

Ezekiel 5 – When the “Siege” has Ended

Description

WHEN THE “SIEGE” HAS ENDED

EZEKIEL 5

THE JUDGMENT FOR THE LIVING

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Study Aim:

To see what the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy have to say about what was to happen immediately following the “siege” of Eze. 4, and to determine whether or not those things have transpired as prophesied.

Gem Thought:

“Ezekiel was commanded to take a razor and shave his head and beard and demonstrate in what manner the Lord will purify Jerusalem (the church). See Eze. 5.” Davidian S.D.A. World Session Report, 1964.

Prayer Thought:

“Though it is the crowning work of our salvation and of the setting up of the kingdom of Christ upon earth, yet the “investigative judgment” is one of the least understood and most mystified and confused Bible subjects of the age. Were it not essential to our salvation, the enemy would not have expended every possible effort to envelop it in darkness. Imperative, then, is the unrelenting need to search the Scriptures ‘as for hidden treasure,’ and to beseech God for the guidance of His Spirit in order rightly to understand this all-important subject. In vain though, [will be] any search for truth unless the motive be to learn and to do the will of God. Hence, “if any man,” says Jesus, “will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.” John 7:17.” Tract 3:3.

With that counsel in mind, let us “beseech God for the guidance of His Spirit in order rightly to understand this all-important subject.” In doing so, let us also ask for the humility of heart and mind to acknowledge truth when it is presented to us, regardless of any preconceived opinions we may hold, trusting that God is much more willing to give us the Holy Spirit to convict us of truth

and protect us from error than we can imagine.

INTRODUCTION

In Ezekiel chapter 4, the prophet was told to do certain things that were to symbolize the city of Jerusalem under siege for a period of 430 years (Eze. 4:1-6). In many of his studies Br. Houteff showed that the 430 years of the “siege” were to begin in the time of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation and end in 1930 (See 2TG 39). Yet, he also said that the 430 years were to terminate at the beginning of the Judgment for the Living and the “marking” of Eze. 9, which he put future from his time –

“The [430 year] prophecy by Ezekiel gives the information in detail from the beginning of Luther’s reformation to Ezekiel 9, marking of the 144,000, and unrolling of the scroll. (“Not all in regard to this matter is yet understood, nor will it be understood until the unrolling of the scroll.” Volume 6, page 17.)

“It makes it clear that there is a 430 year period from the reformation by Luther to the purification of the church, ...” 1 SR 116. [brackets added]

“Judgment Among The Living.

“‘Let both grow together,’ commands Christ, in regard to the commingling of the wheat and tares, ‘until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn.’ Matt. 13:30.

“Here the Lord is parabolically teaching that a time of investigation will come, and that then the angels will remove the sinners from “the congregation of the righteous.” Ps. 1:5

“‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.’ Matt. 13:47-49.

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“In both of these parables, Christ is sounding the forewarning that the investigative judgment will take place in the time called ‘harvest,’ which is the end of the world — the time in which the 2300 days culminate, just as the angel declared: ‘Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.’ Dan. 8:17. ‘...shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.’ Dan. 8:26. ‘...for yet the vision is for many days.’ Dan. 10:14.

“Pointing directly to the time that the investigative judgment shall take place among the living, Malachi parallels both parables in his prophecy:

“‘...the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple,...But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner’s fire and like fuller’s sope: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and

purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.' Mal. 3:1-3.

"As the cleansings called for in the parables [Matt, 13:30; 47-49] and in Malachi's prophecy [Mal. 3:1-3] have never taken place, the investigative judgment of the living is obviously, then, yet future. This investigative work is therefore occasioned by the work of separation in the earthly sanctuary (church), as brought to view also in Ezekiel 9." Tract 3 [1934, 1942], p. 42, 43.

