten tribes – Israel), and those who were declared to be “not my people” (the two tribes – Judah).

Moreover, as the Gospel first went forth to all the world, many of those of the “lost tribes” (both of the ten tribes of Israel, and others of the two tribes who never returned from Babylon) who had lost their racial and tribal distinctions received that Good News and became Christians. The apostle James addressed his letter to the “twelve tribes which are scattered abroad,” showing that even after the cross God was still acknowledging in a special way the seed of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob, even though it was said to the Jewish nation “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” (Matt. 21:43). Such it remains today – there are many bloodline Israelites already in the church, and many more yet to join the Church who also have a direct blood line to ancient Israel, but do not know it. Thus so, “the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered.” And thus will it be possible for the Lord to choose and seal 144,000 “of all the tribes of the children of Israel” from within the church.

So, while we have established that it is not the unbelieving Jews, who have partial control of the place called Jerusalem, who are the “daughter” of Jerusalem in this prophecy of Ezekiel, but are, instead, the unfaithful “mother,” and that it is the leadership of the Christians who are the “daughter” who have inherited the title “Jerusalem,” there remains the matter that this “daughter” is also being linked to a shameful lineage – that of a Hittite mother, and an Amorite father.

That the Christian leadership (spiritual Jerusalem – the “daughter”) has done as bad as the Jewish leadership, we need only look to history and the prophecies which record her falling away. Paul speaks of a “falling away” which was coming upon the church (2 Thessalonians 2:3), and Jude speaks of “certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness” Jude 1:4. The results of these things are also revealed in the prophecy of Hosea and in the early history of the church.

The second chapter of Hosea begins with the fact that that which follows is addressed to those who have obtained mercy (Rahumah) and are His people (Ammi) – the Christians. But as we shall see, those names are applied to the laity, the general church body, and not the leadership, for these children are called to plead with their “mother” – their leadership.

“Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; [“my people”] and to your sisters, Ruhamah [“mercy”]. ‘Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband:’ let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts; lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst. And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms. For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them

hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.

“Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them:’ then shall she say, ‘I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.’ For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal.

“Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness. And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand.

“I will also cause all her mirth to cease – her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.” Hosea 2:1-11.

Notice that the sins of the “mother” of those who had obtained “mercy,” and whom God called “My people” here in Hosea (i.e., the Christians) after the time when their names had been changed, are similar to those of ancient Jerusalem, the “mother” in Ezekiel 16. That is, the leadership of the early church after the days of the apostles (yea, even in their day – see 3 John 9, 10), identified as the “mother” of the Christians (Ammi and Ruhamah) in this chapter of Hosea, is also shown to be marked by unfaithfulness. Thereby we may understand why the “daughter” in Ezekiel 16 has been said to have the same shameful lineage as her “mother” (ancient Jerusalem) – that of the unfaithful Hittite mother and Amorite father.

But we also see from Hosea 2 that it was due to the sins of the “mother” of Ruhamah and Ammi that God caused her “mirth” (joy) – “her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts” – to “cease.” This reveals that it was not the pagans nor Gentiles who by means of any great power on their behalf were able to displace the keeping of the seventh day Sabbath with the keeping of Sunday, but that it really was the sins of the unfaithful leaders who caused such to be. The same principle applies to all of the Church’s feast days (other such “times and laws” – Daniel 7:25) – that is, they have been supplanted by pagan practices learned from the unlawful lovers of the unfaithful Christian leaders – the “mother” in Hosea.

For more on Hosea’s prophecy of the casting away and latter day restoration of ancient Israel as the one true Christian church, see our studies. <<<Timely Greetings, Vol. 2, p. 21; Timely Greetings, Vol. 2, p. 6; The Latest News for “Mother.”>>>

Now that we understand that the “daughter” of ancient Jerusalem spoken of in Ezekiel 16 represents the Christian leadership at a certain time, we must now determine to what time this prophecy applies – that is, at what time in history can it be said that the “daughter” of Jerusalem (the Christian leadership) has had two “sisters” as this chapter reveals.

History and prophecy teach that there can be no doubt but that the Catholic Church (Roman, and otherwise) came into being due to the falling away of the leadership of the Christian body. It is written of the power which had “arms ... stand on his part” (Daniel 11:31), that he had “intelligence with them that fors[ook] the holy Covenant.” Daniel 11:30. Pagan Rome was the power which had

the “arms [military might] ... stand on his part,” and the unfaithful Christian bishops (“them that fors[ook] the holy Covenant”) were they with whom he had “intelligence ” (an understanding). Following is a record of this unholy alliance –

“...the Council [of Nicea, in 324 A.D.] addresses the Church of Alexandria,...’All the brethren in the east who formerly celebrated Easter with the Jews [at the same time – the time pointed out in “the holy Covenant”], will henceforth keep it at the same time as the Romans, with us, and with all those who from ancient times have celebrated the feast at the same time with us....

“The Emperor Constantine [he with the “arms...on his part] made the following announcement in his letter to all who were not present at the Council: ‘...It was declared to be particularly unworthy for this, the holiest of all festivals, to follow the custom (the calculation) of the Jews, ...We ought not therefore to have anything

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in common with the Jews....we desire, dearest brethren, to separate ourselves from...the Jews, for it is truly shameful to us to hear them boast that without their direction we could not keep this feast.... As...the custom now followed [“now” that they had forsaken the “times and laws” (Dan. 7:25) of “the holy Covenant”] by the churches of the West, of the South, and of the North and by some of those of the East, is the most acceptable...we can thus celebrate this holy Easter day at the same time, if it is granted me [the one with “arms”, as I desire, to unite myself with you [have “intelligence” with you]; we can rejoice together, seeing that the divine power has made use of our instrumentality[our “arms” – our military might] for destroying the evil designs of the devil, and thus causing faith, peace, and unity to flourish amongst us....” History of the Councils, p. 322-4.

This shows why the “daughter” of Ezekiel 16 in the latter days can be said to have a shameful, unfaithful lineage (her mother an Hittite, and her father an Amorite), like that of her unfaithful mother (ancient Jerusalem). That is, whether the latter-day Christians want to admit it or not, those who formed the Catholic church were their spiritual ancestors (parents), as unfaithful as they proved to be. But, as the church at the beginning and early times of her falling away did not have any notable “sisters,” we must look further on in the stream of time for just such a circumstance.

That is, at that time those unfaithful “Catholic” leaders who had forsaken the law of God truly were the unfaithful “mother” of Hosea from whom the Lord took away her joyful feasts because of her “whoredoms.” But neither they, nor their organization can be considered the “daughter” of Ezekiel 16 in the context of the timing of that chapter because she did not have any “sisters” at that time. Though there was a major split in the “Catholic” church, well after her sabbaths and feasts were taken away, leaving the “Orthodox” (eastern) and “Roman” (western) “Catholic” churches, they were only two “sisters,” and not three, as this chapter requires. Furthermore, though there were then many smaller sects who, for one reason or another, rejected the assumptions of the “Catholic” hierarchies, none of them were prominent enough to be distinguished as their third “sister.” Additionally, the Protestants can’t be counted as the third “sister” because no one of their denominations has such a prominence over another such as the others would be considered her “children.” That is, according to Ezekiel’s prophecy, all three “sisters” are said to also have

“children,” making each of them mothers. The Lutherans, though the first of the Protestants churches, are not the “mother” of the Presbyterians, or Methodists, etc.

While the Catholic church considers the majority of Protestant churches her wayward brethren, neither she nor they can be considered the “daughter” of Jerusalem nor her sisters because ancient Jerusalem was distinguished by the fact that she was a Sabbath-keeping city with God’s voice (the Spirit of prophecy) active within her, and the Catholic church and the majority of the Protestant churches are Sunday-keepers, and do not have the true Spirit of prophecy active in their midst. Furthermore, there are more than three major Sunday-keeping Protestant denominations, thus eliminating the possibility of the Catholic and any two Sunday-keeping Protestant churches, or any combination of Sunday-keeping Protestant churches, being the three “sisters” of Ezekiel 16.

Consequently, there remains but one Sabbath-keeping Christian denomination of any prominence which both claims to be a direct descendant of ancient Israel and the faithful restored remnant of the fallen away Christian church, and professes to have the work of the prophesying Holy Spirit in her midst – that is, the Seventh Day Adventists. The questions which now arise are, Does she still have within her the distinguishing features which would identify her as the “daughter” of Ezekiel 16?; and, Does she have any legitimate “sisters,” as does said “daughter”?

To answer this question we must look closer at one of those features which appears to distinguish the Seventh Day Adventist church as a true descendant of ancient Israel. That feature is related in a few different texts –

“By a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.” Hosea 12:13.

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“Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” Amos 3:7.

This work of God through His prophets, then, is the preeminent feature which distinguished ancient Jerusalem (see also 2 Chronicles 20:20; Ezra 5:1, 2; Zechariah 7:7; Acts 13:27) from all other cities. And, according to the word of the Lord, this is to continue to be Jerusalem’s (God’s leading city’s) defining characteristic –

“For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. . . . I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence.” Isaiah 62:1, 6

That the Lord intends to continue to work for His people through His prophets, we read,

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.... for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Revelation 12:17; 19:10.

We know that God was going to continue to use the true gift of prophecy in the church from the following:

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” Eph. 4:11-14.

“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” 1 Cor. 12:28.

“They continued stedfastly in the apostle’s doctrine...” Acts 2:42.

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.” Eph. 2:19,20.

“(...the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;... Whereof I [Paul] was made a minister ...” Eph. 3:4,5,7

It is clear from the foregoing that the doctrines and practices of the church are established by “apostles” and “prophets,” and by them alone. They are the ones to whom the “gift” has been given. The “evangelists,” “pastors,” and “teachers,” are gifts given to promulgate the doctrines brought forth by the “Spirit of Prophecy” through the apostles and prophets. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would come to lead us into “all truth.” (John 16:13) That work is still in progress, as is the work of bringing us into “the unity of the faith.”

Anyone who is familiar with the history of the Seventh Day Adventist church knows that she owes her whole existence to the Spirit of prophecy active within her. Without this gift of God the SDA church would know nothing of Christ’s entering into the Most Holy place for the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, and his intercessory work there. Were it not for God using the gift of prophecy to reveal this particular knowledge, the church would have had nothing much which

distinguished it as the faithful remnant, for there were others before her which kept and taught the truth of the seventh day Sabbath, and there were also others who taught the Advent doctrines as taught by William Miller and his associates. The same is true of the doctrine concerning the non-

existence of the dead.

In ancient Jerusalem, the work of God through His sanctuary was the heart and soul of the city. So one would expect that the same to be true regarding Christ's work in the heavenly sanctuary, of which we read,

"We have such an high priest [Christ], who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Hebrews 8:2.

The knowledge of the service of the earthly service, which was a type ("example and shadow" – Hebrews 8:5) of the work of the heavenly, was given to Moses, and thereby to Israel, by God directly. Thus, also, by the same means the knowledge of Christ's work in the heavenly sanctuary has been given to Israel, the Church, the true "olive tree," – that is, by the active Spirit of Prophecy, the testimony of Jesus, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:" John 16:13.

But the active gift of prophecy in the church involves more than revealing the "hidden manna" (Revelation 2:17). Its work is also to fulfill Christ's righteousness which is summed up in the words, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." Revelation 3:19. This, therefore, is what distinguishes the Seventh day Adventists from all other Sabbath-keeping congregations – that is, the living "testimonies" of Jesus to His people. This is not to say that God has been totally silent towards any other congregations, or even individuals, because it is His righteousness to bring all unto repentance by speaking directly with them. But His special work within the Adventist church has been to "Bind up the testimony, [and to] seal the law among my disciples." Isaiah 8:16.

There can be no doubt among Adventists that when Ellen White was alive just such a work of the Holy Spirit as depicted above was active within the church. But the question still remains as to whether or not the SDA church is the "daughter" of Jerusalem spoken of in Ezekiel 16 now that she no longer has a living prophet among her, or, instead, is she just one of that daughter's "sisters?"

At this point we must note that the only thing which makes "sisters" have a family relationship one to another is their common parentage. Christ stated that the purpose of the Father sending us the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of prophecy) who is to lead us into all truth, was so that He would not leave us "comfortless" – "orphans" in the Greek (John 14:18, margin). In order to not leave us as "orphans," He would have to send us a Parent. And what better Parent could He send us than the One of Whom we are "born" – the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth (John 3:5, 6, 8). Therein we have revealed the only legitimate Parentage which these three "sisters" could have to be rightly considered family. More on this will be shown later.

The uncertainty that the leadership of the Seventh Day Adventists is the "daughter" of Jerusalem of Ezekiel 16 also arises from the fact that she has, as a body, chosen to only accept a portion of God's holy law which is applicable under the New Covenant, while choosing instead to teach the commandments and statutes of men for the remainder. This, as we shall see, was a characteristic of those who became known as

“SAMARIA,”

rather than those of Jerusalem (Judah) at the typical time under consideration.

A perfect example of this is that they have chosen to reject the keeping of the memorial of Christ's sufferings, death and resurrection at Passover time, as admonished to by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:8, while they observe Easter at the time commanded by the Roman Catholic Church. Their scholars know that there was never a controversy in the early centuries of the Church as to whether or not to keep the memorial of Christ's passion at Passover time, and that the only dispute

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that arose in the centuries following the passing of the apostles was that concerning the date to observe the memorial. That is, some wanted to keep it according to the Gentile (Roman) calendar tradition, and others after the Jewish calendar tradition, as noted above.

