

Chapter Five

The End of the 2300 Days

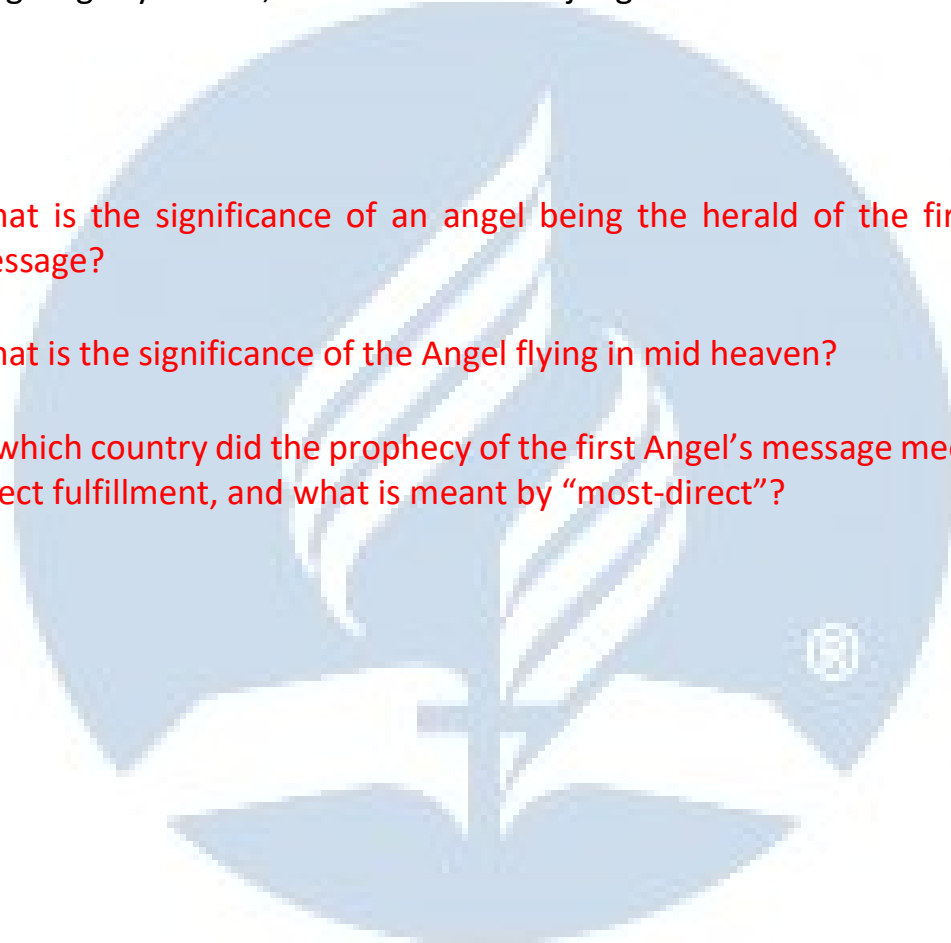
A great religious awakening under the proclamation of Christ's soon coming is foretold in the prophecy of the first angel's message of **Revelation 14**. An angel is seen flying *“in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.”* *“With a loud voice”* he proclaims the message: *“Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”* **Verses 6, 7.**

The fact that an angel is said to be the herald of this warning is significant. By the purity, the glory, and the power of the heavenly messenger, divine wisdom has been pleased to represent the exalted character of the work to be accomplished by the message and the power and glory that were to attend it. And the angel's flight “in the midst of heaven,” the “loud voice” with which the warning is uttered, and its promulgation to all “that dwell on the earth,”—“to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,”—give evidence of the rapidity and world-wide extent of the movement. ...

Like the great Reformation of the sixteenth century, the advent movement appeared in different countries of Christendom at the same time. In both Europe and America men of faith and prayer were led to the study of the prophecies, and tracing down the inspired record, they saw convincing evidence that the end of all things was at hand. In different lands there were isolated bodies of Christians who, solely by the study of the Scriptures, arrived at the belief that the Saviour's advent was near....

To William Miller and his collaborators, it was given to preach the warning in America. This country became the center of the great advent movement. It was here that the prophecy of the first angel's message had its most direct fulfillment. The writings of Miller and his associates were carried to distant lands. Wherever missionaries had penetrated in all the world, were sent the glad tidings of Christ's speedy return. Far and widespread the message of the everlasting gospel: "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come." ...

- What is the significance of an angel being the herald of the first Angel's message?
- What is the significance of the Angel flying in mid heaven?
- In which country did the prophecy of the first Angel's message meet its most direct fulfillment, and what is meant by "most-direct"?



