

Last Day Events

The Overwhelming Surprise

All these things must come to pass but the end is not yet
This is the beginning of sorrows

The Lord, in his great mercy, does not bring judgments upon the earth without giving warning to its inhabitants by the mouth of his servants. Says the prophet Amos, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Amos 3:7 4SP 208.2

Let us show the people where we are in prophetic history. LDE 16.3

God has always revealed major events to come through His prophets, especially when the event involves the well-being of His children. The events portrayed in Matthew 24:6-8, and further explained in the writings of Ellen White in such terms as "an overwhelming surprise", and "a great storm", are major events and they deeply involve the well-being of God's children. It is a life and death matter not only for Christians but for all who live in the cities. The prophecy reveals terrible destruction coming very soon to our major cities and a war is clearly connected with the destruction. Every evidence is that it will be a world-wide war which will leave a very different world -- prepared for the Antichrist who promises peace.

Prophecy describes this great event coming as a surprise, coming sooner than God's people expected. "We knew that the judgments of God were coming upon the earth, but we did not know that they would come so soon." ChS 111.3 It is evident, then, that these judgments will come contrary to the expectations of even God's people.

Among thinking Christians and people of the world there is a growing apprehension about the future, and a foreboding of trouble. Nature is going out of control and war appears imminent with the Muslims openly threatening destruction to our large cities. These are events which most Adventists expected after the Sunday law. We are as a man lost in the fog unless God's Word sheds light on both the events just before us and our own true spiritual condition. "The people must not be left to stumble their way along in darkness, not knowing what is before them, and unprepared for the great issues that are coming." 3SM 389.1

Dear friends, this prophecy is a message of judgments that will come to both the world and God's people. We are in the Day of Atonement, the day of both justice and mercy. We have all appreciated God's mercy, but do we accept and appreciate His justice? To truly accept the message of this prophecy means more than to accept and act on God's counsel to move out of

the cities to avoid destruction. It means to accept a testing, purging process through which God must send us to perfect His character in us. This is the very essence of the experience of the three angels' messages. It means abandoning the idea of getting ourselves into a comfortable position in life. For the most part God's real soldiers have been found in the mountains instead of down in the plains where everything is convenient. It means to accept God's requirements, His discipline and His leading without murmuring.

Israel failed to accept this process in His dealings with them in their wilderness journey, and they failed to go into the Promised Land. As a people we have not accepted this process in our wilderness wandering since 1888. Few men enter this school by choice in their private life, but God will soon provide the occasion for us all to enter this school through judgments soon to come. "Tribulation will come of a character that will drive to God all who wish to be His, and His alone. Until tested and proved in the furnace of trial, we do not know ourselves." 6T 396.3 This is God's primary purpose in bringing judgment upon the earth for the honest at heart.

The premise for this study is Matthew 24:6-10 with supporting statements from the Spirit of Prophecy. Three different periods of judgment are portrayed. The first in sequence of time is distinguished as wars and rumors of wars with earthquakes, famines, and pestilence. The second and third periods of judgment are described in the following quote. The second is during the loud cry and the third occurs during the time of the plagues. "At the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully. . . . The commencement of that 'time of trouble,' here mentioned does not refer to the time when the plagues shall begin to be poured out, but to a short period just before they are poured out, while Christ is in the sanctuary. At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel. At that time the "latter rain," or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out." {EW 85-86} This study focuses on the first period of judgment.

Neither in Scripture nor the Spirit of Prophecy does the Lord lay out the last day events as A, B, C, D, Etc. We are dependent on the Lord's presence to gather and correctly understand them. May the Lord lead your mind as you read the following statements and place them to the test, not according to your own understanding, but according to the intent of the One who inspired them.

If you ask the average Adventist what he understands to be the next prophetic event in the world, he will usually answer, "The Sunday Law."

As you study this subject, I suggest you look back in sacred history and ask yourself, "How many times has prophecy been fulfilled as even God's children expected?"

- The prophecy given to Abraham of the promised land and the promise of a son,
- The Exodus of the Children of Israel,
- The coming of the Messiah,
- The fulfillment of the 2300-year prophecy.

Each event as it unfolded, tested God's people to the core. This is the picture presented in the following statements.

All These Things Must Come to Pass But The End is Not Yet

Matthew 24:6-10 "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. (7) For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. (8) All these are the beginning of sorrows. (9) Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. (10) And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another."

How many times have you, like myself, read these verses and never really noticed the words, "All these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet...these are the beginning of sorrows."? The next word, "Then", sequences the next event -- persecution. First come wars and rumors of wars, nation rising against nation, then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations. We, as Adventists, know this time of persecution comes after the Sunday laws, but clearly these wars come before the persecution. Notice the wording in the following statements such as, "even before the great destruction", "shortly to precede the great day of the Lord", etc. communicating the same message as in Matthew 24:6-8.

"We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. The Lord is at the door. Upon the Mount of Olives the Saviour rehearsed the scenes that were to precede this great event: "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars," he said. "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." While these prophecies received a partial fulfillment at the destruction of Jerusalem, they have a more direct application in the last days." LDE 18 Note that persecution is not the beginning of sorrows. The beginning of sorrows are wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes.