Considering that Br. Houteff said that the Investigative Judgment (the marking of Eze.9) begins at the end of the 430 years, and he put the Investigative Judgment "future" from his time, then the true end of the 430 year "siege" must have also been future from his time. Note that, regarding the dates 1930 and 1931 on his charts, he said they were "not exact," and "not definite." He also said he used those dates because he had to use some date in order to make the charts –

"The chart on page 112, 113, shows its [the 430 years of Ezekiel's prophecy] termination in 1930, for as we stated before, it is outlined by the coincidences which perfectly fit the prophecy of Ezekiel. As it is impossible to make a time chart without any date to go by, we have used these coincidences, and it is stated that the date is indefinite. (See chart on page 133.) Ezekiel's prophecy is intended to point forward to the announcement of the predicted reformation, and the one through Abraham, to its completion (Ezekiel nine)." 2SR 275. [brackets added]

From what is stated therein, it should be forever clear that what began in 1930 with the coming of the Rod message was only Heaven telling us of the coming of "the announcement of the predicted reformation" at the end of the 430 years, and not that that "reformation" itself had actually come in 1930. That is, at the true end of the 430 years an "announcement" was to be made that the actual beginning of the "predicted reformation" had arrived, and the "marking" of Ezekiel 9 in (not before) the time of the Judgment for the Living was beginning.

Indeed, even the subtitle of Br. Houteff's first publication, The Shepherd's Rod, tells of this situation – "The 144,000 of Revelation 7 — Call For Reformation." Calling for reformation is a wholly different thing than announcing that the "predicted reformation" was actually in the process of taking place.

While it's obvious that Br. Houteff, at first, believed that said reformation had begun, or was to begin, in 1930, an overall view of the Rod message clearly shows that he was only pointing forward to the actual coming of that "reformation" at the end of the 430 years – the "marking" that would occur at the opening of the Judgment for the Living. He describes that "reformation" as "Ezekiel 9," which begins with a "marking" and ends with a slaying, not the other way around.

Br. Houteff said that a "marking" (sealing) of the 144,000 started in 1929 because the truth of what that "seal" consisted of began at that time. There is a certain amount of truth to that, but there is more to the matter which places that circumstance in a larger context. He distinguished the seal that the 144,000 were to be sealed with from the Sabbath seal (the seal of God) by referring to them as being "Two Seals" (1SR 127- 129). What he said that he understood at that time was that those who would go through the grave need only be sealed with the Sabbath seal after 1845 when Sabbath was revealed to the remnant church, but, after 1929, the 144,000 who were to live until Christ's second coming had to be sealed with a different seal – the one placed upon those who sighed and cried for the abominations in the church.

There is only one problem with that premise. That is, when Ellen White saw the 144,000 in a vision, she saw that on their foreheads was written “God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus’ new name” (EW 15). So the idea that there were “Two Seals” is not completely accurate, for the “two seals” he spoke of are actually only two parts of the complete seal that 144,000 are to receive. Both of those two parts of the complete seal are just what he said there are, but even then there is more to them what had been revealed through the time of his ministry. Just as Ellen White said that the time will come when we will proclaim the Sabbath (the 1st part of the seal) “more fully,” so we will also proclaim the truth of the 144,000 (the 2nd part of the seal) “more fully” as the scroll unrolls.

Since there were only two parts of the complete seal through Br. Houteff’s time, there had to be another unrolling of the scroll after 1929-1930 in which the 3rd part of the complete seal – Jesus’ new name – would be revealed. Moreover, that unrolling of the scroll and the “marking” with that 3rd part of the complete seal must begin at a specific time pointed out in prophecy, as had the first two parts of the seal. Additionally, the 144,000 could not be judged worthy of having their names retained in the Book of Life and their sins blotted out during the Judgment for the Living, and thereafter be delivered and remain alive until they are translated at Christ’s second coming, unless they were sealed with the complete seal before the time when their names came up in the judgment. That which is the determining factor as to whether or not one receives any part of the seal is their acceptance or rejection of the light revealed under the unfolding of the truth for that part of the seal.

In Ben Roden’s study, *Revival & Reformation 430 Year Prophecy* (Branch Lesson 2-3), he points out that even though Luther began a certain type of reformation in his own life around 1501, he was still very much a loyal Papist for well over a decade after that time, and had no thoughts of protesting against the Church during that time. In that study, Br. Roden gives the details of the reformation from history and the Spirit of prophecy as follows:

“1501 – At the age of 18 he entered the University of Erfurt. (Id. and G.C. 121:4)

““While one day examining the books in the library of the university, Luther discovered a Latin Bible. Such a book he had never before seen...now the deep conviction of

his condition as a sinner took hold upon him as never before.’ G.C. 122:2.

