

Sabbath School Today **With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

How to Interpret Scripture **Lesson 10: The Bible as History**

Through His covenant promise, God works directly with His agents—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets—to see that history’s prophetic destiny of the promised Messiah is fulfilled. In the “fullness of the time,” God sends His Son, the ultimate divine act in human history, to pay the penalty for humanity’s rebellion against the divine law of God’s government (Gal. 4:4).

All creation anticipates Christ’s proclamation from the cross: “It is finished” (John 19:30). As prophesied, after three days, He breaks free of the tomb, appears to hundreds of people, and ascends to heaven.

He then goes into the Holy Place to perform His High Priestly ministry before entering the Most Holy in 1844 for the pre-Advent judgment. The prophet Daniel foresaw that it would take 2300 years (Dan. 8:14) for God’s people to realize an understanding of the extent of God’s purposes in Christ to redeem and eliminate sin through His shed blood.

When God’s judgment is finished, He returns in triumphant glory to claim His ransomed people. The scope of Scripture thus spans the beginning and end of human history.

No other sacred religious text provides this perspective of totality in time and place. No other books, secular or sacred, contain prophetic messages of God’s omniscient foreknowledge and His intervention in human affairs.

Why do we need to go back in history to 1888 and devote time to what happened there? 1888 marks a significant progression in the understanding of God’s people in coming to a full knowledge of the plan of salvation.

Ellen White put it succinctly: “We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.” [1]

Two complimentary dates in Adventist history demand special attention: 1844 and 1888. The first marks the prophetic beginning of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, the Day of Atonement and the beginning of the sounding of the seventh angel’s trumpet (Dan. 8:14; Rev. 11:15-19).

The second date marks the beginning of the long-awaited outpouring of the Latter Rain and the loud cry.

History and inspiration are clear that the Latter Rain and loud cry “special power of the

Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them” “was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world.” [2] This is the *primary* reason for the long delay in the finishing of our gospel commission. The Lord has not delayed His return; we have delayed it.

There is no problem facing this worldwide church as serious as our relationship to the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Godhead. The Lord’s inspired messenger said of the 1888 experience: “I know that at that time the Spirit of God was insulted.” [3]

Again, “All the universe of heaven witnessed the disgraceful treatment of Jesus Christ, represented by the Holy Spirit. Had Christ been before them they would have treated him in a manner similar to that in which the Jews treated Christ.” [4]

But what difference does this make to us in 2020? Does this terrible sin of 1888 have any appreciable affect on us now?

Yes, this sin does have a serious affect on our relationship to the Holy Spirit today. It has delayed the preparation of God’s people for the coming of the Lord for over 130 years.

Sin and guilt are not passed on from our fathers genetically (Eze. 18:19-30). None of us were personally present in 1888 to join in that sin, but we are told that “sin has continued its hateful work, reaching from mind to mind” [5] unless repentance takes place.

For example, the sin of crucifying Christ involves a guilt that includes the “whole world ... all classes and sects who reveal the same spirit ... manifested by those who put to death the Son of God” [6] unless they experience genuine repentance.

By nature we are not better than those who have gone before us. They insulted the Holy Spirit and showed enmity against Christ through His delegated messengers.

Until full understanding of our history and a full repentance bring full healing and reconciliation, the spiritual alienation will continue. The hard hearts and mind set of our predecessors are passed on to us “through the influence of mind on mind.” The Bible declares that this was also the experience of the ancient Jews: “... ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye” (Acts 7:51).

Practically without exception, Seventh-day Adventists recognize our need of the Holy Spirit. Since Ellen White recognized in the 1888 message the beginning of the Latter Rain, there has been no further authenticated manifestation of the Latter Rain. Large numerical increases to the church do not necessarily indicate the reception of the Latter Rain. Christ will reap the mature grain harvest at His coming (Rev. 14:15), which is prepared by the message of the Holy Spirit. This Latter Rain message—the cleansing of the sanctuary—began in our history during the 1888 era.

—Paul E. Penno

Endnotes:

- [1] *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 196.
- [2] Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 234-235.
- [3] *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1043 [1892].
- [4] *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1479.
- [5] *Review and Herald*, April 16, 1901.
- [6] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 38.

Notes:

Pastor Paul Penno's video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRnxZsuK3XQ>

Many of Pastor Penno's sermons are on YouTube in Spanish. Just type **pastor paul penno en español** in the search bar.

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