“Calamity of War.--We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Prophecies are fulfilling. Strange and eventful history is being recorded in the books of heaven--events which it was declared should shortly precede the great day of God. Everything in the world is in an unsettled state. The nations are angry, and great preparations for war are being made. Nation is plotting against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. The great day of God is hastening greatly. But although the nations are mustering their forces for war and bloodshed, the command to the angels is still in force that they hold the four winds until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.--Ms 117, 1908.” {3MR 313.1}

“The time is right upon us when there will be sorrow in the world that no human balm can heal. Even before the last great destruction comes upon the world, the flattering monuments of man's greatness will be crumbled in the dust. God's retributive judgments will fall on those who in the face of great light have continued in sin. Costly buildings, supposed to be fireproof, are erected. But as Sodom perished in the flames of God's vengeance, so will these proud structures become ashes. I have seen vessels which cost immense sums of money wrestling with the mighty ocean, seeking to breast the angry billows. But with all their treasures of gold and silver, and with all their human freight, they sank into a watery grave.... But amid the tumult of excitement, with confusion in every place, there is a work to be done for God in the world.” {Mar 175.4}

“Soon grievous troubles will arise among the nations--trouble that will not cease until Jesus comes. As never before we need to press together, serving Him who has prepared His throne in the heavens and whose kingdom ruleth over all. God has not forsaken His people, and our strength lies in not forsaking Him.” {Mar 25.3}

“Brethren, we are far behind in our missionary work, both at home and in foreign countries. We are a people who claim to believe solemn and sacred truth, and our works in proclaiming the truth should correspond to our profession. Great trouble will soon arise among the nations, which will not cease until Jesus comes. The world is becoming more and more lawless. The churches are united in their efforts to restrict religious liberty. What are we as a people doing in this crisis? Are we purifying our souls by obedience to Christ's words? Are we humbling our hearts before God, and confessing our sins? Are we seeking with earnestness and contrition of soul Him who is the source of our strength? Are we claiming the promises, believing that Jesus pardons our transgressions and forgives our sins? Are we educating ourselves to overcome all temptation to murmur and complain?” {13MR 329.1}

“Soon grievous troubles will arise among the nations, troubles that will not cease until Jesus comes. . . . The judgments of God are in the land. The wars and rumors of wars, the destruction by fire and flood, say clearly that the time of trouble, which is to increase until the end, is very near at hand. We have no time to lose. The world is stirred with the spirit of war.” PH120 11.2 Again, notice that once the sorrows begin they go straight through to the end.

“I was shown the inhabitants of the earth in the utmost confusion. War, bloodshed, privation, want, famine, and pestilence were abroad in the land. As these things surrounded God's people, they began to press together, and to cast aside their little difficulties. Self-dignity no longer controlled them; deep humility took its place. Suffering, perplexity, and privation caused reason to resume its throne, and the passionate and unreasonable man became sane, and acted with discretion and wisdom.

“My attention was then called from the scene. There seemed to be a little time of peace. Once more the inhabitants of the earth were presented before me; and again everything was in the utmost confusion. Strife, war, and bloodshed, with famine and pestilence, raged everywhere. Other nations were engaged in this war and confusion. War caused famine. Want and bloodshed caused pestilence. And then men's hearts failed them for fear, ‘and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.’ 1T 268.1,2

Some have suggested that the two times of war shown in vision refer to World War I and World War II. It is important to note the first war in this quote caused God's people to press together, self-dignity no longer controlled them, deep humility took its place, suffering, perplexity and privation [obviously caused by war and disasters] caused reason to resume its throne, etc. This has yet to happen; we have not had a war which has had this effect upon God's people. Then comes a little time of peace.

We know that there must be a relative time of peace during the Loud Cry because men are pre-occupied with self preservation during war. “At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel.” EW 85.3

The next war described is obviously at the very end of time because men's hearts are failing them for fear for those things which are coming on the earth.

The troubles which come upon the earth that will not cease till Jesus comes begin with the first war, but during the Loud Cry all indications are that they are the result of nature being out of control. God's children are not blamed for war, but they are blamed for natural disasters. It is still a time of trouble, but not because of war. “For nation shall rise against nation, ... Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.” Matthew 24:7, 9 This is the period when God arises in His majesty to shake terribly the earth.

“The substitution of the laws of men for the law of God, the exaltation, by merely human authority, of Sunday in place of the Bible Sabbath, is the last act in the drama. When this substitution becomes universal, God will reveal Himself. He will arise in His majesty to shake terribly the earth. He will come out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity, and the earth shall disclose her blood and shall no more cover her slain.” {7T 141.1}

The following statement is very significant in light of the foregoing statements, and shows the same sequence of events.

“December 16, 1848, the Lord gave me a view of the shaking of the powers of the heavens. I saw that when the Lord said "heaven," in giving the signs recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, He meant heaven, and when He said "earth," He meant earth. The powers of heaven are the sun, moon, and stars. They rule in the heavens. The powers of earth are those that rule on the earth. The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then the sun, moon, and stars will be moved out of their places. They will not pass away, but be shaken by the voice of God. {CET 111.1}

“Dark heavy clouds came up, and clashed against each other. The atmosphere parted and rolled back; then we could look up through the open space in Orion, whence came the voice of God. The holy city will come down through that open space. I saw that the powers of earth are now being shaken, and that events come in order. War, and rumors of war, sword, famine, and pestilence are first to shake the powers of earth, then the voice of God will shake the sun, moon, and stars, and this earth also. I saw that the shaking of the powers in Europe is not, as some teach, the shaking of the powers of heaven, but it is the shaking of the angry nations.” {CET 111.2}

Inspiration gives the sequence of events very clearly and they come in order. War with its consequences first, then the voice of God will shake both the powers of heaven and this earth also. I think it is self evident that we have not seen the wars described in the previous or following statements.

