

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

***The Book of Revelation***  
**Lesson 6: The Sealed People of God**

“But like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God’s purposes know no haste and no delay. ... So in heaven’s council the hour for the coming of Christ had been determined. When the great clock of time pointed to that hour, Jesus was born in Bethlehem.” [1]

“Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God’s people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14. When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing.” [2]

These two familiar quotations, both written by Ellen G. White, seem to contradict each other. However, it requires little analysis to see that the two statements are not contradictory since they refer to two different periods of time. The first statement is obviously referring to the first coming of Christ. The second statement refers to the end of time when Christ returns the second time.

Yet, there are those who use the first statement to say that nothing can influence Christ’s second return, so therefore there can be “no haste and no delay” in His return. They think heaven and earth must wait until the great cosmic clock reaches some unknown future point as if our fate is up to the stars.

Consider another statement by Ellen White written in the late 1800s:

“When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.

“It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for *but to hasten* the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain.” [3]

What must happen that will result in hastening the coming of Jesus? “All who profess His name will bear fruit to His glory to the world.” Revelation 18:1 tells us that a fourth angel (messenger) will lighten the earth with the glory of God. The Adventist Church can never separate itself from the three angels’ messages, which are present truth for our time. A careful reading of the fourth angel’s message shows it is a reiteration of the warnings and admonitions of the three angels’ messages, but “having great power.” The quote above from *Christ’s Object Lessons* describes that when “all” who profess His name bear fruit “to His glory” the gospel will go to the world “quickly.”

Our lesson this week deals with the sealing of the saints. “We have long talked of the time when God’s people would be sealed and live without a mediator or an intercessor as they faced the time of trouble in the end. The very fact that a mediator is needed at any time indicates there is a problem. That problem is sin and when the day comes that no mediator is required, it means the problem has been removed. ... The whole point of the sanctuary truth is that Christ will not remain an Intercessor and Substitute forever; this work must come to an end. There must be a character development that no community of saints has ever previously experienced. They will overcome ‘even as [Christ] overcame’ (Revelation 3:21). The issue is not concerned with getting a people ready for death, but for translation.” [4]

“The Bible so clearly teaches that righteousness is by faith. Therefore the only element that God’s people need in order to prepare for the second coming of Christ is *genuine faith*. The message the world needs to hear is the truth of righteousness by faith in the light of the cleansing of the sanctuary—‘the third angel’s in verity.’ Faith is understood in its true biblical sense—a heart appreciation of the *agape* of Christ.” [5]

“Being sealed by the seal of the Holy Spirit is the sign of a genuine Christian who belongs to God and the sign of assurance of salvation. ‘In Him, you also,’ Paul explains, ‘after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory’ (Eph. 1:13-14; cf. 2 Cor. 1:21-22).” [6]

How does God seal people? From Paul’s description, it comes after “listening” to the gospel, to those who also believe. This can happen in a moment, as it apparently did for the thief on the cross, or more likely, over a lifetime of experiences which test the belief first expressed as what we call conversion.

Abraham is one of the best examples. He believed God enough to leave everything and take his family to an unknown country based on a promise. Wonderful faith, but it wavered throughout his life. Finally, he was ready for the ultimate test of sacrificing his son. At that point in his life, Abraham didn’t question, nor did he explain his plans to anyone who might deter him. He was to a point where all his hopes, dreams, and ambitions were secondary to following God’s command. Even the opinions of family and friends were secondary.

The sealing process takes place in our lives the same way. The four horsemen begin with a white horse of victory, but those who reject that victory receive judgments of war, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts. All this is intended to bring us to repentance. Everything constant in human experience will be shaken, and our choice will be whether to believe God will save, either physically in this world, or later at the resurrection.

“Under the seventh trumpet God’s love is highlighted in a final message of mercy and warning for ‘every nation, tribe, tongue, and people’ just before the second coming of ‘the Son of man.’ Revelation 14 introduces the final scene as a conflict between the pure, true ‘everlasting gospel’ and a massive counterfeit known as ‘Babylon.’ The prophetic drama is starkly simple; even a child can grasp its overall significance. The special enlightenment of the Holy Spirit is what God solemnly promises to anyone who will seek to understand (see Dan. 12:4, 10; Rev. 1:1-3).” [7]

—Arlene Hill

### **Endnotes:**

[1] Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 32.

[2] Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 425.

[3] Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 69, emphasis added.

[4] Donald K. Short, “*Then Shall the Sanctuary Be Cleansed*,” p. 44, CFI ed. (2018).

[5] Compiled by Robert J. Wieland, *Ten Great Gospel Truths That Make the 1888 Message Unique*, “Gospel Truth #9,” p. 30 (1998).

[6] Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, Andrews University Press, p. 261.

[7] Robert J. Wieland, *Dial Daily Bread*, “The Prophetic Drama Is Starkly Simple” (Dec. 8, 2018).

### **Notes:**

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

<https://youtu.be/ey5J9F-Cu4E>

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