““1505 – ‘An earnest desire to be free from sin and to find peace with God led him at last to enter a cloister and devote himself to a monastic life.’ G.C. 122, 123.

““...he sought by his own works to obtain pardon and peace...But with all his efforts his burdened soul found no relief. He was at last driven to the verge of despair.’ G.C. 123:1. ...

“1507 – ‘Luther was ordained a priest...’ G.C. 124:1. (Funk and Wagnall’s Enc. ‘Luther’) ““Luther was still a true son of the papal church and had no thought that he

would ever be anything else.” G.C. 124:2.

“1512 – Luther received the degree of Doctor of Divinity at the University of Wittenberg. (G.C. 125:2 & Funk and Wagnall’s ‘Luther’)

“‘During the next four years Luther engaged in a severe mental struggle, seeking peace of mind and conscience.’ Funk and Wagnall’s Enc. under ‘Luther’

“1517 – ‘In 1517 the Dominican monk Johan Tetzel arrived in Wittenberg and began preaching the sale of indulgences for the rebuilding of St. Peter’s church at Rome.’ Id.

“Luther opposes Tetzel’s indulgence sales, posts a paper containing ninety-five theses against the sale of indulgences on the door of Wittenberg Chapel. (G.C. 129:2)

“Many of Luther’s congregation buy Tetzel’s indulgences. Luther refuses them absolution. They demanded their money back. Filled with rage, Tetzel declared he had orders from the pope to burn all opposers. (G.C. 128:3 and 129:0)

“Luther still a papist of the straitest sort. (G.C. 128:3)

“1518 – ‘Only a year had passed since the Reformer posted his theses on the castle church, ...

Luther was as yet but partially converted from the errors of Romanism...Luther was still a 4

supporter of the Roman Church, and had no thought that he would ever separate from her communion.’ G.C. 139:1-2. Branch Lesson No. 3:3.

From the foregoing facts, it is evident that the Protestant Reformation didn’t begin in earnest until well after 1500, for Luther didn’t even become a monk until 1505, and then became a Catholic priest in 1507 – something far different from protesting against the Catholic Church.

Though Br. Houteff prepared much of the material for use in the time when the “predicted reformation” would take place, such as its “organizational publication, The Leviticus ...” (1 Answerer 38), that governing organ was not even in full effect in his day as evidenced by the fact that he, alone, would issue membership cards and appoint all members of the Executive Council and trustees for the association’s properties, which was a different order of things than is delineated in the Leviticus. Within that very “reformation” document it’s stated that “its Constitution and By-Laws as herein codified will become fully operative” when “its name will be changed” (The Leviticus, Preface). Therefore, the “announcement of the predicted reformation” “Ezekiel’s prophecy is intended to point forward to” didn’t come in 1930, because the Protestant Reformation didn’t actually begin in 1500, and Luther didn’t really begin protesting until 1517, and even then he had no intention of separating from the Catholic Church.

Ben Roden also pointed out that Luther really made his personal severance from the Catholic Church when he married a nun in 1525, and that was the true beginning of the Protestant Reformation under Luther. Thus, in 1955, 430 years after Luther’s personal reformation, Ben Roden announced the opening of the Judgment for the Living.

This situation can be understood by the fact that Br. Houteff said that his message was “the final phase of the First Angel’s Message” (WHR 37). In the initial phase of the First Angel’s Message under William Miller there was a correction in the expected date of the cleansing of the sanctuary (i.e., the end of the 2300 days) that joined it as a “Midnight Cry” in the summer of 1844 at the same time the 2nd Angel’s Message announcing the fall of Babylon was being proclaimed. Thus, in 1955, there was, likewise, a correction made in the date of “final phase of the 1st Angel’s Message” (the end of the 430 years) at the time the final phase of the 2nd Angel’s Message (Rev. 18:1 – the Branch message) was announcing the fall of Babylon and the true opening of the Judgment for the Living.