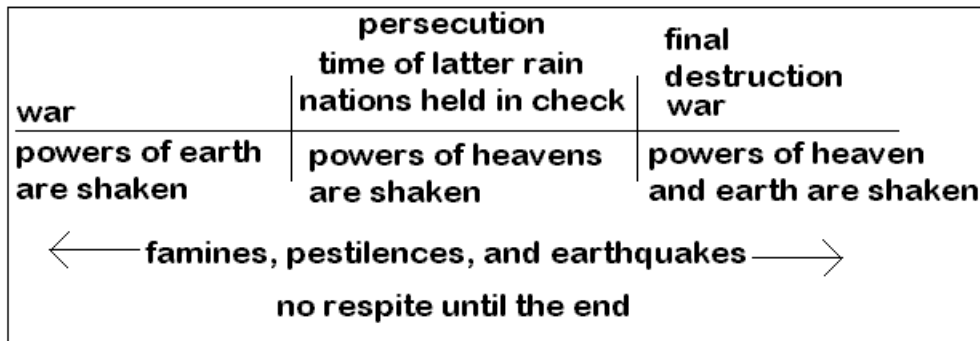
“The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude. {9T 11.1}

“The agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones.” {9T 11.2}

The storm is gathering

“The bolts of God's wrath are soon to fall, and when He shall begin to punish the transgressors, there will be no period of respite until the end. The storm of God's wrath is gathering, and those only will stand who are sanctified through the truth in the love of God. They shall be hid with Christ in God till the desolation shall be overpast. He shall come forth to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity, and ‘the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.’ [Isaiah 26:21]” {TM 182.2}

The sequence of events showing first the shaking of the powers of earth and then the heavens, the vision of war, then peace, then war again, are in agreement with the statements that war comes first, then a period of persecution without war while the Loud Cry goes forward, and then war again during the final destruction.



It Will Be Fatal Not to Know

“Though no man knoweth the day nor the hour of His coming, we are instructed and required to know when it is near. We are further taught that to disregard His warning, and refuse or neglect to know when His advent is near, will be as fatal for us as it was for those who lived in the days of Noah not to know when the flood was coming. ...

“Thus it was shown that Scripture gives no warrant for men to remain in ignorance concerning the nearness of Christ's coming.” GC 371, 372

“We are to realize that the judgments of God are about to fall upon the earth, and we should most earnestly present before the people the warning that the Lord has commissioned us to give: ‘For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.’” {RH, Nov. 22, 1892 par. 6}

“There are in the world today many who close their eyes to the evidences that Christ has given to warn men of His coming. They seek to quiet all apprehension, while at the same time the signs of the end are rapidly fulfilling, and the world is hastening to the time when the Son of man shall be revealed in the clouds of heaven. Paul teaches that it is sinful to be indifferent to the signs which are to precede the second coming of Christ.” {AA 260.1}

“If the truth for this time, if the signs that are thickening on every hand, that testify that the end of all things is at hand, are not sufficient to arouse the sleeping energy of those who profess to know the truth, then darkness proportionate to the light which has been shining will overtake these souls.” {RH, July 21, 1896 par. 2}

“The Lord calls upon those who believe in him to be workers together with him. While life shall last, they are not to feel that their work is done. Shall we allow the signs of the end to be fulfilled without telling people of what is coming upon the earth? Shall we allow them to go down in darkness without having urged upon them the need of a preparation to meet their Lord? Unless we ourselves do our duty to those around us, the day of God will come upon us as a thief.” {RH, Nov. 22, 1906 par. 6}

God Has a Purpose

God has a kind purpose in sending these judgments at the time He sends them. They are to awaken the honest of heart to their senses before the great

issues of truth are presented to the world. If these judgments came down toward the end of time, they would be too late to "drive men to God".

"We are on the verge of the eternal world. The judgments of God have already begun to fall upon the inhabitants of the land. God sends these judgments to bring men and women to their senses. He has a purpose in everything that He permits to take place in our world, and He desires us to be so spiritually minded that we shall be able to perceive His working in the events so unusual in the past, but now of almost daily occurrence." {7T 103.3}

"Calamities will come--calamities most awful, most unexpected; and these destructions will follow one after another. If there will be a heeding of the warnings that God has given, and if churches will repent, returning to their allegiance, then other cities may be spared for a time. But if men who have been deceived continue in the same way in which they have been walking, disregarding the law of God and presenting falsehoods before the people, God allows them to suffer calamity, that their senses may be awakened. . . ." {Ev 27.3}

"The day of test and purification is just upon us. Signs of a most startling character appear, in floods, in hurricanes, in tornadoes, in cloudbursts, in casualties by land and by sea, that proclaim the approach of the end of all things. The judgments of God are falling on the world, that men may be awakened to the fact that Christ will come speedily (RH Nov. 8, 1892)." {7BC 950.5}

"The Lord's agents should have a sanctified zeal, a zeal that is wholly under His control. Stormy times will come rapidly enough upon us, and we should take no course of our own that will hasten them. Tribulation will come of a character that will drive to God all who wish to be His, and His alone. Until tested and proved in the furnace of trial, we do not know ourselves, and it is not proper for us to measure the characters of others and to condemn those who have not yet had the light of the third angel's message." {6T 396.3}

"As faithful watchmen we should see the sword coming, and give the warning, that men and women may not pursue a course through ignorance that they would avoid if they knew the truth. The Lord has enlightened us in regard to what is coming upon the earth, that we may enlighten others, and we shall not be held guiltless if we are content to sit at ease with folded hands, and quibble over matters of minor importance. . . .