But, in spite of knowing these facts, the Adventists have come to accept a variation of the new-fangled theology that arose during the Reformation which states that the feast days (including the Sabbath) were somehow “nailed to the cross.” That perversion of the truth was brought forth by some so-called Protestants as an excuse to avoid having to return to keeping the Bible feast days and the seventh day Sabbath which had been supplanted by Easter, Christmas, Sunday-keeping, etc. Some, though, say that it was Jesuits who introduced this notion in order to counter the work of the Reformation. To overcome the erroneous idea that the Sabbath has been nailed to the cross, the Adventist pioneers said that there are “Two Laws” – one moral (the Ten Commandments that contain the Sabbath law which were kept inside the Ark of the Covenant), and one ceremonial (the Statutes and Judgements that contain all of the feast days [including the Sabbath] which were kept on the side of it). This notion did not originate with them.

In order to substantiate this distinction they have to deny that the moral law (the Ten Commandments) contains a ceremonial element (the Sabbath), and that the book (scroll) on the side of the ark (the ceremonial law) is full of moral principles. They also have to dissect that book into even smaller parts, because the first one of the feasts days given in the list of the feast days (Leviticus 23) is the Sabbath, and they acknowledge its continuance while denying the same regarding the rest of the feast days. They also have to continue in this line of thinking in dissecting the part of God's law which was kept on the side of the ark in order to sustain the idea that tithing remains a duty of the Christians. What they are obscuring for themselves and others is the fact that none of the law has been blotted out when Christ was nailed to the cross, but there has only been a change in it – “For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.” Hebrews 7:12.

Furthermore, and what is most important in this matter, that which was nailed to the cross was resurrected, minus the curse that was on it. That is, Christ, the law-giver (the embodiment of the law), was nailed to the cross, He bearing upon Himself the curse that the sins of those who had broken the law had brought upon themselves – “the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us” (Colossians 2:14). Then, after He had died and was buried, He was

resurrected, leaving the curse of the law which was written against the sinners which He bore in their stead buried with their sins – thus blotting them out. But with Him in His resurrection are the blessings of the law which are made available to all who will enter into the rest of His salvation.

Moreover, Paul, in speaking of the feast days (Colossians 2:15), describes them as they “Which are a shadow of things to come,” not which were a shadow of something which had come, or was yet to come. They are spoken of in the present tense, as though they are still in force, not in the past tense, as though they had been done away with.

So while the Spirit of Prophecy has attributed to the leadership of the Seventh Day Adventist church a likeness to ancient Israel, and has said that they are the modern counterpart of her (Testimonies, Vol. 5, p. 160 – “We are repeating the history of that people”), those statements and this matter must be considered in relation to both the time and events which were transpiring at the time that those statements were made, as well as to the same in regards to ancient Jerusalem. That is, ancient Jerusalem went through a number of changes during her existence, and, likewise, the leadership of the Adventists has gone through various changes. So we will look at some of the more prominent changes in ancient Jerusalem to see if they have received an antitypical fulfillment in the Adventist leadership.

The first, and most notable, change in ancient Jerusalem was that in her beginning God’s tabernacle (and later His sanctuary) which was in her midst was the center of worship for all 12 tribes of Israel. But after Solomon’s sins, the nation was divided into two sections – the ten tribes whose capital was then in Samaria, and the two tribes, whose capital remained in Jerusalem. What is most notable about this division is that the leadership of the larger portion of Israel (the ten tribes) set up their own places and mode of worship, and abandoned the Lord’s sanctuary and its ordinances in Jerusalem.

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The significance of this is to be seen in how this relates to God’s personal leadership in Israel – His personal, direct intervention and counsels in their affairs. The Lord’s promise to Israel was that

“... at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD,” where the “continual [daily] burnt offering” was made, “I will meet you, to SPEAK there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest’s office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.” Exodus 29:42-45.

When the leadership of the ten tribes set up their own altars in Bethel and Dan (1 Kings 12:29), they did so in order to prevent the ten tribes from worshipping in Jerusalem, and thus being brought again into contact with the Lord’s sanctifying presence and Voice (verses 26-28). These circumstances have direct relevance to the matter of whether or not the Seventh Day Adventist leadership is the “daughter” of Jerusalem of Ezekiel 16 because of what the text says about the relationship between the “daughter” and “Samaria” – that is, that “Samaria” is said to be “elder” to this “daughter” (verse 46). From the type, we also learn that “Samaria” was representative of the

much greater number of the congregation of Israel.

Some may presume that the “elder sister,” represented as “Samaria,” would be the greater-in-number Protestant churches, thus making the Adventist leadership this “daughter,” because she is younger than them, and much less in number, as was the two tribe Judah in comparison with Samaria. But the problem with that idea is that both ancient Samaria and ancient Judah (and thus Jerusalem) were Sabbath-keepers, and while the Adventists are, the vast majority of the Protestants are not. Moreover, the Sunday-keeping Protestants are depicted as “Babylon,” and God’s people will have to be called out of her before she will go into perdition (Rev. 18), while the two “sisters” of the “daughter” are to be given to her as “daughters,” as we read,

“Nevertheless I will remember my Covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting Covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy Covenant. And I will establish my Covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD” verses 60-62.

From verse 46 we are given to understand that the body represented by the “daughter” is actually younger than “Samaria,” but this is, literally, the reverse of Israel’s history, for Samaria only became a place of prominence well after the time Jerusalem was established as the place of the Lord’s name, and the place from where His Voice was to be heard. Thus the whole matter contains a symbolism which involves one particular family of Sabbath-keepers whose characteristics are similar to these two ancient kingdoms, and even to ancient Sodom, but whose ages relative to each other are not similar, but are defined within the prophecy itself.

Therefore, we must look to see if there was a time when the sins of the leadership of the Adventist church caused a separation in the body of the Church (Israel), and which led to the greater number of the Church (symbolized by the ten tribes) establishing a form of worship which was antagonistic to that part of the Church which remained faithful to the means whereby God could continue to “speak” to His people at the “door” of the sanctuary. As that means is the living Spirit of Prophecy, then we must look to a time when a division came within the Church involving an unrolling of the scroll – that is, a time when another present truth message came to the Church but was rejected by the leadership, and that that leadership then took steps to prevent the people from coming to the place where God had ordained for His Voice to be heard, as had the leadership of Samaria.

Those who are familiar with Adventist history know that a controversy over an unrolling of the scroll did arise in the Church in 1888 with the presentation of new light through elders A. T. Jones, and E. J. Waggoner. Though the testimonies of the Spirit through Ellen White both endorsed

the message, and also noted its rejection (E.G. White Letter 106, 1903), the leadership at that time did not bring about something which caused a division in the Church on the scale of the division between the ten tribes and the two tribes.

While it is true that the Church has not accepted any new light from the Spirit of Prophecy after 1890, the books and other publications which contain that new light are still available for study by the people without any repercussions to them, such as them being disfellowshipped, and without the formation of a second, “sister,” Seventh Day Adventist church. But following that time, just such a division did come, and the cause involved an unrolling of the scroll – that is, the controversy involved God’s continuing to “speak” to His people by means of a prophet.

When Ellen White died in 1915, it is reported that she was asked if she thought that God would raise up another prophet like unto her. Her reported answer was “I don’t know.” What is significant about this is that the question should never have been asked by a people who professed to believe her testimonies and the very Bible texts which they hold forth as their particular identifying criteria. That is, they had had ample evidence as to what was meant by the Biblical declaration that the “remnant” Church is to be identified by the fact that it has the living “testimony of Jesus Christ...” which “is the spirit of prophecy” in her midst. Thus the leadership of the Church should have both been looking for, and praying for that particular work of Christ in His Church to be manifested in a person, or persons after her death for it was to be their lifeblood, so to speak.

But when that work of Christ through His Spirit was remanifested again in 1930, the leadership of the Church did rise up against it to an extent similar to that which the leadership of the ten tribes rose up against the peoples’ going to worship at the sanctuary in Judah, where the Lord’s Voice was to be heard. Consequently, a major division did occur then which resulted in the Seventh Day Adventist church having a “sister” church. That “sister” became known as the Davidian Seventh Day Adventists – and the message is known as The Shepherd’s Rod.

Around 1929, the Lord called a Seventh day Adventist Sabbath School teacher named Victor T. Houteff to the prophetic office in fulfillment of His promise that “For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. . . . I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence.” Isaiah 62:1, 6

Though the Adventist church, as a general body, rightly claims to be the faithful remnant to whom all of the Covenant promises will be fulfilled, it is just as true that that remnant has many testimonies against them written in the Scriptures of Truth. Additionally, they have also been given Christ’s testimony that “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Revelation 3:19), which they must accept or suffer great loss (Revelation 3:16). Such straight testimonies are necessary because of the general state of the Christian Church due to the spiritual bondage she brought upon herself in “falling away” from God’s graces (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

Though counsels of just such a nature came to the Adventist church through Ellen White, the intended results have yet to be realized, for the leadership continues to reject them in practice. These counsels do not consist solely of matters of moral sins of commission or omission, but also of the fact that they are clinging to false doctrines which have no true foundation in the Word of God.

That the leadership of the Adventist church is of the opinion that it is alright for them to “eat [their]

own bread [doctrines], and wear [their] own apparel [righteousness],” and under such a condition ask the Lord to “let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach” (Isaiah 4:1), is revealed in the picture that they commonly use to portray verse 20 of Revelation 3 (one of the verses which they believe to be a defining part of their heaven sent message), which reads,

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

That picture shows Christ standing at the door of a dwelling with only a staff in hand, and sometimes without even any sandals on. What is implied in this picture, and how it reveals the

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attitude of many of the Adventist leaders, is that it appears that Christ is there to eat of their food, for He does not appear to be bringing anything for them to feast on. As a matter of fact, the picture somewhat implies that He may there for a handout (as He is not shown with any food of His own), rather than coming there to provide them with a feast which He, Himself, intends to supply. But in reading verses such as the following, we see that He is not interested in eating anyone else’s food (doctrines), but only that which He, Himself, provides. The Messiah is commanded to

“Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.” Psalms 28:9

“For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, ...” Revelation 7:17.

“He shall feed his flock like a shepherd ...” Isaiah 40:11.

“And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.” Isaiah 25:6.

“The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.” Proverbs 10:21.

Thus we see that when Christ comes to “sup” with us, and we with Him, He intends to supply the food (doctrines). And this He does through His Spirit (the Spirit of Prophecy) who has been sent to lead us into “all truth.” John 16:13. To the artist’s credit, there is a text which could be used to justify Christ standing at the door with only a staff in His hand, when His intention is to come to sup with us – that verse is,

“Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage ...” Micah 7:14.

But to get this meaning out of the picture, one would have to be aware of the spiritual meaning of this and kindred verses (such as Micah 6:9) – that is, that the rod in His hand (a Shepherd’s staff) is something to feast upon.

The announcement of this spiritual feasting, which is to be brought by Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit, and the things which needed to be done by those who would partake in this supping with Christ, were at the heart of the message brought in 1930 through Victor Houteff, as

were the results of doing that which qualified the guests to partake of the feast. That is, the qualification was that they simply hear His voice, and open the door and let Him in, and result would be a purified Church, with a pure, undefiled doctrine.

One of the key texts which was at the heart of the new message was
“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people

their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” Isaiah 58:1.

One of the most prominent sins which the new message pointed out was the Adventists’ private interpretations of the Scriptures, and particularly the prophecies which relate to the latter days. They had been teaching that there were only to be 144,000 saints alive at Christ’s second coming; that there was not to be any purification of the Church before she gave the final message of mercy to the world; that the law of God (except the ten Commandments) had been “nailed to the cross,” rather than having been only changed with the change in the Priesthood (Hebrews 7:12); and that there is not to be any restoration of God’s Covenant people to the land of promise (Israel), among other prophetic matters.

The rejection of the message and messengers in 1888 was due to the leadership clinging to some private opinions regarding the law of God, and the Adventist leadership were being brought over this same ground in the new message of reformation which came in 1930. But this time they were

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warned (through the applicable Scriptures) that in rejecting this heavenly light this time they would be sealing their fate, and cutting themselves off from God’s graces.

Because the primary focus of the reform message was directed to the leadership and their sins (“... unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write ...” – Revelation 3:14), they rose up against it and almost immediately began disfellowshipping anyone who accepted even a part of the new message, or who even investigated it themselves. Their purpose in doing this was the same as the reason why the leadership of ancient Samaria instituted means to keep the ten tribes from going to Jerusalem to worship the Lord – that is, to keep them from hearing fresh revelations of truth from the Lord at His appointed times, and in His appointed manner and place, that pointed out their sins, and called them to repentance. Thus the Seventh Day Adventist leadership inherited the unfaithful character which is symbolized in Ezekiel 16 as “Samaria.” Therein also is revealed how she can be said to be “elder” than her other “sisters” – that is, she acquired this unfaithful character representation before her “sisters” acquired their respective unflattering representations.

Hence, though ancient Samaria was younger than ancient Sodom, the symbolism in this prophecy, when understood in this light – that the Adventist leadership is symbolized by “Samaria,” the elder of the three sisters – shows how the prophecy is accurate in its applications of the respective ages of the three sisters. This will be better understood when the identity of the other two sisters becomes clear, and we learn that

THE IDENTITY OF JERUSALEM IS CONDITIONAL.

According to the type, after the kingdom was divided, and Samaria had separated herself from the place and mode of true worship, Jerusalem had assumed a new identity – that being the ruling city of that portion of Israel (the two tribes – known as Judah) which remained truer to God's Covenant requirements, and was then the only place where the Lord would continue to meet with His people to speak with them. Thus in the antitype, after the Seventh Day Adventist leadership had chosen to separate themselves from the work of the living Spirit of prophecy (God's meeting them at the door of the tabernacle, and there speaking to them), the Davidians acquired the title "Jerusalem" – they not having yet rejected God's personal involvement in leading the church into "all truth." While the Davidians are a true sister of the SDAs, and are younger than her, we have to look further into what qualifies one of these three sisters to be identified as the "daughter" of ancient Jerusalem, and, therefore, the one who will receive the full Covenant blessings (verse 60), and will actually receive her two "sisters" as her "daughters" (verse 61). "Though thou, Israel (SDA), play the harlot, yet let not Judah (DSDA) offend..." Hosea 4:15.