While Br. Houteff made a general application of the “siege” of Eze. 4 to his reform work (one of more of a coincidence than of a direct application – see 1SR 129), the purpose of this study is to look at the events that are portrayed in Eze. 5 which are to happen when the “siege” of Eze. 4 is ended, and whether or not those things have happened; not how the specifics of the Eze. 4 siege do or don’t fit his work. In doing so we will be able to better understand the siege of Eze. 4 and how it relates to the opening of the Judgment of the Living and that which is to follow its opening.

One of the things that Br. Houteff taught was that when the Judgment of the Dead was over and the Judgment for the Living began the scroll was to unroll and we would receive a “new message”

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“....after the judgment of the dead which the Church has been preaching for a number of years is over, if the Church does not then receive a new message, the message of the judgment of the living, she will have no message, no oil for the time of the judgment of the living.” 2 TG 11:13 (unrevised)

As Br. Houteff repeatedly pointed forward from his time for the opening of the Judgment for the Living, then that would mean that the Judgment for the Dead was not over in his day and the “new message” for the time in the Judgment for the Living had not arrived, though the announcement of that “new message” had arrived and much of its content was being revealed. Though the above quoted TG is the unrevised version, the following is the revised version, which contains the same thought.

“Now what is the difference between the oil in the lamp and the oil in the vessel? — Just this: The oil that is in the lamp, that already lightens the traveler’s path toward the Master’s mansion, must represent Truth in progress. But the oil in the vessel, must represent Truth that is to lighten one’s path after the former Truth has accomplished its work. For

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example, after the harvest (Investigative Judgment) of the dead is past, other truths even more important must be introduced for the harvest of the living. I say more important truths because they are concerning the living themselves, concerning those whose own cases are to be weighed in the balances, those who personally are to be judged either as “wheat” or as “tares,” either as

good “fish” or as bad “fish.”

“Moreover, after the judgment of the dead which the Church has been preaching for a number of years, is over, if the Church does not then receive a new message, the message of the judgment of the living, she will have no message, no oil, for the time of the judgment of the living.” 2 TG 11:12, 13.

As the Rod message did not come “after the harvest (Investigative Judgment) of the dead [was] past,” but came in the final days of the Judgment of the Dead, the Rod message, of its own, cannot be the “other truths even more important” that “must be introduced for the harvest of the living.” That is, it cannot be the “new message” that was to be received “after the judgment of the dead ... is over” because the judgment of the dead was not over in his day. But that is not to say that the Rod message does not contain important material that is a significant part of the “new message” in “the time of the Judgment of the Living,” for it does. For those who may not be sure whether or not Br. Houteff believed that they were still in the time of the Judgment of the Dead in his day, we present the following –

“When finally the judgment passes from the dead to the living, thus outmoding by expiration the initial phase of the First Angel’s Message (the judgment of the dead), what timely Truth will the church then have for herself and for the world? What, indeed, if she does not now accept and practice the message of very present Truth, the final phase of the First Angel’s Message, which is presently announcing the stealthy approach of judgment upon the living, and which is knocking at each heart’s door?” WHR 37.

That tract, published in 1951, makes it quite clear that the judgment had not yet passed from the dead to the living at that time because Br. Houteff’s message (“the final phase of the First Angel’s Message”) was still in the process of “announcing the stealthy approach of judgment upon the living,” not announcing that it had already arrived.

One of the main teachings in the Rod message is that whatever light is to come to the church concerning the “great and dreadful day” of the Lord is to come through the work of “Elijah” – “the Messenger of the Covenant.” While Br. Houteff showed that his work of announcing the Lord’s coming suddenly to His temple at the opening of the Judgment for the Living, and preparing the people for that coming (Malachi 3:1-3) was in fulfillment of the coming of the “Messenger of the Covenant,” whom he identified as “Elijah,” he also said that the work of “Elijah” was to continue during the Judgment for the Living while it was in progress –

“All may for a surety know both “the day” and the Elijah as he proclaims it, because to our surprise he will point out that every Bible prophet describes the day and also tells what the Lord would have us do while it is approaching and subsequently while we are going through it. All will see that no one but Elijah can proclaim the day.” GCS 12.