"The people must not be left to stumble their way along in darkness, not knowing what is before them, and unprepared for the great issues that are coming. There is a work to be done for this time in fitting a people to stand in the day of trouble, and all must act their part in this work. They must be clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and be so fortified by the truth that the delusions of Satan shall not be accepted by them as genuine manifestations of the power of God." {RH, March 9, 1911 par. 20}

"Let us show the people where we are in prophetic history." {5T 716.2}

Overwhelming Surprise

We can do nothing until we are awakened

“Let no one feel that he is secure from the danger of being surprised. Let no one's interpretation of prophecy rob you of the conviction of the knowledge of events which show that this great event is near at hand.” {LDE 16.5}

“Christians should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise, and this preparation they should make by diligently studying the word of God and striving to conform their lives to its precepts. The tremendous issues of eternity demand of us something besides an imaginary religion, a religion of words and forms, where truth is kept in the outer court. God calls for a revival and a reformation.” {PK 626.1}

“Transgression has almost reached its limit. Confusion fills the world, and a great terror is soon to come upon human beings. The end is very near. We who know the truth should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise.” {8T 28.1}

“The terrible disasters that are taking place from week to week speak to us in earnest tones of warning, declaring that the end is near, that something great and decisive will soon of necessity take place.” {RH, Nov. 22, 1906 par. 4}

“Probationary time will not continue much longer. Now God is withdrawing his restraining hand from the earth. Long has he been speaking to men and women through the agency of his Holy Spirit; but they have not heeded the call. Now he is speaking to his people, and to the world, by his judgments. The time of these judgments is a time of mercy for those who have not yet had opportunity to learn what is truth.” {RH, Nov 22, 1906 par 5}

“The days in which we live are eventful and full of peril. The signs of the coming of the end are thickening around us, and **events are to come to pass that will be of a more terrible character than any the world has yet witnessed.**” “For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.” But to those who have the light of truth, it has been written, “Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” {RH, Nov. 22, 1892 par. 5}

“A terrible crisis.” “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.” 5T 463

“We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Prophecy is fast fulfilling. The Lord is at the door. There is soon to open before us a period of overwhelming interest to all living. The controversies of the past are to be revived. New controversies will arise. The scenes to be enacted in our world are not even dreamed of.

Satan is at work through human agencies. Those who are making so great efforts to change the Constitution and secure a law enforcing the first day of the week little realize what will be the result. A crisis is just upon us.” {RH, Jan. 11, 1887 par. 15}

Ought men to be surprised over a sudden and unexpected change in the dealings of the Supreme Ruler with the inhabitants of a fallen world? Ought they to be surprised when punishment follows transgression and increasing crime? Ought they to be surprised that God should bring destruction and death upon those whose ill-gotten gains have been obtained through deception and fraud? Notwithstanding the fact that increasing light regarding God's requirements has been shining on their pathway, many have refused to recognize Jehovah's rulership, and have chosen to remain under the black banner of the originator of all rebellion against the government of heaven. {PK 276.1}

“We are living in the time of the end. The fast-fulfilling signs of the times declare that the coming of Christ is near at hand. The days in which we live are solemn and important. The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth. Plagues and judgments are already falling upon the despisers of the grace of God. The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude.

Waves of the sea: “Yes, they shall pass their borders, and destruction will be in their track.” {3SM 417.3}

“Everything has been moving on just as the Lord revealed in prophecy that it would. Something great and decisive is soon to take place, else no flesh would be saved. The character of God will not be compromised. Under the wrath of God, universal desolation will soon reach all parts of the known world.” {RH, Nov. 27, 1900 par. 2}

“The work of the people of God is to prepare for the events of the future, which will soon come upon them with blinding force. In the world gigantic monopolies will be formed. Men will bind themselves together in unions that will wrap them in the folds of the enemy. A few men will combine to grasp all the means to be obtained in certain lines of business. Trades unions will be formed, and those who refuse to join these unions will be marked men.” {2SM 142.2}

“The Lord desires you to be of good courage. He has a work for you to do in evangelistic lines, a work demanding more distinctly spiritual efforts than the work in which you have been engaged. . . . May the Lord help you, my brother, to devote your God-given capabilities to winning souls to Christ. Rest in God, and walk humbly with Him. You will need much of the rich grace of the Saviour, and a deep, settled conviction that the work of the people of God is to prepare for the events of the future, which will soon come upon them with blinding force.” {4MR 74.3}

Final events will be sudden

3SM 413.1 “suddenly and swiftly”

3SM 419.3 “short, but terrible... How long will it last? Only a little while.”