Another of the key points of the message Victor Houteff brought was the Church's feast days which had been supplanted by the power which had thought "to change times and laws" were to be restored to her. Of this he said,

"Hos. 2:8-12 — 'For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal. Therefore will I return, and take away My corn in the time thereof, and My wine in the season thereof, and will recover My wool and My flax given to cover her nakedness. And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of Mine hand. I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them.'"

"From these verses we see that it was just such a departure from God that caused the church in her early Christian era to lose her path and all her possessions, including her feast days, her new moons, her Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.

"This is exactly what happened when the "Dark Ages" of religion began. The Pagans in whose clutches the church fell were no more to blame for the church's

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going into darkness than were the Chaldeans of destroying Judah and her temple. The real blame falls on the church herself. And this should be a lasting lesson to each of us, that we should never again have illicit connection with the world, should never depart from the Lord." Timely Greetings, Vol. 2, No. 6, p. 20, 21.

Note: In these Bible verses and inspired commentary we see the truth of why the "mother" of Ruhamah and Ammi (the Christian laity born to the Christian leadership) had a falling away,

making it necessary for God to call upon her children to plead with her to reform (Hosea 2:1-15). That is, she, like her own “mother” (ancient Jerusalem – Ezekiel 5:5, 6), sought to have “illicit” connections with the world – this, by accepting the pagan and heathen philosophies which supplanted the living word of God (Leviticus 18:3).

“Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; And I polluted them in their own gifts... ” Ezekiel 20:25, 26.

Thus, the idolatrous and ungodly theories that displaced the truth of God and which were accepted by the church through her leaders, brought in their train the unprofitable customs and practices which God brought upon her for forsaking His “holy Covenant,” as He had with her mother (“as is the mother, so is her daughter”).

So, though this second “sister” (DSDA) may also hold some of the criterion necessary to identify her as the “daughter” of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 16, as she, likewise, gave evidence of having the Spirit of Prophecy (the heavenly Parent) within her; is a Sabbath-keeper; is preaching the restoration of the law of God to its rightful place in His church; and is even younger than the larger-in-number Seventh Day Adventists (antitypical “Samaria,” in this prophecy); she also fails to qualify for that title because she, like the Adventists today, does not now have the living Spirit of Prophecy within her. Furthermore, though she called for the restoration of the feasts (along with other New Covenant Biblical ordinances), she did not institute them herself, but only pointed forward to the time when they would be restored to the remnant church. Therefore, she also is disqualified from being the “daughter” of Jerusalem in this chapter because ancient Jerusalem kept not only the seventh day Sabbath, but all of the Biblical feast days as they were applicable under her Covenant, and also had the Lord’s voice living within her, and such is not the case with this “sister” – the Davidian Seventh Day Adventists.

Consequently, as the Davidian Seventh Day Adventists are “younger” than her “sister” “Samaria,” but lack the requirements to be called the “daughter” of Jerusalem in this prophecy, the only name left for her in this prophecy would be

“SODOM.”

The Adventist leadership didn’t inherit the character of unfaithful ancient “Samaria,” nor that name in this prophecy, while she was following the Voice of God within her, and was holding up the standard as she was able, and the same principle applies to the Davidians in their acquiring the name “Sodom.” That is, while they had a living prophet among them, and were faithfully proclaiming their message in word and deed as it was unfolding to them, as they were able, the unfaithful character represented by the name “Sodom” could not be applied to her during that time. But the time and circumstances changed, as they had with the Adventists.

The question here arises, What could the Davidians, who profess a higher standard than the Adventists, have done in order to obtain a name (“Sodom”) which is so much more disdainful than that which the unfaithful Adventist leadership had acquired – “Samaria?” Consider the following statements of Victor Houteff which are at the heart of the message they profess to bear:

“... without the living Spirit of Prophecy in our midst there can be no success in any revival and reformation, and the sooner we know it the quicker we shall achieve our goal. ” Timely Greetings, Vol. 1, No. 10, p. 27.

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“Here [in Isaiah 62:1] we are told that the Lord will continue thus to speak, not for the sake of the world, but for the sake of the church so that she may eventually stand on Mount Zion with the Lamb; that He will thus continue ‘until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.’ ” Timely Greetings, Vol. 1, No. 42, p. 3

On this matter he also says,

“This verse [Isaiah 62:1] denotes that it will take much speaking and effort on God’s part before righteousness and salvation will go forth out of Zion and Jerusalem. It is because God’s people need a work to be done for them that will cause Him to continue speaking and working until righteousness and salvation are accomplished. We may be certain also that in this process we as a body will win; but some as individuals will lose out because they, like rebellious Israel of old, will not submit themselves to the necessary requirements that God lays before them. They refuse to exchange their ways for His ways and their thoughts for His thoughts.” Symbolic Code, Vol. 12, No. 3, p. 3.

He furthermore says,

“Ever have your ears open to any claimant of Inspiration if you are not to repeat the history of the Jews. God will not let you be deceived if you really hunger and thirst after righteousness, if you really want to know the Truth, for He is anxious that you keep up with His progressively revealed Truth. There is therefore no danger for one to be deceived by coming in contact with error, but there is a great danger for staying in darkness by not coming in contact with fresh Truth. Inspiration’s counsel is thus:

” ‘Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.’ 1 John 4:1. To keep this commandment is just as important as to keep any other.” Timely Greetings, Vol. 1, No. 12, p. 18.

To sum up Victor Houteff’s thoughts on the nature and character of the message he bore, we present the following compilation of his comments of what that message is to be:

“[an] ever-increasing supply of pure (Divinely revealed) truth” Shepherd’s Rod Volume 1 Tract, p. 85;

“His ever-increasing Light” Timely Greetings, Vol. 1, No. 44, p. 10;

“His ever-increasing Truth?” Timely Greetings, Vol. 2, No. 5, p. 11;

“the ever increasing light” Vol. 1 Symbolic Code No. 6, p. 10;

“the ever-unfolding, Inspired interpretation of the Scriptures ... the ever-

living Spirit of Prophecy, the eyes of the church at work” Timely Greetings, Vol. 2, No. 45, p. 7;

“God’s ever unfolding Truth; ... A true and up-to-date religion ... something as essential as the eyes in your head.” Timely Greetings, Vol. 1, No. 49, p. 9;

“fresh Truth for today from the throne of God, ... ‘meat in due season,’ “Timely Greetings, Vol. 1, No. 50, p. 25;

“fresh Truth.” The White-House Recruiter, p. 48, Timely Greetings, Vol. 2, No. 5, p. 2;

“progressive Truth” The White-House Recruiter, p. 71, Timely Greetings, Vol. 1, No. 26, p. 17, Timely Greetings, Vol. 1, No. 51, p. 4, Timely Greetings, Vol. 1, No. 38, p. 28;

“the progressive Truth of the living Word revealed through Inspiration.” War News Forecast (Tract) 14, p. 39;

“Truth ... ever timely, ever unfolding as time goes on.” The White-House Recruiter, p. 29.

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Thus we see that the message they profess to bear was to be a continually unfolding revelation of truth, both prophetic and practical. But as time has shown, the leadership of most of those groups that profess to be teaching the Shepherd’s Rod message have rejected any and all light which is not written by V.T. Houteff, or endorsed by him, and have not progressed one step with the “ever unfolding Truth” since his death in February, 1955. Though the “angel of the church of the Laodiceans” (the SDA ministry) says “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” this should not be a characteristic of the Davidians, for their message clearly teaches that they are not only to look for, but to expect “progressively revealed Truth.” So while this circumstance could brand them as being hypocritical to their own message, how would it make them eligible for the symbolical name “Sodom?”

This can only be understood in the light of some of the most present truth, and in light of another prophecy in which these same names are brought up. We will first look at that prophecy, which we find in Jeremiah chapter 23 –

“Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness. For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right. For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD....”

“And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err....”

“I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in

lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.”

“... from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land. ... they speak a vision of their own heart, and NOT OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE LORD. ...” Jeremiah 23:9-11, 13, 14, 16.

Prophesying at the time of the Babylon captivity, Jeremiah was shown the Lord’s controversy with the leaders of the ten tribes (Samaria) in the past, and with the leaders of the two tribes (Jerusalem) in his day. That controversy is summed up in the words “they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.” That is, they chose their own thoughts over those of the Spirit of prophecy.

But from these verses we see that because of their false prophesying the prophets of Jerusalem were likened to “Sodom,” and even “Gomorrah.” Therefore, in the Lord’s eyes, it is the corrupting work of the false prophets that brings upon a city the identification with ancient Sodom. There can be no doubt but that the false theories and philosophies embraced by the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah are they which led to their notable sins of immorality, and that of a sexual nature. But to understand how those false theories and philosophies relate to a likening of the works of the false prophets of Jerusalem, and also, in contrast, to the work of the living Spirit of prophecy, we must look at other texts which reveal the Lord’s thinking on the matter of gender relationships as He created them in the beginning, and pronounced them as being “very good.” The first is in the first chapter of Romans.

“... the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

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“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

“And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward

another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.” Romans 1:18-28.

Therein we see why God gave the inhabitants of Sodom “over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient,” – that being because “they did not like to retain God in their knowledge.” But what was it of the knowledge of God that they did not like to retain in their thoughts? The fact that “that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.

Where in “the creation of the world” do we see a revelation of the “invisible things” of the “Godhead?” In the creation of Adam and Eve, because God said,

“Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness. ... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; MALE and FEMALE created he them. ... In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; MALE and FEMALE created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.” Genesis 1:26, 27; 5:1, 2.

From a candid reading of these verses one can easily see that the very “likeness” and “image” God created in order to reveal the “invisible things” of Himself was “male and female” – thus showing that God must be “male and female.” Though this fact is somewhat obscured by the use of the English word “God,” it being singular, such is not the case in the original Hebrew, for the word Elohim, which is translated “God,” is not only plural, but also is both feminine and masculine. That is, Elohim has as its base the feminine word Eloah, to which is added the masculine plural ending im.

Moreover, from what “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21) concerning the creation of mankind being made in the image and likeness of God, we see that a feminine being (Eve) came forth from a masculine being (Adam), indicating another of the “invisible things” of the “Godhead.” Though what Jesus said of Himself is true – that is, “I proceeded forth and came from God” (John 8:42) – and it is equally true that He is masculine, there is another Who also “proceeded forth and came from God,” – that being the Holy Spirit, who is, according to the Hebrew language, feminine.

This truth of the femininity of the Holy Spirit explains why God compares the false prophets to the Sodomites when we also understand that “prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Peter 1:21. That is, in the light of “comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Corinthians 2:13), the “holy men of God spake” the love of God in truth and righteousness when they were motivated by, and interacting with, the feminine Holy Spirit, while the false prophets were speaking “a vision of their own heart” – that is, they, being men, were satisfying themselves with themselves, without interacting with the feminine Holy Spirit. Collectively, they were, spiritually, “men with men working that which is

unseemly” (Romans 1:27) – that is making lies in the name of the Lord in order to jointly please themselves with lying words and practices.

This brings us back to why the term “Sodom” is being applied to the Davidians after the death of Victor Houteff. As noted previously, before the division in Israel, the leadership of ten tribes, along with the leadership of the two tribes, were all designated by the name Jerusalem, for that was the national center of all the tribes. But after the division of the tribes, only the two tribes were designated as Jerusalem (even though there were members of all the tribes present in Judah after the division – see 1 Chronicles 9:3; 2 Chronicles 11:13-16, 15:9)

When the Adventists rebelled against the living Spirit of prophecy, and became as “Samaria,” their “sister” the Davidian leadership who had the Spirit of Prophecy among them through Victor Houteff inherited the title “Jerusalem” by default, as it were. But when Victor Houteff died in February of 1955, they were faced with the same set of circumstances which the Adventists had been faced with in 1915 when Ellen White died.

In both cases, the messages they bore contained ample evidence to the fact that God was going to “continue to speak” unto them by means of the living Spirit of Prophecy, and thus they should have been looking for, and praying for, another manifestation of the Lord’s Voice in an unrolling of the scroll. But in the case of the Davidians, the matter is beyond excuse because the message they had been learning and bearing had not only pointed out to them that God fully intended to keep speaking to them through the gift of prophecy, but also because the death of Victor Houteff had left them on the very verge of an unrolling of the scroll of truth in that they had been told, and were preaching, that the Judgment of the Living was “imminent,” “at the door,” “almost here,” and that they would be fully informed of its arrival and their duty during its progress by means of a living prophet. And by that means – a living prophet – the announcement of the arrival of that all important event came shortly after Victor Houteff’s death.

Like so many times in the past, it did come from within the movement, but it did not come from the remaining leadership. A few months after Victor Houteff died, the Lord called a humble Davidian worker, Benjamin Roden, to proclaim that the Judgment of the Living was to open on Oct. 20, 1955. Along with this declaration, he also announced that Jesus’ name had been changed to “the Branch” in fulfillment of Bible prophecies (Revelation 2:17, 3:12; Zechariah 3:8, 6:12), and that time for the feast days which Victor Houteff taught were to be restored to the church had also come, including also the correct way of keeping the Lord’s Supper.