The word “subsequently” is defined as meaning
“following in time; coming or being later than something else (subsequent events);

following in order of place.” Webster

So, it is clear from Br. Houteff’s use of the word “subsequently,” in the context of what he said in that statement about “Elijah’s” work was to announce the “day” “while it is approaching” (which is

exactly what the Rod message did), and “following” that announcement of its approach, “Elijah” is also to tell “what the Lord would have us do ... while we are going through it” in the “new message” that is to come when the Judgment of the Dead is “past.” It is thus, and only thus, that it can be said that “Elijah” never dies. This truth is made sure by Br. Houteff’s “last analysis” of the “Messenger of the Covenant” (“Elijah”) –

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“In the last analysis, however, the title Messenger of the Covenant belongs to the Holy Spirit. For example, 1 Peter 3:18-20 states that Christ preached to the antediluvians by the same “Spirit” Who “quickened” Him. But as He preached by the Spirit in the person of Noah, not of Himself, He thereby unfolded the truth that the Holy Spirit is in all His messengers alike.

“Thus “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Pet. 1:21.

Briefly summarized, the term Messenger of the Covenant means the Holy Spirit (the invisible Christ) in Heaven’s visible representative—be it Moses, John, Christ, Elijah, or some other.” 1 Answerer 79.

After faithfully performing the work of “Elijah” in “announcing the stealthy approach of judgment upon the living” (WHR 37), Br. Houteff was laid to rest. But “Elijah’s” work of telling us “what the Lord would have us do ... while we are going through it” (“other truths even more important”) continued through “some other” who was chosen to be “Heaven’s visible representative,” being invested with the living, prophesying Spirit. What many do not consider is that when the Lord comes suddenly to His temple to purify and judge His people, He does not do so in Person, but does so through the “Invisible Christ,” the Holy Spirit – the living Spirit of prophecy. It is thus only that “Elijah can proclaim the day” “while we are going through it.”

While Br. Houteff told us some of the things we would be doing when the Judgment for the Living opened, many of those things were only partially revealed in his day and required further illumination during the time when the Judgment for the Living was in progress. We’ll discuss some of those things later in this study. Were it not for the fact that the Lord has promised to “continue speaking” to us through the Spirit of prophecy (Tract 8:3; 12SC 3:3) we would be left in darkness as the scroll unrolls, and would be without the counsel that will bring us unto perfection and enable us to survive “the day.”

This explains why Br. Houteff couldn’t comment on Eze. 5. That is, the events that were to transpire in that chapter were not to occur until after the Judgment for the Living opened after the 430 year siege ended, and that had not met its fulfillment in 1930, 1931, or anytime during his ministry, so the Lord didn’t give him any light on those verses. Also, because certain events portrayed in Eze. 5 had not met their fulfillment during the days when Ben Roden was announcing that the Judgment for the Living had opened and that the “new message” (the Branch) that was prophesied to come (1TG 8:24, 26) was on the scene, he was not given light on the specifics of that chapter either. Br. Houteff explains the phenomenon of the unrolling of the scroll as follows –

“Still further, there are circumstances in connection with certain aspects of every message which

necessitate clarification. Such clarification, however, can be no greater than the light which shines at the time. And the light may come solely from within the message itself, or, again, it may derive from a limited understanding common to the time “then present”—an understanding which the messenger himself shares.

“Such a case was John the Baptist’s. Inspired to declare only the coming of the King, John was squarely confronted with the question concerning the setting up of the kingdom. He answered in keeping with the common understanding which he as well as the people had of the kingdom—that when the King arrived He would doubtless set up His kingdom and thus free His people from the Roman yoke. But when Christ finally appeared, He explained that the time for the kingdom to be set up, and for the Roman yoke to be removed from His people’s shoulders, was not yet come. And the truly “wise” gave no concern to these discrepant teachings, but gladly accepted the truth in its progressive form, and went on to higher and higher spiritual attainments, whereas those who stumbled on this disparity either rejected John as a false prophet and accepted Jesus as the Christ, or accepted John as a true prophet and rejected Jesus as a false Christ, and consequently slipped farther and farther backwards and downwards until they were no longer followers of either Christ or John.