“I knew that time was short, that the scenes which are soon to crowd upon us would at the last come very suddenly and swiftly, as represented in the words of Scripture: “The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (1 Thess. 5:2). {3SM 113.4}

“A great crisis awaits the people of God. A crisis awaits the world. The most momentous struggle of all the ages is just before us.” 5T 711

The actual event which is described as the overwhelming surprise is not specifically revealed in Ellen White’s writings. The fact that these truths are connected to war, and that great balls of fire bring great destruction seem to indicate nuclear war. This event is to awaken God’s children and the world, so it obviously does not come down toward the end of time. It does not occur during the loud cry, because the nations are held in check during this time. It is self evident that it must come before the loud cry. Note that the overwhelming surprise is consistently associated with war, judgment, and loss of life.

A Storm is Coming

“A storm is arising that will wrench and test the spiritual foundation of every one to the utmost.” {5T 129.2}

“A storm is coming, relentless in its fury. Are we prepared to meet it?” {8T 315.2}

“The storm is coming, the storm that will try every man's faith, of what sort it is. Believers must now be firmly rooted in Christ, or else they will be led astray by some phase of error. Let your faith be substantiated by the Word of God. Grasp firmly the living testimony of truth. Have faith in Christ as a personal Saviour. He has been and ever will be our Rock of Ages. The testimony of the Spirit of God is true. Change not your faith for any phase of doctrine, however pleasing it may appear, that will seduce the soul.” {Ev 361.4}

“The conflict that is right upon us will be the most terrible ever witnessed.” {6T 407.3}

The following statement is included as a personal testimony in a conversation with Ellen White.

A Statement Made by Ellen G. White at Loma Linda, Calif. about the Year 1908

Brother Will Ross (now deceased) was a personal friend of mine, and an acquaintance of about forty-five years. In our church fellowship we very frequently spent our Sabbath afternoons discussing his experiences in the message, and his conversations with Mrs. E. G. White.

About 1908, while in Loma Linda and living near Sister White, he would frequently accompany her in her walks, and would discuss the message and future events. On one of these walks together, and while waiting at the Loma Linda railroad depot in company with Sister McInterfer, and Elder D.E. Robinson, (her grand-daughter’s husband) present,

Sister White related to the three of them about the storm of persecution that was coming upon the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Will Ross related it to me as follows:

Storm of Persecution Coming before the Loud Cry

“Sister White told us, as we three stood there on the railroad depot platform, that a terrible storm of persecution was coming, just like a windstorm, that blew down every standing object. There was not a Seventh-day Adventist to be seen. They, like the disciples, forsook Christ and fled. All who had sought positions were never seen any more.

After the storm there was a calm. Then the Adventists arose like a great flock of sheep, but were without shepherds. They all united in earnest prayer for help and wisdom, and the Lord answered by helping them choose leaders among them, who had never sought positions before. They prayed earnestly for the aid of the Holy Spirit which was poured out upon them making them fully ready for service. They then went forth “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners” to give the message to all the world.

I was astonished, and asked if that applied to Loma Linda, as we were looking that way. Sister White replied to my question by stating that it applied to the entire denominational world. It so stunned me, that I did not ask any more questions.”

--Will Ross Boulder, Colorado

In the year 1943, Elder D.E. Robinson was visiting the churches of Colorado. I was serving as the elder on the platform that Sabbath that Elder Robinson visited and spoke in the Boulder S.D.A. church, and having with him the large Bible which Sister White held in her hand, and leafed through during one of her visions.

At the close of the service, Brother Ross talked with Elder Robinson and asked him if he remembered when he and Elder Robinson, and Sister McInterfer were standing on the depot platform visiting with Sister White, and she related to them about the terrible windstorm of persecution that was coming upon the S.D.A. church. Elder Robinson replied, “Yes, Brother Ross, I remember it.”

So I documented the reply January 15, 1945. Not wishing to forget this important narration that was related to me by Brother Ross, I frequently discussed it with him in later years, and his statements never varied.

(Signed)

Elmer M. Johnson

The same pattern appears in this account: first a great storm with great destruction, a regrouping of God’s people, and then the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them.

War

“Fearful tests and trials await the people of God. The spirit of war is stirring the nations from one end of the earth to the other.” {9T 17.1}

“John also was a witness of the terrible scenes that will take place as signs of Christ's coming. He saw armies mustering for battle, and men's hearts failing them for fear. He saw the earth moved out of its place, the mountains carried into the midst of the sea, the waves thereof roaring and troubled, and the mountains shaking with the swelling thereof. He saw the vials of God's wrath opened, and pestilence, famine, and death come upon the inhabitants of the earth.” {RH, Jan. 11, 1887 par. 13}

“During the night a very impressive scene passed before me. There seemed to be great confusion and the conflict of armies. A messenger from the Lord stood before me, and said, ‘Call your household. I will lead you; follow me.’ He led me down a dark passage, through a forest, then through the clefts of mountains, and said, ‘Here you are safe.’ There were others who had been led to this retreat. The heavenly messenger said, ‘The time of trouble has come as a thief in the night, as the Lord warned you it would come.’” {Mar 270.3}

“I am writing this letter by lamp light, sitting upon my bed. I could not sleep longer than half past two A.M. The Lord lives and reigns. There is to be such a time of trouble as there never was since there was a nation. Already nations are angry, already Satan is working with signs and lying wonders, and this will increase until the end. God will use his enemies as instruments to punish those who have followed their own pernicious ways whereby the truth of God has been misrepresented, misjudged, and dishonored. These enemies of God are living evidences of the truth of His word; they are fulfilling that which holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. God does not forewarn His people of trifles; the repetition of caution and warnings shows that there is importance in that which was spoken. Do those who claim to want light, treat the light with the respect which is due?” {PC 136.3}

“The armory of heaven is open; all the universe of God and its equipments are ready. One word has justice to speak, and there will be terrific representations upon the earth, of the wrath of God. There will be voices and thunderings and lightnings and earthquakes and universal desolation. Every movement in the universe of heaven is to prepare the world for the great crisis. {SpTA01b 39.1} Special Testimonies, number 2, 1892.