Yet, despite the fact that the Rod message had repeatedly brought to light the fact that the leadership of almost every movement had rejected the next step in the unrolling of the scroll, and had faithfully warned its followers against doing the same thing, the leadership did that very same thing. What made this matter all the more lamentable is the fact that as they were doing it Ben Roden was showing them the very prophetic Scriptures which pointed out their course of action, and the inevitable results.

Because of their rejecting the living Spirit of Prophecy in the unrolling of the scroll in another

message after Victor Houteff died, they so corrupted themselves by their private interpretations of the very message they professed to believe, and by their false prophesying which followed, that they became “as Sodom” in the Lord’s eyes.

This should stand a warning to all of those who would think to speak in the name of the Lord when they are not specifically moved to do so, for the same destruction which came upon Sodom will come upon them for a very similar reason, as we read in the rest of that prophecy in Jeremiah 23 –

“They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you. For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it?

“Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the

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LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: IN THE LATTER DAYS YE SHALL CONSIDER IT PERFECTLY.

“I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

“Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

“I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.

“How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal.

“The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the

LORD.

“Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that

breaketh the rock in pieces?

“Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my

words every one from his neighbour.

“Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues,

and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.” Jeremiah 23:17-32.

This, then, brings us to the identity of the third “sister” – the true “daughter” of Jerusalem – the Branch Davidian Seventh Day Adventists. Of these three, she is the only one which has all of the qualifications which the name entails – she is a Sabbath-keeper, a feast-keeper, acknowledges all of the law of God as applicable under the New Covenant, and has the living Spirit of prophecy in her midst. Note also that the unbelieving Jews in Israel do not have a “mouth” (verse 56) – a prophetic voice – as does the Branch movement.

Though the Branch has had these things from her youth, to be the true “daughter” of Jerusalem portrayed in this chapter, there had to be a time come when it could be said of her,

“AS IS THE MOTHER, SO IS HER DAUGHTER”

“Yet hast thou [modern Jerusalem, the “daughter”] not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations: but, as if that were a very little thing, thou wast corrupted more than they in all thy ways.” Ezekiel 16:47.

In a previous unrolling of the scroll, Ben Roden taught that the Seventh Day Adventists are represented in this chapter as “Samaria;” the Davidian Seventh Day Adventists, after Victor Houteff’s death, are represented as “Sodom (Seven Letters to Florence Houteff, p. 20),” and that the third sister of this parable was “modern” “Jerusalem,” – the Jews in Palestine (The Stone, p. 5-7). At the time this was said, there was nothing happening in the Branch movement which would have qualified her for the unfaithful characterization of the “daughter” in this chapter. But as there was a “falling away” after Christ’s first appearing in the flesh, so has there, likewise, been a falling away after His coming invisibly in His Word – His Living Word, the Spirit of Prophecy.

One purpose of this study is to show that more light has come on this matter in the turning of events since Ben Roden died, and that this third “sister” (the one described as her “mother’s daughter”) is the general Branch movement (Jerusalem – the city of David) – specifically, the Branch “candidates,” and not the unbelieving Jews in Palestine, nor Ben or Lois Roden, themselves.

[NOTE: We use the word “candidates” because that is the only term that accurately portrays their relationship to the message. Under Victor Houteff’s leadership, most all Davidians were issued membership cards for only one year’s duration, and they needed to pass an examination in order to renew them. This was due to the fact that the message was continually unfolding, and the people had to keep pace with it in order to be recognized as members of the Association. Such is the case with those who were associated with the Branch message – their passing from mere candidates to full fledged members is conditioned on whether or not they progress with the truth

as it unfolds.]

The simplest proof that the Branch is the third “sister” can be seen in verse 52, which, concerning the “daughter,” reads, “Thou also, which hast judged thy sisters . . .” As it was the Branch message and movement, and not the Jews in Israel, which proclaimed the Judgement of the Living to her two “sisters,” SDA, and DSDA; and, as the Jews do not acknowledge Jesus, the Branch, as their Brother (and thus a family member), they cannot be considered as being a part of the same family. Thus the identity of the third sister is clear. The apostle Paul makes it clear that the unbelieving Jews have been cut off of the family vine (Israel), but, also, that they, as individuals and as the faithful remnant of those who were cut off, can, and will be, grafted back in (Romans 11). That is, the remnant of the Jews will be grafted into the true vine (the believing Church), rather than the other way around.

In the following paragraphs we will examine a few statements from Ben Roden’s teaching regarding the unbelieving Jews in Palestine being the “daughter” in this chapter. In the first one, he uses the comparative ages of the three “sisters” to establish their identities. Therein he uses the term “New Jerusalem” to refer to the current day Jews in Palestine. He says,

“Only could it be said of the Seventh-day Adventist church that she is a sister and yet be older than New Jerusalem, the daughter of ancient Jerusalem. Therefore, SDA is modern Samaria ten tribes of the 144,000.” The Stone, p. 7.

There we see that he is basing his conclusion on the fact that the SDA church came into existence in the mid-1800s, while “New Jerusalem” (which he elsewhere terms, “modern Jerusalem”) came into existence in 1948-49 – thus making the SDA church older than the State of Israel. Though this is true, it cannot be the sole basis for believing that those Jews are the “daughter” of Jerusalem in this chapter. He goes on further in using this comparison by bringing in the matter of the relative age of “Sodom.”

“But what can be said of Sodom? She is a sister of the daughter of Jerusalem. Keep in mind that Sodom represents the Gentiles. With this key we may be able to unlock the mystery of the other sister. If, then, Sodom represents the Gentiles, or heathen, we may conclude she represents the Sunday keeping churches. Inspiration, however, says she is younger than SDA (Samaria), even younger than Jerusalem. And furthermore, in order to be a sister, Sodom must be a Sabbath keeper, with perhaps heathen (Gentiles) ruling her, because Jerusalem is a Sabbath keeper. The Scripture says that all three loath their husbands. Then who is Sodom, seeing that the daughter of Jerusalem has just passed her tenth birthday, and Sodom is her younger sister? Here is a truth that God has held His hand over for many centuries, to be revealed at the proper time; that the simple things may confound the so-called wise – those that think they know so much. There is only one Sabbath keeping church that “loatheth” her Husband – not following Inspiration, that is under ten years old. The only one we know of that fits this description is DSDA. But, you say, DSDA began in 1930. Perhaps, but she did not become one that loatheth her Husband until after the death of Bro. Houteff in 1955. While the messenger was living he admonished the SDAs to remain in the church, even though he realized that the SDA leaders would cast them out for believing the Shepherd’s Rod. But, shortly after Bro. Houteff’s death, the rulers at Mt. Camel rejected the Branch message and started a big campaign to get the people to leave SDA (Egypt – Ezek. 17:15; 5T 217) and come to DSDA, thereby creating another SDA

church, which makes them under ten years old – younger than the daughter of Jerusalem.” Ibid., dated 1958.

What is of note here is the fact that it was only after they had “rejected the Branch message and started a big campaign to get the people to leave SDA,” that they became “as Sodom.” But before that time, there was another “sister” born to the true movement – that being the Branch, as she was born in 1955. In the above quoted study, Ben Roden said,

“Now, since the 144,000 are the Seventh-day Adventists and 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes (Rev. 7:4-8); and since the Lord is a stumbling stone and a snare to “both the houses of Israel,” there must be some positive way to prove this fact. In the first place, Seventh-day Adventists know that there is a Davidian S.D.A. church. Since the Adventists are Modern Israel (P.K. 417; 5T. 160) and there is S.D.A. and Davidian S.D.A., the names show us quickly that there are two houses of Israel, in modern Israel, the church.” Ibid., p. 3.

What we have to consider here is the fact that the DSDA was truly born in 1930 when the message began to be published (brought to life) and the leadership separated those who embraced the message from the main church. Thus, at that time, a second (“sister”) SDA church was created. But the above quoted statements show the birth of “Sodom” to be after 1955. These facts may lead some to conclude that what we have there are 3 “sisters” (SDA, DSDA before Victor Houteff died, and another DSDA after he died), and that there is no room in that accounting to allow for the Branch. But taking into consideration the fact that, (1) the true DSDA movement is to ever have the Spirit of Prophecy in her midst; (2) that at a certain point in time she was to have her name changed; (3) that the Branch is the only true continuation of the DSDA movement with both the Spirit of Prophecy in her, and which purports to have changed the name of the DSDA association at the Lord’s command, the facts stand forth clear that the Branch DSDA is the only true progression of the DSDA church, and is, therefore, the third “sister” – the true daughter of Jerusalem – because there is no other DSDA church which meets the criteria set forth for identifying a body as “Jerusalem.”

In summation, we see that while the SDA leadership were faithful in holding forth the standard they had been given by allowing the living Spirit of Prophecy to have some prominence in their midst, they were as faithful “Jerusalem.” But when they chose to reject any further guidance by a living person with the Spirit of Prophecy, they became as unfaithful as “Samaria,” and thus acquired that name. At that time, the title of “Jerusalem” passed on to those who did have this gift of the Spirit among them – i.e., the DSDA. But when they also chose to reject any further guidance by a living person with the Spirit of Prophecy, in spite of the fact that the very message they purported to bear declared that they must continue to have God’s living voice among them, they became as “Sodom,” and the title of “Jerusalem” passed on to the Branch – the true daughter to whom all of the Covenant promises will be fulfilled. According to the prophecy under consideration, now that the Branch, the Covenant receiving “daughter” has received the name “Jerusalem,” it will not be passed on again, for it is written of her,

“Thou hast borne thy lewdness and thine abominations, saith the LORD. For thus saith the Lord

GOD; I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the Covenant. Nevertheless I will remember my Covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting Covenant.” verses 59, 60.

So, while all three sisters have the Lord’s strong testimonies against them in this chapter, He says to them what he said to ancient Israel –

“For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name’s sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.” 1 Samuel 12:22.

“The inhabitants of Judah were all undeserving, yet God would not give them up. By them His name was to be exalted among the heathen. Many who were wholly unacquainted with His attributes were yet to behold the glory of the divine character. It was for the purpose of making plain His merciful designs that He kept sending

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His servants the prophets with the message, ‘Turn ye again now everyone from his evil way.’ Jer 25:5. ‘For My name’s sake,’ He declared through Isaiah, ‘will I defer Mine anger, and for My praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.’ ‘For Mine own sake, even for Mine own sake, will I do it: for how should My name be polluted? and I will not give My glory unto another.’ Isa 48:9,11.” Prophets and Kings, p.319.

“And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have wrought with you for my name’s sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.” Ezekiel 20:44.

Before we go on to the Lord’s testimony against the Branch at some time during her existence, we must provide some further evidence that she is this “daughter” to whom will be established “an everlasting Covenant.”

As the Covenant made with Abraham and his Seed (Christ) was confirmed in Christ (Galatians 3:16, 17), and made sure to those who believe in Him, it is to them (the Christians – Jew and Gentile, but, “to the Jew first . . .” Romans 1:16; 2:8-10); it is to them (the Christians), who broke the Covenant in forsaking God’s law; it is to them (the Christians), that the Covenant will be renewed. Moreover, as Israel is the one, and only, true Vine, and as the believing Gentiles have been grafted into that one Vine (Romans 11), then the Covenant that is to be renewed with Israel (and “Jerusalem”) after “those days” (of “falling away”), will be renewed with the believing Christians (the seed of Abraham through Christ), and not the unbelieving Jews.

Therefore, in Ezekiel 16: 60, where it reads,

“Nevertheless I will remember my Covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting Covenant,” the “thee” (the “daughter” of Jerusalem) refers to the church who are heirs to the Covenant of Abraham made in their “youth.” And that church is identified as those “which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. ...the spirit of prophecy. (Revelation 12:17; 19:10).

Such is not the case with the Jews in Palestine. As they have been cut off as a people from the spiritual inheritance of Abraham, the Covenant cannot be renewed with them while they, as a nation, remain in unbelief. So this “daughter” of Jerusalem, who inherits the name, “Jerusalem,” is the leading portion of the church to whom the “everlasting Covenant” will be established.

But considering that some of the Jews (identifiable, and unidentifiable) who are to be a part of the promised remnant who will be restored to their former glory in the land are to come from the literal blood line of king David, and that some of those from David’s line must also be in the church during the first fruit harvest (being born again of the Bloodline of heaven through the Holy Spirit), their city, Jerusalem (the ministry) – the city of David – would be the one under discussion, and not Jerusalem in Palestine, because the Covenant promise of restoration is to the believing Jew, not the unbelieving one.

To those who may stumble over the fact that more light has been revealed on these Scriptures which seemingly contradicts a portion of a former prophet’s teachings on a passage of Scripture, the Lord says,

“Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD’S servant? Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not. The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness’ sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.” Isaiah 42:19-21.

In the matter at hand, we must also take into consideration that fact that during the time when Ben Roden wrote what he did, it was only the Lord’s purpose to reveal the true identities of “Samaria” and “Sodom,” and what transpired in order for them to be so identified. As during the time

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of his ministry, the Branch congregation had not fallen to the condition to which the “daughter” is said to have fallen, it would have been untimely for the Lord to have revealed her true identity then. This same principle applies to the times of Ellen White’s and Victor Houteff’s ministries – that is, during their times the leaderships under their heaven-ordained guidance had not reached the conditions to which Inspiration ascribes the titles of “Samaria” and “Sodom.”

Ben Roden’s teaching on the identity of the third sister (that she is the Jews in Israel) was in error, for in his day it was only time for God to reveal the true identities of “Sodom” and Samaria,” and not the third sister. (See Isaiah 42:19). The reasons why the unbelieving Jews in Israel cannot be the third sister (the “daughter” of Jerusalem) are summed up as follows: (1) They do not have

Christ as their Brother, and thus are not of the same family; (2) They have no “mouth” (living Spirit of prophecy – a prophet) by which to mention “Sodom” (DSDA); (3) They have no real knowledge of Florence Houteff and associates (Sodom), and are not her sister, so it is impossible for them to mention “Sodom.” (4) It is only the Branch movement which had, and has a “mouth,” is knowledgeable about, and a sister to both “Sodom” and “Samaria,” and has “judged” her sisters, SDA and DSDA. It is that simple and straightforward.