Waiting in Calm Expectancy

With unspeakable desire those who had received the message watched for the coming of their Saviour. The time when they expected to meet Him was at hand. They approached this hour with a calm solemnity. They rested in sweet communion with God, an earnest of the peace that was to be theirs in the bright hereafter. None who experienced this hope and trust can forget those precious hours of waiting.

For some weeks preceding the time, worldly business was for the most part laid aside. The sincere believers carefully examined every thought and emotion of their hearts as if upon their deathbeds and in a few hours to close their eyes upon earthly scenes. There was no making of “ascension robes”; but all felt the need of internal evidence that they were prepared to meet the Saviour; their white robes were purity of soul—characters cleansed from sin by the atoning blood of Christ.

Would that there were still with the professed people of God the same spirit of heart searching, the same earnest, determined faith. Had they continued thus to humble themselves before the Lord and press their petitions at the mercy seat they would be in possession of a far richer experience than they now have. There is too little prayer, too little real conviction of sin, and the lack of living faith leaves many destitute of the grace so richly provided by our Redeemer.

God designed to prove His people. His hand covered a mistake in the reckoning of the prophetic periods. Adventists did not discover the error, nor was it discovered by the most learned of their opponents. The latter said: “Your reckoning of the prophetic periods is correct. Some great event is about to take place; but it is not what Mr. Miller predicts; it is the conversion of the world, and not the second advent of Christ.”

The time of expectation passed, and Christ did not appear for the deliverance of His people. Those who with sincere faith and love had looked for their Saviour, experienced a bitter disappointment. Yet the purposes of God were being accomplished; He was testing the hearts of those who professed to be waiting for His appearing. There were among them many who had been actuated by no higher motive than fear. Their profession of faith had not affected their hearts or their lives. When the expected event failed to take place, these persons declared that they were not disappointed; they had never believed that Christ would come. They were among the first to ridicule the sorrow of the true believers.

But Jesus and all the heavenly host looked with love and sympathy upon the tried and faithful yet disappointed ones. Could the veil separating the visible from the invisible world have been swept back, angels would have been seen drawing near to these steadfast souls and shielding them from the shafts of Satan.—The Great Controversy, 355-374.

- How did these expecting Adventist pass their time as they awaited the second coming?
- How did they achieve the purity of soul in anticipation of the second coming?
- What does Ellen White say there is too little of in the church today that they had in the year 1844?
- What did William Miller's opponents say about his prediction, and were they correct? How do these opponents lend credibility to the message today?

The Scriptures Reexamined

When the time passed at which the Lord's coming was first expected,—in the spring of 1844,—those who had looked in faith for His appearing were for a season involved in doubt and uncertainty. While the world regarded them as having been utterly defeated and proved to have been cherishing a delusion, their source of consolation was still the word of God. Many continued to search the Scriptures, examining anew the evidence of their faith and carefully studying the prophecies to obtain further light. The Bible testimony in support of their position seemed clear and conclusive. Signs which could not be mistaken pointed to the coming of Christ as near. The special blessing of the Lord, both in the conversion of sinners and the revival of spiritual life among Christians, had testified that the message was of Heaven. And though the believers could not explain their disappointment, they felt assured that God had led them in their past experience.

Interwoven with prophecies which they had regarded as applying to the time of the second advent was instruction specially adapted to their state of uncertainty and suspense and encouraging them to wait patiently in the faith that what was now dark to their understanding would in due time be made plain....

In the summer of 1844, midway between the time when it had been first thought that the 2300 days would end, and the autumn of the same year, to which it was afterward found that they extended, the message was proclaimed in the very words of Scripture: “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!”

That which led to this movement was the discovery that the decree of Artaxerxes for the restoration of Jerusalem, which formed the starting point for the period of the 2300 days, went into effect in the autumn of the year 457 B.C., and not at the

beginning of the year, as had been formerly believed. Reckoning from the autumn of 457, the 2300 years terminate in the autumn of 1844.

- What was the discovery in scripture that led them to start looking for the autumn date as fulfilling the cleansing of the Sanctuary?



Types in the Sanctuary Service

Arguments drawn from the Old Testament types also pointed to the autumn as the time when the event represented by the “cleansing of the sanctuary” must take place. This was made very clear as attention was given to the manner in which the types relating to the first advent of Christ had been fulfilled.

The slaying of the Passover lamb was a shadow of the death of Christ. Says Paul: *“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”* **1 Corinthians 5:7.**

The sheaf of first fruits, which at the time of the Passover was waved before the Lord, was typical of the resurrection of Christ....