“Soon grievous troubles will arise among the nations--trouble that will not cease until Jesus comes. As never before we need to press together, serving Him who has prepared His throne in the heavens and whose kingdom ruleth over all. God has not forsaken His people, and our strength lies in not forsaking Him.” {Mar 25.3}

“The world is stirred with the spirit of **war**. The prophecy of the eleventh chapter of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place.” 9T 14

“We have no time to lose. Troublous times are before us. The world is stirred with the spirit of war. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place. The prophecy in the eleventh of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. Much of the history that has taken place in fulfillment of this prophecy will be repeated. In the thirtieth verse a power is spoken of that "shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant." Verses 31-36, quoted. {13MR 394.1}

“Soon strife among the nations will break out with an intensity that we do not now anticipate. The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the strained, restless relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they realize that something great and decisive is about to take place, that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.” {Mar 174.3}

“We are standing on the threshold of the crisis of the ages. In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another--fire, and flood, and earthquake, with war and bloodshed. We are not to be surprised at this time by events both great and decisive; for the angel of mercy cannot remain much longer to shelter the impenitent.” PK 278

So the beginning of sorrows, or judgments, is war, (and rumors of war during the Loud Cry), with no respite until Jesus comes.

Cities Destroyed

“Great pains should be taken to keep this subject before the people. The solemn fact is to be kept not only before the people of the world but before our own churches also, that the day of the Lord will come suddenly, unexpectedly. The fearful warning of the prophecy is addressed to every soul. Let no one feel that he is secure from the danger of being surprised. Let no one's interpretation of prophecy rob you of the conviction of the knowledge of events which show that this great event is near at hand.” {FE 335.2}

“Impending Destruction.--The time is near when large cities will be swept away, and all should be warned of these coming judgments.”

“Oh, that God's people had a sense of the impending destruction of thousands of cities now almost given to idolatry!” {AH 136}

“In the night I was, I thought, in a room but not in my own house. I was in a city, where I knew not, and I heard expression after expression. I rose up quickly in

bed, and saw from my window large balls of fire. Jetting out were sparks, in the form of arrows, and buildings were being consumed, and in a very few minutes the entire block of buildings was falling and the screeching and mournful groans came distinctly to my ears. I cried out, in my raised position, to learn what was happening: Where am I? And where are our family circle? Then I awoke. But I could not tell where I was for I was in another place than home. I said, Oh Lord, where am I and what shall I do? It was a voice that spoke, "Be not afraid. Nothing shall harm you." {11MR 361.1}

Two men, one from the *Liberty Magazine*, Lincoln Steed, and also the son of Russell Standish, James Standish, were studying this passage and noted the words "expression after expression" seemed to be out of place. They wrote the White Estate and asked them to check the original to see if the words "expression" were copied correctly from the original. The original said "explosion after explosion". It is worth noting that when this vision was given in reference to the balls of fire coming down on our cities, there was no such thing as a bomb.

"Last Friday morning, just before I awoke, a very impressive scene was presented before me. I seemed to awake from sleep, but was not in my home. From the windows I could behold a terrible conflagration. Great balls of fire were falling upon houses, and from these balls fiery arrows were flying in every direction. It was impossible to check the fires that were kindled, and many places were being destroyed. The terror of the people was indescribable." {Ev 29.1}

"I am writing this letter by lamp light, sitting upon my bed. I could not sleep longer than half past two A.M. The Lord lives and reigns. There is to be such a time of trouble as there never was since there was a nation. Already nations are angry, already Satan is working with signs and lying wonders, and this will increase until the end. God will use his enemies as instruments to punish those who have followed their own pernicious ways whereby the truth of God has been misrepresented, misjudged, and dishonored. These enemies of God are living evidences of the truth of His word; they are fulfilling that which holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. God does not forewarn His people of trifles; the repetition of caution and warnings shows that there is importance in that which was spoken. Do those who claim to want light, treat the light with the respect which is due?" {PC 136.3}

"The work that should long ago have been in active operation to win souls to Christ has not been done. The inhabitants of the ungodly cities so soon to be visited by calamities have been cruelly neglected. The time is near when large cities will be swept away, and all should be warned of these coming judgments. But who is giving to the accomplishment of this work the wholehearted service that God requires?" {WM 135.3}

“At the present time there is not a thousandth part being done in working the cities that should be done, and that would be done if men and women would do their whole duty.” {WM 136.1}

“The Lord will not suddenly cast off all transgressors, or destroy entire nations; but He will punish cities and places where men have given themselves up to the possession of Satanic agencies. Strictly will the cities of the nations be dealt with, and yet they will not be visited in the extreme of God's indignation, because some souls will yet break away from the delusions of the enemy, and will repent and be converted, while the mass will be treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.” {Ev 27.4}

“While at Loma Linda, Calif., April 16, 1906, there passed before me a most wonderful representation. During a vision of the night, I stood on an eminence, from which I could see houses shaken like a reed in the wind. Buildings, great and small, were falling to the ground. Pleasure resorts, theaters, hotels, and the homes of the wealthy were shaken and shattered. Many lives were blotted out of existence, and the air was filled with the shrieks of the injured and the terrified.