Now that we have a basic understanding of the identity of these three “sisters,” we will look further into what the Lord has to say about them.

“LEFT” AND “RIGHT” HAND

“And thine elder sister is Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand: and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand is Sodom and her daughters.” verse 46.

Concerning this geographical situation, Ben Roden, in 1958, said,

“Jerusalem is the center of the world and just a fraction below the 32nd meridian. The map shows that the thirty-second meridian runs almost halfway between Dallas and Waco, Texas. Midland is right on the line and Odessa just a fraction below the thirty second. So, standing in Jerusalem, Israel, and looking east, Samaria is on the left and the place where ancient Sodom stood (the Dead Sea) is on the right. Continue to face East, and following the line around the world to the United States and you will find that the location of antitypical Samaria (SDA) is to the north – left; and anti-typical Sodom (DSDA) is on the right.” The Stone, p. 7.

At the time this was written the Branch was headquartered in Odessa, Texas, and the geographical depiction was true as he had stated it with respect to the literal Jerusalem, the SDAs, and the DSDAs. But after the Davidians under the leadership of Florence Houteff and her unlawful Council (“Sodom”) had cast off the original Mt. Carmel Center on the west of Waco, and had acquired New Mt. Carmel Center on the east of Waco, and shortly thereafter also cast it off, and after Ben had thereafter acquired title to New Mt. Carmel Center, the geographical aspect of this prophecy lost its literal significance.

Another reason why a literal, geographical application of verse 46 cannot be made is because not only are “Samaria” and “Sodom” said to be dwelling at the left and right hand, respectively, of the “daughter,” but their own “daughters” are also said to be in those same respective positions. The SDAs have numerous “daughters” – so many so that they have sought to trademark their name in order to prevent confusing their organization with that of their “daughters.” While it may be possible that many of the SDA’s daughters dwell to the “left” (north) of the Branch’s location, such is not the case of all of them. This point is accentuated by the fact that most of the “daughters” of “Sodom” (DSDA) are, themselves, also headquartered to the “left” (north) of the Branch, rather than them all being on the “right” (southern) hand of the Branch. The same is true concerning the position of literal Jerusalem relative to the “daughters” of the SDAs and the DSDAs.

Despite the lack of continuity in a literal, geographic interpretation of this text, there still remains a symbolical representation in the dwelling of these two “sisters” at the “right” and “left” hand of the “daughter.”

In the Bible, the right hand, when compared to the left, is a symbol of strength, as in most people – “Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.” Psalms 20:6.

The prophecy says that Samaria (SDA) dwells at the daughter's left hand, and that Sodom (DSDA) dwells at her right hand. This implies that the message the DSDA have is more powerful than that borne by the Adventists in their relationship to the Branch.

The Adventists are only proclaiming Three Angel's messages (Revelation 14:6-13), but are taught that when an additional angel (Revelation 18:1 – a repetition of the 2nd Angel message) joins the Third Angel their message will become more powerful. Their message is basically two-fold – the Sabbath and the Cleansing of the Sanctuary in the Judgment of the Dead.

The Davidians are proclaiming the Three Angel's messages, plus “... the final phase of the First Angel's message ... announcing the stealthy approach of judgment upon the living.” White House Recruiter, p. 37 “This very restricted representation of the ‘additional message’ — that of the judgment of the living — gives, in itself, tremendous ‘power and force’ to the three angel's messages.” White House Recruiter, p. 39. Their message contains not only the Sabbath and Sanctuary truths as they apply under the Judgment of the Dead, but also how they are to apply under the Judgment of the Living which was stealthily approaching. The message announced the imminent purification of the Church; the sealing of the 144,000; the ingathering of the “great multitude which no man can number” (Revelation 7:9); and the setting up of the kingdom in the land of promise.

Thus, the Davidian message, being much more powerful than the Adventist message, (as it also contains it) is depicted in this prophecy as dwelling at the daughter's “right hand,” while the weaker Adventist message is shown to dwell on her “left hand.”

A deeper look at the rest of this 16th chapter of Ezekiel will further elucidate the relationship between these three “sisters” (SDA, DSDA, and BDSDA) and their “mother” (the unbelieving Jews, some of whom are in Palestine), and will provide us with a means of restoration and unity by revealing to us the truth of our present situation, even though it may bring us to tears (Joel 2:12-18, Zech. 12:10-14). The prophecy continues –

“Yet hast thou [the “daughter” of Jerusalem – the Branch candidates] not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations: but, as if that were a very little thing, thou wast corrupted more than they in all thy ways.” verse 47.

From this verse we see that though the “daughter” of Jerusalem has not walked after their ways, nor done after the abominations, of “Samaria” or “Sodom,” she is said to have the worst record in that she “wast corrupted more than they in all thy ways.”

“As I live, saith the Lord God, Sodom [DSDA] thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters.” verse 48.

As Ben Roden correctly identified the DSDAs under Florence Houteff as “Sodom,” then her “daughters” would be all of the Davidian Associations which have been born, so to speak, from her basic foundation – which is a Davidian Association which is without a living prophet/president in her midst who is bringing forth “God’s ever unfolding Truth; ... a. true and up-to-date religion ... something as essential as the eyes in your head;” “fresh Truth for today from the throne of God, ... ‘meat in due season.’ ” All of the groups such as M. J. Bingham’s Bashan Hill, Don Adair’s South Carolina group, Wanda Blum’s Calimesa, California group, the Los Angeles group, the New York group, the Waco (old Mt. Carmel) group, etc., are depicted in this prophecy as the “daughters” of “Sodom.”

“Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom [DSDA], pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and

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committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.” verses 49, 50.

In Victor Houteff’s day, many Davidians were proud that they were proclaiming the message of the hour and were able to do so in the face of persecution from hard-hearted brethren, as was witnessed by the many testimonials which Victor published in the Symbolic Codes, and elsewhere. They had some reason for feeling such, for he said,

“Now we really are enriched with Truth if we have studied and assimilated what has been given us, for we have had made available to us the ‘gold that is tried in the fire’ that we might be rich, the ‘eyesalve’ that we ‘might see,’ and the ‘raiment’ with which we may be covered (Rev. 3), and the ‘extra oil’ that our way might be lighted (Matt. 25).” Symbolic Code, Vol. 11, No. 2, p. 11.

But, as “pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18), when he said that “we really are enriched with Truth,” many of them choose to overlook the condition given for such a standing – that being, “if we have studied and assimilated what has been given us.” Most prominent among those thing that were to be “studied and assimilated” was the fact that the message was going to be continually unfolding with fresh truth, as previously noted herein. In failing to accept this fundamental principle, especially after Victor Houteff died, most of the Davidians chose instead to shut themselves off from heaven’s open door to Truth by embracing a perversion of the words which follow those quoted directly above – that is,

“Therefore the Devil is not going to attack us where he attacked Laodiceans, but he will tell us that we are poor in Truth. He will do this in almost any way.” Symbolic Code, Vol. 11, No. 2, p. 11.

Thus, in saying that the Rod message was to be the last one to the church, and that anyone who professes to have any more new light is just the devil attempting to tell them that they are “poor in truth,” those Davidians who since Victor Houteff’s death have been rejecting the further unrolling

of the scroll have allowed that “pride” and “fullness of bread” to bring forth from them an “abundance of idleness.” The Hebrew word here translated “idleness” does not mean being lazy or slothful, but rather, being at “rest,” in “quietness.” It is used in connection with those who have been delivered from the outward foes and conflict. Therefore, the “abundance of idleness” speaks of their attitude of refusing to prayerfully investigate any new light (and specifically the Branch message) – their prideful resting in quietness in the bread they already have, saying that the Shepherd’s Rod message is the last to come.

There is still another condemnation against “Sodom” – that is, “neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.” Anyone who has read Ben Roden’s publications, such as <<<The Flying Roll>>> etc., should be aware of this aspect of the iniquities of “Sodom” (the DSDAs under Florence Houteff, et. al.) – that is, their theft of the 2nd tithe that was for the elderly, the poor, the sick, and the carrying forth of the message which was to sustain that missionary work.

Along with their not strengthening “the hand of the poor and needy,” it is written that “they were haughty, and committed abomination before me.” This haughtiness was revealed in both their appropriating the church funds to themselves by claiming those funds were theirs because of a “wage adjustment” they were due, and their denunciation of V. T. Houteff’s teachings.

Thus in verses 49 and 50 we see what happened to the Davidian leadership after Victor Houteff died – that God “took them away as [He] saw good” – and why He did so. But the Scriptures declare that the third sister has done worse than they.

“Neither hath Samaria [SDA] committed half of thy sins; but thou [BDSDA] hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done.

“Thou also, which hast judged [past tense] thy sisters [thou which has brought the Judgement of the Living message to the SDAs, and to the DSDAs] bear

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thine own shame for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they: they are more righteous than thou: yea, be thou confounded also, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters.” verses 51, 52.

Note that the Lord is not calling upon the SDA nor the DSDA to be accountable for the matter at hand, but for the Branches to hear the Lord’s testimony against them. Yet in doing this, the Adventists and Davidians are also reminded of their sins. The very fact that those bodies are portrayed in this chapter by the names “Samaria” and “Sodom” is an open rebuke to their unfaithfulness. The specific sins of “Samaria” are dealt with in many other places, as are those of “Sodom” that are not mentioned in this chapter. But, as we shall see in the remainder of this chapter, God is not going to gloss over any of the sins of His people, not even the very elect to whom the Covenant promises will be fulfilled.

Though the deeds of the “daughter” (The Branch candidates) have “justified” her “sisters,” they

have not excused them, nor atoned for them. Such is not the message of this chapter. The judgments pronounced upon the sins of the Adventists and Davidians are surely to fall on the unrepentant among them. But the condemnation against the Branches in this chapter speaks to the fact that because of their (our) sins, our “sisters” feel safe in their rebellion and stubbornness, and that is primarily what the Lord is complaining about here. That is, the abomination of the Branches, which are worse in the Lord’s eyes, have caused the Adventists and Davidians to rest in their carnal security, making it harder for the Lord to recover them from their errant ways.

What could the Branch candidates have done which the Lord would consider as being “worse” than the stealing of the 2nd tithe and the declaring Brother Houteff a false prophet by Florence Houteff and her associates (Sodom)? Or what have they been doing which is “worse” than the SDAs (Samaria) turning the grace of God into lasciviousness by rejecting the living Spirit of prophecy? What has been done by the very elect which would “justify” Sodom and Samaria in “all” of their abominations which the Branch messengers had so faithfully judged?

We have seen that the reason that the daughter’s (BDSDA’s) two sisters (SDA and DSDA) have, themselves, been disqualified from being the “daughter” in this chapter (she to whom the “everlasting covenant” will be made) is due to their unfaithfulness in regard to God’s work through the living Spirit of prophecy – the Testimony of Jesus. We have also seen that, due to a similar unbelief in God’s word, Abraham and Sarah are also portrayed in this chapter in an unflattering manner – that is, as an Amorite, and a Hittite, respectively.

Therefore, as this type of unfaithfulness is the theme of this chapter, the same must be true of the third sister, herself, but even on a greater scale, as we shall see. The following verses reveal one of the specific results of her unfaithfulness to the Spirit of prophecy within her, and why this sad state of affairs exists among the Branch candidates.

“For thy sister Sodom [DSDA] was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride, before thy wickedness was discovered, as at the time of thy reproach of the daughters of Syria, and all that are round about her, the daughters of the Philistines, which despise thee round about. Thou hast borne thy lewdness and thine abominations, saith the LORD.” verses 56-58.

The preceding verses point to the fact that “Sodom [DSDA] was not mentioned by thy mouth [prophet] in the day of thy pride.” Please note that the verb tense is not in the present tense when speaking of the time of her “pride” for it does not say, “for Sodom is not being mentioned by thy mouth” (present tense), but rather, “was not mentioned” (past tense). This means that there was a time (“the day of thy pride [excellency]” when our “mouth” (prophet) should have, apparently, “mentioned” our sister “Sodom” – DSDA, but for some reason did not or could not.

The word translated “pride” is also translated “excellency,” and “majesty.” The reading would then be, “in the day of thy excellency” (“majesty”). This time would then refer to the time of Lois Roden’s ministry, when her message was going throughout the English-speaking world by means of the printed page, radio and television, and she was receiving awards and commendations for her work.

Those who are familiar with Lois Roden's ministry during the time of the Branch's "excellency" know that she did not publish anything about the Davidian leadership's unfaithful and unlawful activities, nor the similar activities of her "daughters," as had Ben Roden. Though her message went widely over the English-speaking world, one who came in contact with it would not have readily known the movement's connection with "Sodom" (DSDA) by Lois' testimony in her literature, nor from the name she used on it.

The present truth lesson of this verse lies not in the fact of Lois' silence regarding "Sodom," but in the reason why she could not freely use the Association's full name on anything other than her Field Letters (which were sent mainly to those most active in the movement), and why she could not address the problems caused by Sodom's actions. It will be shown that the same root source of the troubles that existed during Lois' ministry, which was the reason why she couldn't mention "Sodom," is, today, fully blossoming and bearing all of the attending unsavory fruits.