These types were fulfilled, not only as to the event, but as to the time. On the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, the very day and month on which for fifteen long centuries the Passover lamb had been slain, Christ, having eaten the Passover with His disciples, instituted that feast which was to commemorate His own death as *“the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”* **John 1:29**

That same night He was taken by wicked hands to be crucified and slain. And as the antitype of the wave sheaf our Lord was raised from the dead on the third day, *“the first fruits of them that slept,”* **1 Corinthians 15:20** a sample of all the resurrected just, whose “vile body” shall be changed, and *“fashioned like unto His glorious body.”* **Philippians 3:21.**

In like manner the types which relate to the second advent must be fulfilled at the time pointed out in the symbolic service. Under the Mosaic system the cleansing of the sanctuary, or the great Day of Atonement, occurred on the tenth day of the seventh Jewish month (**Leviticus 16:29-34**), when the high priest, having made an atonement for all Israel, and thus removed their sins from the sanctuary, came

forth and blessed the people. So, it was believed that Christ, our great High Priest, would appear to purify the earth by the destruction of sin and sinners, and to bless His waiting people with immortality. The tenth day of the seventh month, the great Day of Atonement, the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary, which in the year 1844 fell upon the twenty-second of October, was regarded as the time of the Lord's coming. This was in harmony with the proofs already presented that the 2300 days would terminate in the autumn, and the conclusion seemed irresistible....

Carefully and solemnly those who received the message came up to the time when they hoped to meet their Lord. Every morning they felt that it was their first duty to secure the evidence of their acceptance with God. Their hearts were closely united, and they prayed much with and for one another. They often met together in secluded places to commune with God, and the voice of intercession ascended to heaven from the fields and groves. The assurance of the Saviour's approval was more necessary to them than their daily food; and if a cloud darkened their minds, they did not rest until it was swept away. As they felt the witness of pardoning grace, they longed to behold Him whom their souls loved.

- What Old Testament idea did the Millerites turn to for support of the October 22 date for the second coming of Christ?

Disappointed, But Faith in God's Word Unshaken

But again, they were destined to disappointment. The time of expectation passed, and their Saviour did not appear. With unwavering confidence, they had looked forward to His coming, and now they felt as did Mary when, coming to the Saviour's tomb and finding it empty, she exclaimed with weeping: *"They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."* **John 20:13**....

The world had been looking on, expecting that if the time passed and Christ did not appear, the whole system of Adventism would be given up. But while many, under strong temptation, yielded their faith, there were some who stood firm. The fruits of the advent movement, the spirit of humility and heart searching, of renouncing of the world and reformation of life, which had attended the work, testified that it was of God. They dared not deny that the power of the Holy Spirit had witnessed to the preaching of the second advent, and they could detect no error in their reckoning of the prophetic periods. The ablest of their opponents had not succeeded in overthrowing their system of prophetic interpretation. They could not consent, without Bible evidence, to renounce positions which had been reached through earnest, prayerful study of the Scriptures, by minds enlightened by the Spirit of God and hearts burning with its living power; positions which had withstood the most searching criticisms and the most bitter opposition of popular religious teachers and worldly-wise men, and which had stood firm against the combined forces of learning and eloquence, and the taunts and reviling alike of the honorable and the base. True, there had been a failure as to the expected event, but even this could not shake their faith in the word of God....

God did not forsake His people; His Spirit still abode with those who did not rashly deny the light which they had received and denounce the advent movement. In the Epistle to the Hebrews are words of encouragement and warning for the tried,

waiting ones at this crisis: *“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”* **Hebrews 10:35-39.**

That this admonition is addressed to the church in the last days is evident from the words pointing to the nearness of the Lord's coming: *“For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come and will not tarry.”* And it is plainly implied that there would be a seeming delay and that the Lord would appear to tarry. The instruction here given is especially adapted to the experience of Adventists at this time. The people here addressed were in danger of making shipwreck of faith. They had done the will of God in following the guidance of His Spirit and His word; yet they could not understand His purpose in their past experience, nor could they discern the pathway before them, and they were tempted to doubt whether God had indeed been leading them. At this time, the words were applicable: “Now the just shall live by faith.”

As the bright light of the “midnight cry” had shone upon their pathway, and they had seen the prophecies unsealed and the rapidly fulfilling signs telling that the coming of Christ was near, they had walked, as it were, by sight. But now, bowed down by disappointed hopes, they could stand only by faith in God and in His word. The scoffing world were saying: “You have been deceived. Give up your faith, and say that the advent movement was of Satan.” But God's word declared: “If any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him.”

To renounce their faith now, and deny the power of the Holy Spirit which had attended the message, would be drawing back toward perdition. They were encouraged to steadfastness by the words of Paul: “Cast not away therefore your confidence;” “ye have need of patience,” “for yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” Their only safe course was to cherish the light which they had already received of God, hold fast to His promises, and continue to search the Scriptures, and patiently wait and watch to receive further light.—The Great Controversy, 391-408.

- What were the fruits of the Advent movement which were evidence despite the second disappointment?
- What bible text gave them hope over this disappointment, and what did this time period become known as?
- What were they being led to live by in the light of their disappointment?