“The destroying angels of God were at work. One touch, and buildings so thoroughly constructed that men regarded them as secure against every danger, quickly became heaps of rubbish. There was no assurance of safety in any place. I did not feel in any special peril, but the awfulness of the scenes that passed before me I cannot find words to describe. It seemed that the forbearance of God was exhausted, and that the judgment day had come.

“The angel that stood at my side then instructed me that but few have any conception of the wickedness existing in our world today, and especially the wickedness in the large cities. He declared that the Lord has appointed a time when He will visit transgressors in wrath for persistent disregard of His law.” {CL 8, 9}

“In harmony with the light given me, I am urging people to come out from the great centers of population. Our cities are increasing in wickedness, and it is becoming more and more evident that those who remain in them unnecessarily do so at the peril of their soul's salvation.” {CL 9.4}

“The destroying angels are today executing their commission. Death will come in all places. This is why I am so anxious for our cities to be warned. There is a work to be done by canvassing in our cities that has not yet been done. . . . The blessing of God rests on the workers who warn those that are unready to meet him. . . . Now is our time to work.

“For the past twenty years, and particularly since my return from Australia, I have borne a most decided testimony in favor of proclaiming the third angel's message in the cities of America.” {RH, July 5, 1906 par. 16, 17}

“I have no light in particular in regard to what is coming on New York, only that I know that one day the great buildings there will be thrown down by the

turning and overturning of God's power. . . . Death will come in all places. This is why I am so anxious for our cities to be warned.” {RH, July 5, 1906 par. 14, 16}

“Terrible shocks will come upon the earth, and the lordly palaces erected at great expense will certainly become heaps of ruins.” {3MR 312.4}

“When God's restraining hand is removed, the destroyer begins his work. Then in our cities the greatest calamities will come.” {3MR 314.3}

“The Lord gives warnings to the inhabitants of the earth, as in the Chicago fire and the fires in Melbourne, London, and the city of New York.--Ms 127, 1897.

“The end is near and every city is to be turned upside down every way. There will be confusion in every city. Everything that can be shaken is to be shaken and we do not know what will come next. The judgments will be according to the wickedness of the people and the light of truth that they have had.--1MR 248 (1902).

“On one occasion, when in New York City, I was in the night season called upon to behold buildings rising story after story toward heaven. These buildings were warranted to be fireproof, and they were erected to glorify the owners and builders. Higher and still higher these buildings rose, and in them the most costly material was used. . . . The scene that next passed before me was an alarm of fire. Men looked at the lofty and supposedly fire-proof buildings and said: "They are perfectly safe." But these buildings were consumed as if made of pitch. The fire engines could do nothing to stay the destruction. The firemen were unable to operate the engines.

“I am instructed that when the Lord's time comes, should no change have taken place in the hearts of proud, ambitious human beings, men will find that the hand that had been strong to save will be strong to destroy. No earthly power can stay the hand of God. No material can be used in the erection of buildings that will preserve them from destruction when God's appointed time comes to send retribution on men for their disregard of His law and for their selfish ambition.” {9T 12, 13}

A Deadly Taint to the Air

“In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous.” {FLB 328.5}

“Already sprinklings from the vials of God's wrath have been let fall upon land and sea, affecting the elements of the air. The causes of these unusual conditions are being searched for, but in vain.

“God has not restrained the powers of darkness from carrying forward their deadly work of vitiating the air, one of the sources of life and nutrition, with a deadly miasma. Not only is vegetable life affected, but man suffers from pestilence.

...

“Physical and Religious World to Be Shaken.-- These things are the result of drops from the vials of God's wrath being sprinkled on the earth, and are but faint representations of what will be in the near future.” {3SM 391.2,3,4}

“I saw that those who had the means, were required to help speed those messengers, that God had called to labor in his cause, and as they went from place to place, they would be safe from the prevailing pestilence. But if any went that were not sent of God, they would be in danger of being cut down by the pestilence; therefore all should earnestly seek for duty, and be sure and move by the direction of the Holy Spirit.

“What we have seen and heard of the pestilence, is but the beginning of what we shall see and hear. Soon the dead and dying will be all around us. I saw that some will be so hardened, as to even make sport of the judgments of God. Then the slain of the Lord will be from one end of the earth, to the other; they will not be lamented, gathered, nor buried; but their ill savor will come up from the face of the whole earth. Those only who have the seal of the living God, will be sheltered from the storm of wrath, that will soon fall on the heads of those who have rejected the truth.” {RH, Sept. 1, 1849 par. 9, 10}

Prayer that Calamity be Deferred

“We are not doing the will of God if we sit in quietude, doing nothing to preserve liberty of conscience. Fervent, effectual prayer should be ascending to heaven that this calamity may be deferred until we can accomplish the work which has so long been neglected. Let there be most earnest prayer, and then let us work in harmony with our prayers. It may appear that Satan is triumphant and that truth is overborne with falsehood and error; the people over whom God has spread His shield, and the country which has been an asylum for the conscience-oppressed servants of God and defenders of His truth, may be placed in jeopardy. But God would have us recall His dealings with His people in the past to save them from their enemies. He has always chosen extremities, when there seemed no possible chance for deliverance from Satan's workings, for the manifestation of His power.” {5T 713.4}