Please take notice of the fact that it is not "thy m o u t h (prophet)" that is under condemnation here, but rather the whole of the "daughter" of Jerusalem (the ruling city), the third sister, and her daughters. The text speaks, repeatedly, of "thy" wickedness, "thy" reproach, etc., speaking of the "daughter," in general, and does not single out any one person or position. It most certainly does not condemn her "mouth."

According to the text, the wickedness of the third sister was not even fully "discovered" until the time of her "reproach," her shame, which is clearly after the time when "thy mouth" should have mentioned "Sodom." In other words, the text is not speaking of the "reproach" nor "wickedness" of the third sister's "mouth" for not having mentioned "Sodom," but, rather, it speaks of the shame of the third sister, herself, which was the cause of her "mouth" not mentioning "Sodom." That is, this text does not condemn Ben or Lois Roden, but, rather, all of the rest of the Branch candidates (Jerusalem, the city of David, the ruling city).

At times, the general leadership of God's people is represented by "Jerusalem," while the highest positions of the leadership are represented by the phrase "the house of David," as we read –

"The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah (the common church members) first, that the glory of the house of David (the highest leadership) and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem (the general leadership) do not magnify themselves against Judah." Zec. 12:7.

Thus, in this context, the third sister (the "daughter" of Jerusalem) in this prophecy, represents the general membership of the Branch, and not the highest office. As the Branch is to bring the fulfillment of the work which the Rod began (that being bringing forth the wavesheaf of the pure Loud Cry ministry), all of the Branch candidates are to be leaders, and thus are represented as "Jerusalem," the ruling city. Concerning Ben and Lois Roden, the following words are applicable.

"The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." Isaiah 57:1, 2.

So it has been with Ben and Lois Roden. They have been laid to sleep before the "evil" fully came to the Branch movement. Ben died about one year after Lois' received her vision of the feminine

Holy Spirit, and before his son, George, rose up against his mother's work and message that he had openly endorsed. There were other evils existing in the lives of the Branch candidates during the early years of Lois' ministry which were not manifestly known until later – at the time of the daughter's "reproach."

The fact that this text (Ezekiel 16:44-63) is now a most present truth is understood from the context established by the words, "before thy wickedness was discovered, as at the time of thy

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reproach of the daughters of Syria, and all that are round about her, the daughters of the Philistine, which despise thee round about."

In other words, there was a "wickedness" in the "daughter" which existed during the time when "thy mouth" should have "mentioned" "Sodom," but which was not "discovered" until a "reproach" came upon her ("modern Jerusalem") by the "daughters" of "Syria" and the "Philistines." Before we get into what exactly that "wickedness" was (is), we will need to learn what was her "reproach," and when it came, for it was then when her "wickedness was discovered."

Just as the names of the three sisters are symbolical, so are the names "Syria" and "Philistines." These names are not acquired due to a genealogical, nor geographical link, but rather because of their similar antagonistic relationship to the "daughter" in these verses, as their types had towards ancient Israel. As both names refer to heathen powers which were opposed to the presence of Israel, and which feared their growth, such would also be characteristics of the symbolical "daughters" of those powers.

Ben Roden has said, "The U.S. is Syria." Please read his study, *The Fall of Assyria and the Liberation of the Saints* for an explanation of this. While "Syria" represents a certain aspect of the U.S., the "Philistines" represent another – each having corresponding characteristics. The main distinguishing features of these two is their use of military-style force, and their antagonism against the true God and His laws. It was the Philistine, Goliath, who challenged the armies of Israel, and was defeated by David. Thus we need only look to a time when the U.S. ("the daughters of Syria," "the daughters of the Philistine") used the force of arms against the "daughter" of Jerusalem.

Most everyone seems to know of the infamy ("reproach") which has been brought upon the name of the Lord's church, The Branch, by the somewhat recent actions of Vernon Howell (a.k.a. David Koresh) and his followers in their conflict with the US government forces. Even though he, at first (1983-4), called his group "Davidian Branch Davidian Seventh-day Adventists," and who are now known as "Koreshians," the reproach ultimately came to fall on the whole Branch movement. This was not a mere coincidence, but rather was by design (see our presentation <<<The Warfare of Vernon Howell (a.k.a. David Koresh) and others against the Branch Davidian Seventh Day Adventists>>>).

There is no doubt but that the blood of many people is upon those former Branch "candidates," but they are not alone in bearing the guilt of the deaths and other abominations which have taken

place since Howell/Koresh first came to Mt. Carmel. This includes the infamy brought against names and works of Victor Houteff, Ben Roden, and Lois Roden, and, most importantly, Christ, The Branch, through the gross selfishness, negligence, and cruel indifference of the third sister and her daughters, both past and present.

It was after Lois' death that those apostate Branches who left the true movement to join with Vernon Howell unlawfully gained control of our property and identity by dropping their name and assuming ours, and by pretending that they were still members of the authentic BDSDA. Though those Koreshians were actually apostatized from the church at the time of the "reproach," they were still considered to be a part of her, just as the rebels of ancient Israel were also identified with her. That is, the sinners in Zion were always regarded as a part of Zion until they were fully cut off.

The heart of the matter regarding the "wickedness" of the "daughter" of Jerusalem lies not in what the Koreshians did to bring a reproach upon themselves and the Branch movement, but in why the Koreshians have been able to steal our identity and property, and thus bring a reproach our name and work. Other than those 15 or so former candidates for membership in the Branch church who left it to join with Howell/Koresh, what of the rest of the church? Did they do anything to prevent those apostates from usurping our name and property after Lois Roden died? If not, why not? If they did do something, what was it? What should they have done? Did they have any counsels on, or examples of, what to do in such a situation?

While we will learn the answers to those questions, what is most relevant to this matter is the answer to the questions, "What were, or are, they doing that was, and is, so bad that it justified our

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"sisters." That is, what is (was) the "wickedness" which was somewhat hidden in the "day of thy pride" (the day in which "thy mouth" should have mentioned Sodom), but has now been "discovered?" Ben Roden gave us the key to unlock this mystery –

"Outside of the two groups [two sisters – SDA and DSDA] of professed children of God, there is yet another group [a third sister – the "daughter" of Jerusalem – BDSDA] that is just as badly, if not worse deceived by Satan. This group represents those who profess to have the very latest knowledge and revealed truth. They make loud professions of believing the Spirit of Prophecy, the Shepherd's Rod, and some even profess to believe the Branch; but they go about establishing their own righteousness and eating their own bread (Isa. 4:1). Of this latter group Inspiration says,

"Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD.' Eze. 33:30.

"Yes they make loud claims of believing the truth, but they still put their private interpretations on the Scriptures saying, 'Look what the Lord has shown me. It just cannot be any other way.' When reminded that their ideas are not in harmony with the Spirit of prophecy, they just remark that they do not care what the Spirit of Prophecy says and refuse to give up their private opinions. This

class, unless there be a change made, will wind up going of on a tangent like the Yahwehs or Friday Sabbath or “the church is Babylon,” or one of the other delusions and finally wind up in the same place where Korah, Dathan, and Abiram found themselves. Think this over Brothers and Sisters, before you put an interpretation on a Scripture be sure it is harmony with the Spirit of Prophecy, lest you confuse others as well as yourself.

“And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.’ Eze. 33:31.

“These individuals come and sit in the congregation as God’s people and they hear the words of Inspiration but they will not do what they hear. They go after their covetousness – private interpretations. What they hear sounds good to them, but they are not about to do what they hear. V. 32.

[“And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song {message} of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument {the Bible}: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.” v. 32.]

” ‘AND WHEN THIS COMETH TO PASS, (LO, IT WILL [HAS] COME) THEN SHALL THEY KNOW THAT A PROPHET HATH BEEN AMONG THEM.’ v. 33.

“The very presence of this delusion of private interpretation among God’s people today proves that God has ONE, (not more) inspired interpreter. This evil of private interpretation has done more to disorganize, disrupt, and retard the progress of Truth than all the other evils put together. These so-called professors of Truth need to realize that they are not fighting for God but against Him.” The Atonement and Passover Feast, April 14, 1959, p. 9. [Brackets added]

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Another important principle that Ben pointed out at the time of the Davidian crisis right after Victor Houteff died was something that Ellen White said. Said principle is even more significant in regards to the wickedness of the Branch candidates after Ben and Lois’ death. That testimony is –

“If God abhors one sin above another, of which His people are guilty, it is doing nothing in case of an emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God.” Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 3, p. 281.

Therein lies another key to the answer of the question concerning what have the Branch candidates done which, in the Lord’s eyes, is “more abominable” than the transgressions of their sisters, and which causes the Lord to say that “they are more righteous than thou” – that is, “... doing nothing in case of an emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis ...” More on this follows hereafter. But, the real “wickedness” lies not in things that were done, or not done in this regards, but what was the cause of those things coming to pass. And that is what the first key we found relates to.

After Lois died, the Branch candidates were faced with the situation of having to seek the Lord for His direct guidance in their future, as that principle is at the heart of the message. The Davidian's were in a similar situation when Victor Houteff died in 1955. In the actual structure of the Church, the place of the active Spirit of Prophecy is that upon which the future existence of the Church hinges. That is, the president of the Church, in order to fill that position, must be specifically chosen by God, and endowed with the Spirit of Prophecy. Therefore, when Victor Houteff died it became incumbent upon the Davidians to seek God for light on what was happening, and for divine leadership in those trying times. But when Ben Roden was brought forth with just those needed things, the vast majority of Davidians rejected the very principle upon which the movement was based – that is,

“... without the living Spirit of Prophecy in our midst there can be no success in any revival and reformation, and the sooner we know it the quicker we shall achieve our goal. ” Timely Greetings, Vol. 1, No. 10, p. 27.

And,

“Here [in Isaiah 62:1] we are told that the Lord will continue thus to speak, not for the sake of the world, but for the sake of the church so that she may eventually stand on Mount Zion with the Lamb; that He will thus continue “until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.” Timely Greetings, Vol. 1, No. 42, p. 3

Consequently, when they rejected the Lord's leading through Ben Roden, the leadership of the Davidians folded as Ben had been moved to predict it would, and those who chose to still identify themselves as “Davidians” were splintered into numerous factions – all of which bring dishonor upon the very principle noted above because they know that their message teaches that there are not to be any divisions in the movement because God, Himself, is to lead it. The very fact that there are divisions among them testifies to the fact that they do not really believe the message, as they profess to. That is, the messages teaches,

“Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.” Isaiah 52:8.

The only way that the watchmen can “see eye to eye,” is to accept that fact that it is “the Lord” who is to “bring again Zion” – and that through the presence of the active Spirit of Prophecy. The point is not only one of the fundamental teaching in the Branch message, but is the very one which the body of the Branch candidates failed to accept and uphold, as had the Adventists and Davidians, who were their examples.

One of the things which Ben counseled the Davidians to do was to candidly investigate what he was teaching. Yet the vast majority trusted in their own understanding, or in the leadership of someone else, and refused to even give Ben a fair hearing, relying instead on rumors and false reports of what he was teaching. Even after the leadership of the movement folded up as Ben had

been predicting it would, in accordance with certain Bible prophecies, most of the Davidians still maintained their stubbornness and thus, by their actions, fulfilled the prophecy, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Luke 19:14. But, unfortunately, that was not the last time this error would be repeated.

What is different in the situation with the Branch candidates, and that which is considered "worse" in the Lord's eyes, is that though the Davidians (and the Adventists) refused to accept anyone else as being another inspired prophet, the Branch candidates actually accepted false prophets. They did this because they, as individuals, did not draw near enough to Lord to hear what He was saying. They chose, instead, to trust in some forceful man or woman who would do their thinking and praying for them.

Victor Houteff pointed out that very rarely did God ever have more than one prophet on the scene at one time, and at those times when He did, those prophets agreed with each other. Moses said,

"... would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!" Numbers 11:29

At most times when there were many prophets on the scene at any time, God still had only one in the position of leadership (such as in the times of Moses and Samuel). An exception to this is when Haggai and Zechariah were sent to aid in the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Another was in the early church after the day of Pentecost. But the church today has not yet reached the state where God can pour out the Spirit as He did on the early church. But as we shall see, some of the Branch candidates ran ahead of the Lord.

One of the reasons this occurred was because the message teaches that one has to have the Holy Spirit in order to understand the words of Inspiration. So those who embraced the message generally had some measure of the Spirit. But the problem was (is) that they couldn't, or wouldn't distinguish between a true moving of the Spirit, and their own brilliant flashes of thought. What makes this so bad is that the messages that they profess to believe (those brought forth by Ellen White, Victor Houteff, and Ben and Lois Roden) all warned against doing that very thing, especially in a time of crisis. To an outside observer it generally appeared that everybody in the Branch was in step with the message in this regards. But when the testing time came, the truth was soon revealed.

As this prophecy of Ezekiel 16 shows, the iniquity of the "daughter" of Jerusalem existed before it was "discovered, as at the time of thy reproach of the daughters of Syria, and all that are round about her, the daughters of the Philistines, which despise thee round about." Prior to that time, under Ben Roden's ministry, the iniquity was not so obvious. But as the scroll unrolled a "crisis" arose.

The first "emergency" – "religious crisis" – which arose in the Branch movement was after Lois began in earnest teaching of the femininity of the Holy Spirit. Christ's saying, "No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better" (Luke 5:39), certainly applies to all of those in the Branch movement at the time Lois began her work. It even took Ben Roden some months before the Holy Spirit was able to convict him of the truth of the matter. But with various others, the results were not the same.

Even after Lois had brought forth many proofs for her message, many of those associated with the

Branch movement refused to take the matter humbly before the Lord for a final conviction on the matter. Then there were others who accepted the truth of the femininity of the Holy Spirit, but rejected the messenger. Thus the movement suffered a splintering which should not have occurred had its professed believers, individually, taken the matter to the Lord as they had been asking others to do similarly with the Branch message. But the real breach came when Ben died, and there arose a dispute over the leadership. If the people were really in the Spirit, and the Spirit in them, as they believed or professed, this problem would not have arisen.