“The ways of Inspiration are constant, the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Questions concerning revealed truth must therefore be answered in the same way today as they were in John’s time. And thus now as then, the critical, the skeptical, and the doubting will find many hooks upon which to hang their doubts. But likewise now as then, the doubters will be taken in their own craftiness.” 1 Answerer 49, 50.

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Therefore, let us humbly lay aside any preconceived ideas, and, with the Spirit’s aid, look at what was prophesied to happen when the siege of Eze. 4 ends.

EZEKIEL 5

The Judgment for the Living – The Purification of the Church

“And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber’s razor, and cause it to pass upon thine head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair.

“Thou shalt burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of

the siege are fulfilled: and thou shalt take a third part, and smite about it with a knife: and a third part thou shalt scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them.

“Thou shalt also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts.

“Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; for thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.” Eze. 5:1-4.

Therein we find that “when the days of the siege are fulfilled” Ezekiel was to shave his head and beard, symbolizing a purification (Lev. 14:8, 9: Num. 6:9, 18) and judgment (Isa. 7:20) of the church. The purification and judgment revealed therein is shown to be in 4 phases –

1. 1) The 1st third part of the hair was to be burned with fire in the midst of the city.
2. 2) The 2nd third part was to be smitten with the knife (sword) round about the outside of the city.
3. 3) The 3rd third part was to be scattered in the wind, and a sword was to be drawn out after it.
4. 4) After Ezekiel bound a small remnant of the hair (“a few in number”) in his skirt, he was to take

a portion of them and burn them in the fire, and from there a fire was to go forth into all the house of Israel.

Thus, the purification is to start “in the midst of the city” and eventually pass from there to “all the house of Israel.” While this has been generally well understood for a long time (1 Peter 4:17, Eze. 9:6), these verses of Eze. 5 give much more than a general view of how the purification is to proceed. That is, the purification is to be in sequential steps, each having its own distinct characteristics. It is to begin with what is shown symbolically as a third part of the hair being burned with fire in the midst of the city.

As some of the events of the purification during the Judgment for the Living are also revealed in the parable of the harvest of the wheat and the tares (Matt. 13:30), then the thrusting in of the sickle at the beginning of the harvest and the subsequent binding of the tares in bundles long before they are destroyed and before the wheat is put into the barn (see Tract 3, p. 64-65) must also be related to what is revealed in Eze. 5:1-4. That is, the “fire,” “sword,” and “sickle” must be representations of the same basic thing for they accomplish the same end – the purification of the church.

Hair is a symbol of “power, honor, glory, and talent (God-given gifts)” (1 Shepherd’s Rod, vol. 1, p. 55). Therefore, Ezekiel shaving his head and beard would be a symbol of the taking away of those things and the humbling of those who had formally possessed them. Why would the Lord so humble His people after the 430 year siege ended? They had just spent 390 years eating defiled bread, and forty more years in captivity (Eze. 4:8). They should have learned their lesson by the time the siege was over. But, evidently, such was not the case.

Isaiah was also shown what the situation would be after that time when the churches had been living on polluted doctrines. He, though, was shown the situation from the point of view of them being drunk on private theories, rather than being polluted by eating dung-baked bread. After saying that the leaders of the people are drunk and all tables are full of vomit (Isa. 28:7, 8), and that the Lord would again be gracious to them by sending them His word “precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a

little, and there a little,” he then relates what was to happen to them because they would not respond to His graces –

“To whom He said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. But the Word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.” Isa. 28:12, 13.

Therein we find that because they would not take heed to His Word as he revealed it in the progressive unrolling of the scroll, they would “go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.” By whom? The Lord, of course. Regarding this situation, Br. Houteff says,

“Those to whom this happens have no excuse.” 12 Symbolic Code, 8, 9. p. 8.

Evidently, the reason why Ezekiel was to symbolically take away and destroy the covering – the hair, a symbol of the church’s “power, honor, glory, and talent (God-given gifts)” – was because, as Br. Houteff said, they “have no excuse.” Sister White, in commenting upon these verses has this to say:

“...’For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people. To whom He said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.’ Why? — Because they did not heed the word of the Lord that came unto them.

“This means those who have not received instruction, but have cherished their own wisdom, and have chosen to work themselves according to their own ideas. The Lord gives these the test, that they shall either take their position to follow His counsel, or refuse and do according to their own ideas, and then the Lord will leave them to the sure result. ...” TM 418, 419.