“If our people continue in the listless attitude in which they have been, God cannot pour upon them His Spirit. They are unprepared to co-operate with Him. They are not awake to the situation and do not realize the threatened danger. They should feel now, as never before, their need of vigilance and concerted action.” {5T 714.1}

“Brethren you to whom the truths of God's word have been opened, what part will you act in this momentous time of the closing scenes of earth's history? Are you awake to these solemn realities? Do you realize the grand work of preparation that is going on in

heaven and earth? Let all who have received the light, who have had the opportunity of reading and hearing the prophecy, take heed to keep those things that are written therein; "for the time is at hand." Let none now venture to tamper with sin, or remain in a state of lethargy and stupid indifference. Let not the destiny of your soul hang upon an uncertainty. Know for yourselves that you are fully on the Lord's side. Let the inquiry go forth from sincere hearts and trembling lips, Who shall be able to stand? Have you, in the precious hours of probation mercifully granted you, been putting the very best material into your character-building? Have you been purifying your souls from every stain? Have you followed the light? Have your works corresponded with your profession of faith?" {RH, Jan. 11, 1887 par. 23}

The immediate and urgent message of this prophecy is: "Who will be warned? We say again, Out of the cities. Do not consider it a great deprivation, that you must go into the hills and mountains, but seek for that retirement where you can be alone with God, to learn His will and way." {CL 14.4}

But be sure you make haste prayerfully, thoughtfully, and intelligently. I highly recommend the little book *Country Living* available at the ABC book stores.

There is a deeper and more searching message in the prophecy of Matthew 24 and the overwhelming surprise which, if we think carefully, speaks to our own hearts. I believe we know instinctively that we need a humility that we do not have. That thought is inherent in the following quote: "Long has He been speaking to men and women through the agency of His Holy Spirit; but they have not heeded the call. Now He is speaking to His people, and to the world, by His judgments." {RH, November 22, 1906 par. 5}

When we think of judgments, our first thought may be of punishment, but God's first thought is of gaining our attention and being in touch with us again.

Trials will come to all men who are right with God, but judgment comes to men who are not right with God. Even though they may be sincere, they are often not even conscious of their true condition.

The very fact that the overwhelming surprise comes as a judgment to God's people tells us they are not right with Him and that He is trying to awaken them to that fact. In God's providence the overwhelming surprise comes before the Sunday law to prepare us for that crisis.

There was a time when King David's heart was not right with God. In His providence God sent the prophet Nathan to him with the story of the rich man who stole the poor man's little lamb. David's heart was stirred with indignation as he heard the story, and he pronounced the death sentence on the man. Then came the message to David as an overwhelming surprise, "Thou art the man". This time of judgment was saving to David.

“There was a great change in David himself. He was broken in spirit by the consciousness of his sin, and its far reaching effects.” {PP 723.3}

David was not conscious of his problem until God sent judgment home to his heart. “Thou art the man” is the very essence of the Laodicean message. This is an example of how God saves men through judgment. The Lord must awaken us to our true condition and bring us a consciousness of the far reaching effects of our sins. This is how He gives us the mysterious gift of a broken heart, a contrite spirit, and a holy boldness.

History teaches us that we should not be surprised to find we need judgments to awaken and drive us to God. The Children of Israel thought they were ready to go straight into the promised land, when they needed to be judged in the wilderness. The Disciples thought they were ready to set up an earthly kingdom, when they needed the cross. The believers in 1844 thought they were ready to go to heaven in glory, when they needed the disappointment of October 22. We have looked to the promise of a great revival and the latter rain as the next great event within the church, when we must meet a terrible storm first — because our hearts are not right with God. This is not merely an act of punishment to the impenitent; it is a saving act for those who want to belong to God and Him alone.

It is evident that these judgments are irreversible and needed. The question is whether they will be saving to us, as they were to David. We should give careful thought to the deeper issues involved in God sending judgments to us, and learn from them. As mentioned earlier, we are all glad for God’s mercy, even Satan has reason to be glad for God’s mercy. But are we willing to suffer under difficult circumstances without murmuring and becoming discouraged? The very fact we have not been willing to suffer under temptation is the reason we must suffer under judgment. It is another chance to learn the same lesson. Will we reason from cause to effect and learn from it?

Here is an interesting and timely quote from the book *Daniel and Revelation*, by Uriah Smith, page 517, commenting on the experience of God’s people when the Muslims punished Christendom starting in the 14th century.

“God designs that men shall make a note of His judgments, and receive the lessons He thereby designs to convey. But how slow they are to learn, and how blind to the indications of providence! The events that occurred under the sixth trumpet constituted the second woe, yet these judgments led to no improvement in the manners and morals of men. Those who escaped them learned nothing by their manifestation in the earth.

“The hordes of Saracens and Turks [Muslims] were let loose as a scourge and punishment upon apostate Christendom. Men suffered the punishment, but learned no lesson from it.”

Dear reader, if you see this heart work as the deeper significance to last day events, I invite you to join me in accepting and learning to appreciate both God's justice and His mercy. This is the nerve center of the great controversy. True, it is important to accept God's mercy, but it is His justice men stumble over. Justice includes not only the outward obedience, but especially the way we relate at heart to the difficult things God allows and requires. The battle is won by the way we relate at heart to the circumstances we meet. This will turn the controversy around in our own hearts and in the world.

--Allen St.Clair