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Every one who had ever professed allegiance to the Branch message (and, thereby, to the work of Ben and Lois Roden), but who were “doing their own thing” during Lois’ ministry, and who, also, after her death, allowed the Association property and name to fall to Vernon Howell and his cohorts because of their following their desires to do things their own way, and because of their “indifference” and “neutrality,” have the Lord’s testimony in this chapter against them for they did little or nothing to prevent the situation from occurring. This attitude was not a new thing with them, but was somewhat hidden before the reproach came.

Brother Roden repeatedly chastised the Davidians for allowing Florence Houteff to disgrace Brother Houteff’s work and reputation, and urged them to put away their differences so that they could at least preserve the work that he had built up. But, as those who are familiar with the matter know, they refused to do it, and, as a result, the Association property, the Second Tithe, etc., fell into the hands of the devil. History has been repeated, only to a worst extent. God says that the Branch candidates have done “worse” than “Sodom” for they have had fair warning of the devil’s trap, and yet still failed to come up to the aid of the Lord when they were most needed. Confession and repentance are the only remedy.

Therefore, according to the Scriptures under discussion, the “wickedness” of all of those who refused to put away their private opinions and practices and come up to the aid of the Lord during Lois’ ministry (which was only later discovered) was the cause of Lois’ inability to mention “Sodom” as she should have, and would have liked to do.

One of the first evidences of this “wickedness” was when George tried to take things over after Ben died. Because many of the people, in all positions of the church, would not humble themselves and take the matter directly to the Lord, individually, and simply listen for the Lord’s voice in answer to their need, confusion and division ensued. This situation ended up in not only Lois having to take out a court injunction against George prohibiting him from acting as the president of the church, but also, later, when a crisis came upon the church through a change in the tax laws concerning the church property, George went into tax court by himself, instead of Lois going there with the aid of a knowledgeable lawyer, with the church being fully behind her in this.

The new tax law limited the exemption from the land taxes to one house and one acre of land to each “minister” living on the property. One of the legal exceptions in the new tax law was that if the extra land was being used for educational purpose, it was free from the taxes. But George did not use this defense until the case went to appeal, and thus it was not able to be considered, and he lost the case. Thus Mt.Carmel Center, ever since that time, has been wrongfully having taxes

charged on it. Howell/Koresh tried to take advantage of this situation by paying the new taxes when George wouldn't or couldn't, and then later claiming the property because he made those payments. Yet most all of the true Branch candidates stood by in "indifference and neutrality," doing nothing about this situation. This matter yet remains to be made right.

The same spirit was manifested by these same people in the time of most urgent crisis after her death, in failing to preserve the name and identity of the Association by their indifference to what was going on, and their just resting on their lees letting "George do it," are under a worse condemnation than Florence Houteff, or any backslidden DSDA or SDA minister. Should you Branch candidates doubt this, or think that this testimony is too hard, then you won't mind producing the proof to justify your actions from 1977-1986, and since Lois died.

Remember that all those who turned away at those times of crisis betrayed not only their own second tithe investment which was bound up in Mt. Carmel and in all of our in-print literature (and in the very Branch name and message itself) but everyone else's interests also. The only way for heaven's theocracy to be established and maintained on earth to be the mission of love that it is supposed to be is through the unity of the family members. There is now, and has always been only one Branch movement, and only one new name.

All of the problems that have existed in the three sisters (and their mother) are results of individuals failing to recognize and heed the Lord's living voice to the church, and instead listening to their own voice. No one is brought to following a false prophet without having first decided to ignore

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the Lord's voice in the true prophets. The false prophet (even if it is one's own self) is just a substitute for the Lord's living voice to the soul. Victor Houteff spoke on this principle in one of his studies on Jonah

"Jonah's whole experience could be a type of God's people with a message that they were to proclaim to the world. It could be a type of the duties God gave to His people and they, like Jonah, wanted to put it aside and 'let George do it,' so to speak.

"The purpose of this study is to help us all to see that Jonah's experience is a sign not only to the Jews in Christ's time but also to you and to me. Whom does Jonah represent by his running away? — Not the 144,000, for they do not run away. On the contrary, they 'follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth' (Rev. 14:4)." Symbolic Code, Vol. 11, No. 8, 7.

Though it is providential that people left many of their own duties for some one literally named "George" (George Roden) to do, "George," in Victor Houteff's context represents anyone but themselves. Thus, at the time when the Lord was calling people to come forward and stand by the side of His prophet, they stood off in the distance, expecting the Lord to call someone else to duty.

After the court order prohibiting George from acting as the president of the church came into effect, Lois was telling people not to support George financially. She did this because she knew

that George would not be able to support himself and his family as things were, without some help from her. She believed that she could thus control George's rebellious activities to a great extent. This was working at first. Yet even some of Lois' own supporters, and other Branch candidates, still gave George money which helped him to continue his warfare against his mother's message and leadership. Thus people saw the results of their letting "George do it."

Shortly before Lois died she told people that George had a right to some of the 2nd tithe in order for him to maintain Mt. Carmel Center, for he remained one of the original trustees of the property. Yet after she died, people failed in this regards, and George ended up renting out some of the houses to people of questionable practices and characters in order to get some money.

Thus, due to the divisions which were caused by the shaking brought forth by the resistance to the living Spirit of Prophecy, the following Scripture has been fulfilled –

"And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." Isaiah 1:8, 9.

The holy Scriptures also reveal the number left in the church after the shaking that occurs during the Judgment of the Living.

"Yet gleanings shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the LORD God of Israel." Isaiah 17:6.

In the year before Lois' death, there were only "two or three" people active in fellowship in the Branch in Waco. That was Lois, myself, and another brother who was on the outskirts of the movement. At that same time, there were only "four or five" others elsewhere who were still actively working with Lois, though many others professed to believe the Branch messages. Many of the former Branch candidates returned to their former fellowships, went off on their own, went back into the world, or became part of one of

THE "DAUGHTER" OF JERUSALEM'S "DAUGHTERS"

This chapter also points out that not only is the third sister, herself, under condemnation, but that her "daughters" are also rebuked therein. But their sins are not specifically pointed out, as are those of their mother (the "daughter" of Jerusalem). But the magnitude of their sins is the same in the

Lord's eyes. The most notable "daughters" of the Branch movement which are under condemnation here are Teresa Moore's The Lord's of Sabbaoth, Our Righteous Branches, Charles Pace's The BRANCH, The LORD (YHVH) Our Righteousness (originally named, Living Waters Branch Our Righteousness).

Why would any of these people or groups ("daughters") be under condemnation? Because they

are departing from some of the most fundamental teachings of The Branch. One of the most obvious departures of the above-mentioned “daughters” (Teresa Moore, and Charles Pace) is seen in the names of their organizations. These two are pointed out here because they profess to accept all of Lois’ message, whereas who could be mentioned stopped short and veered of the path of unfolding truth somewhere along the way.

Victor Houteff has said the following regarding the name, “Davidian Seventh Day Adventists,” and how every major new doctrine brings a new name to the movement:

“Let us not neglect to note, too, that the name of a people is not really a name but a title. And titles, you know, change as fast as Truth unfolds, as fast as Truth advances from one phase of the gospel work to another. ...

“As we are now living in the time of The Revelation, in the time of the unfolding of the prophecies which point to the setting up of the Kingdom as well as to the second advent of Christ, the Church at this time, therefore, could not logically go by a name other than a name which would befit her present (advanced) phase of the gospel work.

“Plainly, then, her name must express the truths she advocates: that is, the keeping of the commandments, the second advent of Christ, and also the restoration of the Davidian Kingdom according to prophecy. Hence the logical name that would represent her work from this time down to the time the Kingdom is set up, is to be Davidian Seventh-day Adventists, — a name that testifies of the Kingdom message, of keeping the commandments of which the seventh-day Sabbath is a part, and of the second advent of Christ.

“Now you see that every additional timely Truth brings an additional timely name. And you who have not been baptized in the name of the Church, but in the name of Christ through the Truth of the Spirit, you who are not tied to any man, but to Christ, cannot help going on with the Spirit of Prophecy Who unfolds the Truth and names Its people.” 2 Timely Greetings, p. 23-25.

“Provisional in set-up as well as in name, the Davidian Seventh-day Adventist Association exists solely to accomplish a divinely appointed work within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, wherein it therefore strictly confines its activities. As its work therewithin draws to a close, and the ‘servants of our God’ (Rev. 7:3) are sealed, its name will be changed (Isa. 56:5; 62:2; 65:15) and its purpose and its work will become all-embracing to the gospel (Matt. 17:11; Acts 3:21, Isa. 61:4-7). Then its Constitution and By-Laws as herein codified will become fully operative.” Preface, The Leviticus of D.S.D.A.

Therein we see that Victor Houteff anticipated the Association receiving “an additional timely name” which, according to his own teachings on the reasons for such name changes, also anticipated the introduction of “an additional timely Truth.” After Victor Houteff’s death, and as the scroll of truth continued to unroll, more specific light on the name of the remnant church came. As previously quoted, Victor Houteff said that,

“Hence the logical name that would represent her work from this t i m e down to the time the Kingdom is set up, is to be Davidian Seventh-day Adventists.”

In light of this statement, and the one from the Preface of The Leviticus that the Davidian Association’s “name will be changed” at a certain point in time (that being “[a]s its work therewithin

[in the SDA denomination] draws to a close, and the “servants of our God” ... are sealed”), we must look at some of the Bible types and prophecies which relate to the time when the

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Davidic kingdom is set up, and those also which relate to that which constitutes the seal, in order to understand this matter.

According to the type, David’s kingdom was set up upon his personal anointing (1 Samuel 16:13), before he was made king in Hebron over the tribe of Judah (2 Samuel 2:4-11), and even before he was made king over all of Israel (1Ch 11:1-9). According to the prophecies, the latter-day Davidic kingdom begins in the same way.

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.” Hosea 2:14, 15.

As the ancient Davidic kingdom began in the wilderness with the anointing of David, so, likewise, the latter day kingdom also begins in the “wilderness,” with the impartation of the Spirit of Prophecy to God’s chosen servant whereby God speaks “comfortably” to His people, and gives them the kingdom (vineyard) “from thence.” The verses which follow those quoted above shed more light on the timing of the setting up of the kingdom, the naming of His people, and the reason the change takes place –

“And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.” Hosea 2:16, 17.

Victor Houteff explains the verses of Hosea 2:14-17 as follows:

“Having brought her into as strait and embarrassing circumstances as one can be in, God promises to allure her, and to bring her into the wilderness, there to speak comfortably to her. Specifically speaking, having emerged from the ‘great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world’ (Matt. 24:21), God brings her, not into her vineyard, not in the Promised Land, but into the ‘wilderness’ (into the lands of the Gentiles), there to speak comfortably to her, and to help her reform. After this comforting meeting takes place she is to have her vineyards from thence, and the Valley of Achor for a door of hope; there she is to sing and rejoice as in the days of her youth, and as in the day she came out of Egypt.

“The Valley of Achor, you note, is her door of hope — it is the only way out of her predicament. The valley has but one significance: it stands for a thorough purging, for destroying the sinners that are in her midst before possessing the land — her only hope of becoming a decent, respectable wife of God.

“It was in the Valley of Achor that Joshua stoned the last of the sinners in Israel — Achan and his household. Then it was that the Israelite nation was permitted to take the promised land, the

vineyard. Just such a purging as this is the church's only "door of hope," says Inspiration, her only escape from her present plight. Then she is to return to her former position and grace. Then she is to receive the promised blessing as verily as ancient Israel received hers. That remarkable incident in the Valley of Achor is now seen to typify the purging for the repossession of the promised land — typifying the Judgment for the Living, the gathering of the saints, and the destruction of the sinners — the separation of the wheat from the tares, the goats from the sheep, the good fish from the bad fish. The "barn" (Matt. 13:30), connotes the Kingdom here projected as does the Lord's right, and as do the vessels.

"Hos. 2:16 — 'And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call Me Ishi; and shalt call Me no more Baali.'

"Yes, rather than be her lord, God is indeed to be her husband, for one can have lords many, but only one husband.

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"Hos. 2:17 — 'For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.'

"The names of Baalim are significant of persons possessing selfish characters such as Balaam's — TEACHERS OF RELIGION, PROPHETS WHO WOULD RATHER CURSE ISRAEL THAN LOSE THE OPPORTUNITY OF MONETARY GAIN, OR OF SOME OTHER FOOLISH, SELFISH PROMOTION THAT EXALTS AND FLATTERS. Such shall then no longer be known by their lordly, high and exalted titles." Timely Greetings, Vol. 2, No. 21, p. 12, 13.

Thus we see that it is in the "wilderness" where the relationship of the church to God changes when a work similar to that done upon Achan in the valley of Achor is done for the church in the time of the "Judgment for the Living." It is then that the church receives her name change because it is then that she is to call God her "husband," and then is to be called by His name, and not hers any longer.

"She shall then no longer call Him 'my Lord,' but rather 'my Husband' (margin). The relationship of a husband being closer than that of a lord it denotes an elevation to a more intimate connection and walk with God. And that this elevation is the direct result of reformation, is evidenced in the words:

"'For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.' Hos. 2:17." The Latest News for "Mother", p. 38.

"Hos. 2:16 — 'And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call Me Ishi; and shalt call Me no more Baali.'

“So it is that after the hypocrites and sinners are taken out of the way, the church shall no longer call the Saviour Baali (Lord), but she shall call him Ishi (Husband). The significance is that then He will truly be her husband, whereas now He is to her as it were only some great personality.”Timely Greetings, Vol. 2, No. 6, p. 23.

Thus we see that when the Judgment for the Living opens, and the work of cleansing the congregation takes place, the church is to receive a new name which is reflective of her change in relationship to God – that being that He has become her husband, and she, therefore, takes His name. Consider also that Jacob had his name changed before he reached home, and when he was stopped short in his wrestling with the Angel that came to bless him (speak “comfortably” to him).

Shortly after Victor Houteff’s death in February of 1955, Ben Roden was called to bear a message to the Davidian leadership (Florence Houteff, et. al.). At the heart of the message was the introduction of Christ’s new name, The Branch; the change of the church’s name to Christ’s new name; that the judgment for the living was in the process of opening; and that that leadership would have to yield up the reins of the Church to the living Spirit of Prophecy, or suffer great loss. That which Victor Houteff had said would come to pass in the Judgment for the Living then occurred – that is, those who came under the classifications related above in Timely Greetings, Vol. 2, No. 21, p. 12, 13 fell away into their own traps.

For more on this, as it relates to the Davidian leadership, please see Ben’s study, <<<The Flying Roll>>>

We have seen some of what Victor Houteff had to say about the name of the Church, and following are some of Ben Roden’s clear teachings on the name change. Note that because of the circumstances involved in the name change, Ben’s teachings supersede those of Victor Houteff’s because they bring to fruition Victor’s teaching:

“V.T. Houteff says: ‘Whatever the ‘new name’ may be, one thing is certain – the name will not imply that there is another church of its kind. And as there

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has never been a church similar in character to the one here projected, the name is to be not only singular of its kind, but entirely befitting the church in her righteousness.’ – Timely Greetings, Vol. 1, No. 42 (Unrevised), p. 15.

” ‘... Whatever that new name may be, we are sure it will be perfect to finish the picture of probationary time, as well as to indicate the end of all the redeemed, or close of probation ...’ The Shepherd’s Rod, Vol. 1., pp. 233, 234.

“V. T. Houteff said that he did not know what the new name of Jesus was, but there was one thing for sure, that when the new name should come it would be a six letter word and would be sufficient to finish the picture of probationary time. In other words, the name of the church was changed several times to teach Present Truth up to that time. But now that the new name of Jesus

has come, the name of God's true church is changed to MESSIAH'S NEW NAME and IT WILL NEVER BE CHANGED AGAIN since she (the church) is called by the Son of God's NEW NAME; 'the BRANCH' shall 'grow up unto David' 'in the land ... and ... She shall be called The Lord our Righteousness.' Jer. 33:15, 16." Seven Letters to Florence Houteff, Ben L. Roden (1955) pp. 114, 115.

"These few statements are plain and simple enough aren't they? No one will have any trouble understanding that the church name will be changed from Davidian Seventh-day Adventists to BRANCH. This is so plain the little ones will have no trouble understanding it. The Lord sure used Brother Houteff to make things clear to us. This must be why He called the Rod message the 'latter rain' because it is so simple and easy to understand. Dear ones, the mouth of the Lord gave the BRANCH message its name. Man did not name it. Was this name accidental or incidental? It is providential. There are statements just as enlightening as these . . .

"The Branch is to be the name of God's church which brings the close of probation. Instead of Christian, or some other name, the Kingdom church throughout the world will be BRANCH – Praise ye the Lord." Ibid., pp. 63, 64.

"Inspiration is here saying that the last section of the church is called The Branch, in the time in which Israel and Judah are saved. The Branch, therefore, means salvation to them . . ." Ibid., p. 85.

"Branch (Christ) is the only name that can save your soul. If you hang on to any other name you will be like a war prisoner with a dead man strapped to his back." Ibid., p. 119.

Despite the fact that Ben Roden said that "now that the new name of Jesus has come, the name of God's true church is changed to MESSIAH'S NEW NAME and IT WILL NEVER BE CHANGED AGAIN since she (the church) is called by the Son of God's NEW NAME," both Teresa and Charlie have adopted new names for their organizations which they claim are the rightful successors to The Branch. Note that neither of the names of Teresa's or Charlie's groups are "the Son of God's NEW NAME," thereby signifying a marriage relationship to Him. Also, neither of those names are of Biblical origin, and thus not given by the "mouth" of the Lord.

Add to this the fact that Brother Houteff taught that only one name change was to occur in the Davidian Association, and that that new name would be given by the "mouth" of the Lord, and you can see that these uninspired "new names" are just vain idols of self-exaltation. And, finally, consider the fact that there is absolutely no word in any prophet's writings, either in the Bible or the "golden bowl," that there was to be another name change after the new name of the church has been given.

Though Lois published the first phase of her message under the name Living Waters (or, sometimes, Living Waters Branch) she also published tracts under the name Universal Publishing

(this is one name which Brother Houteff used), and never changed the Association's one and only name. The only thing that was ever predicted to occur to the name "Branch Davidian Seventh-day Adventists" was that the names "Davidian," and "Seventh-day Adventist" would be dropped because the work within those bodies would be finished, as we see from the following –

"The names Davidian and Seventh-day Adventist which this Association, Branch, inherits from the parent denomination, Davidian Seventh-day Adventist Association, is provisional and only for the duration of its work within the parent denominations, Davidian Seventh-day Adventists and Seventh-day Adventists." The Leviticus of Davidian Seventh-day Adventists, The Branch Supplement, p. 5.

Ben Roden clearly taught that there was only one Branch church. Is Christ, the Branch, divided? No!

This situation sheds light on one aspect of why the Lord says,
"Sodom [DSDA under Florence Houteff] thy sister hath not done, she nor
her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters."

That is, at their worst, neither the Adventists nor the Davidians had so abandoned the true identity of their organizations as to allow and cause such confusion to come in among them as these two professed Branch believers, those with them, and those who have been indifferent to what has been going on, have done in adopting new names for their groups in order to draw people after them, and in allowing Vernon Howell (a.k.a., David Koresh) to steal the name and identity of the Church. Of course, one would think that these name changes were done for the purpose of separating themselves from the "curse" brought upon the name "Branch Davidian" by the Koreshians. But as this chapter of Ezekiel shows, the "wickedness" of these people when they were a part of the "daughter" of Jerusalem (The Branch), was, eventually, to be "discovered." That "wickedness" is revealed in the fact that they would rather adopt new names for their groups than preserve the true Association's name and identity after Lois died. That is, they were, and are, more interested in their own ways and identity than that of the church they profess to have had an allegiance to.

Thus it was the sins of the people that were the real reason why Lois (our "mouth" – piece) could not rightly mention "Sodom." Those who composed the "daughter" of Jerusalem were more interested in themselves than in the Lord. Not only this, but as in Moses' day when in battle against the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8-13), there were times when Lois needed to have her hands held up or the battle would turn for the worst. This even applied to Lois' personal life. Many were weakening her either by flattery or rebellion. Thus it came to pass that in her time of greatest need, when the enemy was attacking her through Vernon Howell, that there were few to help her. It is written,

"Surely oppression maketh a wise man [or woman] mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart."
Ecclesiastes 7:7

The seeds of those sins which the Branch professors were committing during Lois' ministration

developed into their becoming “daughters” after her death when they became separate women – churches – with different names. More can be said on the current state of things, and most specifically relating to the work of the living Spirit of Prophecy, and the rejection thereof, as prophesied in Luke 19:14 –

“But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, ‘We will not have this man to reign over us.’ ”

CLOSING TESTIMONY ON JOHN 6:63-67

“By the public rebuke of their unbelief these disciples were still further alienated from Jesus. They were greatly displeased, and wishing to wound the Saviour and gratify the malice of the Pharisees, they turned their backs upon Him, and left Him with disdain. They had made their choice,—had taken the form without the

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spirit, the husk without the kernel. Their decision was never afterward reversed; for they walked no more with Jesus.

“ ‘Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner.’ Mt 3:12. This was one of the times of purging. By the words of truth, the chaff was being separated from the wheat. Because they were too vain and self-righteous to receive reproof, too world-loving to accept a life of humility, many turned away from Jesus. Many are still doing the same thing. Souls are tested today as were those disciples in the synagogue at Capernaum. When truth is brought home to the heart, they see that their lives are not in accordance with the will of God. They see the need of an entire change in themselves; but they are not willing to take up the self-denying work. Therefore they are angry when their sins are discovered. They go away offended, even as the disciples left Jesus, murmuring, ‘This is an hard saying; who can hear it?’ [Joh 6:60]

“Praise and flattery would be pleasing to their ears; but the truth is unwelcome; they cannot hear it. When the crowds follow, and the multitudes are fed, and the shouts of triumph are heard, their voices are loud in praise; but when the searching of God’s Spirit reveals their sin, and bids them leave it, they turn their backs upon the truth, and walk no more with Jesus.

“As those disaffected disciples turned away from Christ, a different spirit took control of them. They could see nothing attractive in Him whom they had once found so interesting. They sought out His enemies, for they were in harmony with their spirit and work. They misinterpreted His words, falsified His statements, and impugned His motives. They sustained their course by gathering up every item that could be turned against Him; and such indignation was stirred up by these false reports that His life was in danger.

“The news spread swiftly that by His own confession Jesus of Nazareth was not the Messiah. And thus in Galilee the current of popular feeling was turned against Him, as, the year before, it had been in Judea. Alas for Israel! They rejected their Saviour, because they longed for a conqueror

who would give them temporal power. They wanted the meat which perishes, and not that which endures unto everlasting life.

“With a yearning heart, Jesus saw those who had been His disciples departing from Him, the Life and the Light of men. The consciousness that His compassion was unappreciated, His love unrequited, His mercy slighted, His salvation rejected, filled Him with sorrow that was inexpressible. It was such developments as these that made Him a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” *The Desire of Ages*, p. 392, 393.

Such it has been the case in the continual unrolling of the scroll in the Advent movement. Christ and the Holy Ghost have been afflicted with inexpressible grief over the course of Their people. It is only by God’s great mercy that the meek of the earth may raise their heads to look to the soon coming time when will be fulfilled the promise,

“I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

“In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.” Zechariah 12:10-14.

“The work which the church has failed to do in a time of peace and prosperity, she will have to do in a terrible crisis, under most discouraging, forbidding, circumstances. The warnings that worldly conformity has silenced or withheld, must be given under the fiercest opposition from enemies of the faith. And at that time the superficial, conservative class, whose influence has steadily retarded the progress

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of the work, will renounce the faith, and take their stand with its avowed enemies, toward whom their sympathies have long been tending. These apostates will then manifest the most bitter enmity, doing all in their power to oppress and malign their former brethren, and to excite indignation against them. This day is just before us. The members of the church will individually be tested and proved. They will be placed in circumstances where they will be forced to bear witness for the truth. Many will be called to speak before councils and in courts of justice, perhaps separately and alone. The experience which would have helped them in this emergency they have neglected to obtain, and their souls are burdened with remorse for wasted opportunities and neglected privileges.” *Testimonies For the Church*, vol. 5, p. 463.

“Unmoved in the Shaking Time

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may

serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Heb.

12:28.

“Those who accept Christ, and in their first confidence say, I am saved, are in

danger of trusting to themselves. They lose sight of their own weakness and their constant need of divine strength. They are unprepared for Satan’s devices. . . . Our only safety is in constant distrust of self, and dependence on Christ.

“Man’s great danger is in being self-deceived, indulging self-sufficiency, and thus separating from God, the source of his strength.

“The Lord is coming very soon, and we are entering into scenes of calamity.

“We need not say: The perils of the last days are soon to come upon us. Already they have come. We need now the sword of the Lord to cut to the very soul and marrow of fleshly lusts, appetites, and passions.

“Minds that have been given up to loose thought need to change. . . . The thoughts must be centered upon God. Now is the time to put forth earnest effort to overcome the natural tendencies of the carnal heart.

“As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel’s message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position, and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren.

“We are in the shaking time, the time when everything that can be shaken will be shaken. The Lord will not excuse those who know the truth if they do not in word and deed obey His commands.” *The Faith I Live By*, p, 336-7.

For the current time this will suffice for this presentation of the matter. Regardless of what one may think, the remnant church – the overall Advent movement – is well prophesied of in the whole Bible, in all aspects of her existence – good, bad, or indifferent – as we have seen. In her glory, and in her dishonor.

Yet, regardless of the fact that many of those who are members of this dysfunctional family (the three sisters and their mother) have been walking in the fires that they themselves have kindled by the sparks that have come from their own imaginations (Isaiah 50:11), God is going to bring forth the faithful remnant as a brand plucked out of the fire. Thus the separation brought by the shaking will be complete, and God’s pure ministry will be brought forth in glory.

“And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” Zechariah 3:2.

To do this that remnant must accept the one wind that comes from the “four winds of heaven” to

resurrect them (Ezekiel 37:9-11).

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“...this simile of the dry bones appl[ies]... to those who have been blessed with great light; for they... are like the skeletons of the valley. They have the form of men, the framework of the body; but they have not spiritual life. ...The dead are often made to pass for the living; for those who are working out what they term salvation after their own ideas, have not God working in them to will and to do of His good pleasure. THIS CLASS IS WELL REPRESENTED BY THE VALLEY OF BONES EZEKIEL SAW IN VISION. Those who have had committed to them the TREASURES of TRUTH, and yet who are DEAD i n trespasses and sins, need to be CREATED ANEW in Christ Jesus.” Review and Herald Jan. 17, 1893, as found in the SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 4, p. 1165,1166.

“Our faith is to have a resurrection....We need the breath of the divine life breathed into us.” Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 8, p. 45, 46.

So let it be, Lord. Doug Mitchell

THE BRANCH

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