What was the “sure result” of said rebellion? God taking away the covering, as symbolized by Ezekiel shaving his head and beard. Br. Houteff also spoke on this principle, especially as it relates to Eze. 4 –

“The difference between the Reformation during the 430 years and the one after, is this: During the 430 years “grace” lingered, whereas after this period of time has run out, and while Ezekiel is up, those who fail to attain to “righteousness by faith” will themselves have to pay the price of their sins. No longer are their sins laid upon Ezekiel, and no longer is Ezekiel lying down and inactive; no longer are they to be excused upon the ground of ignorance after the warning has been sounded in their ears ...” 2TG 39:13.

As it was Br. Houteff’s work to sound the “warning” of the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord in the ears of the Laodiceans by means of the Rod message, and then was to come the Judgment for the Living and the “new message” therein, then that 430 year period of grace had to extend through the time when the Rod message had sounded throughout the church as it had done around the time of his death in 1955. Had that period of grace not extended until the church

at large had had the opportunity to hear the Rod message of “warning,” see the unjust opposition to it, and take their stand on one side or the other of the controversy, God would not have been fair in bringing the judgments upon them that were to follow the end of the “siege.”

Among the many texts Br. Houteff applied to the Judgment for the Living and the purification of the church is Mal 3:5, 6 –

“And I will come near to you to judgment and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from

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his right, and fear not Me, saith the Lord of hosts. For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.’ – Mal. 3:5, 6.

“Here Inspiration explains how the Judgment for the Living begins, how the cleansing of the sanctuary on earth takes place (Dan. 8:14). And having unveiled His people’s shocking irresponsibility towards the unfortunate ones among them, and their taking advantage of others whenever possible, He then reassures that He changes not; that He is the same unerring and just God; that His ancient statutes and ordinances are ever lasting; that He has not changed them; that He will restore all things. He, as you will see, finally comes to the real trouble, then pleads His people accept His remedy.” Jezreel Letter, No. 9, p. 2.

Thus, not only is the church to experience the events symbolized by Ezekiel shaving his head and beard and then doing certain things with the hair when the “siege” is ended and the Judgment for the Living begins, but it’s also at that time that the Lord “will be a swift witness” against “the sorcerers,” “adulterers,” “false swearers,” and those who are irresponsible towards the “unfortunate ones among them.”

He is to do that when He comes suddenly to His temple,

“the time He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.” (Mal. 3:1-3).

Thus, the Judgment for the Living (the purification) begins with two simultaneous events when the Lord comes suddenly to His temple – one being His sitting to refine and purify the ministry (the sons of Levi), and the other His being a “swift witness” against the outstanding sins thereof – both of which involve the Lord rebuking and chastening His loved ones (Rev. 3:19).

In reading Br. Houteff’s early publications it is apparent that he was expecting the Judgment for the Living and the purification of the church to commence at the end of the 430 year “siege” of Eze. 4, which he determined to be 1930. Yet, not long afterwards, he repeatedly stated that the opening of the Judgment of the Living was yet future, but not very far so.

“... in view of the fact that our message is announcing the imminent purification of the church, the

time in which the angels are to sift out the hypocrites from among the faithful, the time in which the net is drawn to shore and the bad fish cast out, the cleansing of the sanctuary — the Judgment for the Living in “the house of God” (1 Pet. 4:17) is about to begin ...”, 1 TG 40:15 (1947).

Br. Houteff certainly bore a faithful witness against the sins pointed out in Mal. 3:5, 6 beginning in 1930. Yet, as he said that the time when the Lord was to be a “swift witness” as described in those verses was to take place when the Judgment for the Living would actually begin, and that that time was still future from his day, then the actual application of Mal. 3:5, 6 must also have been future from his time. Therefore, as the events of Eze. 5:1-4 that are to occur at the end of the “siege” are but another portrayal of the same events of Mal 3:5, 6, then the “siege” could not have ended when the “announcement” of the Lord’s coming to His temple for the Judgment for the Living came in 1930 through the appointed “Messenger” (Mal. 3:1), but had to continue until the Lord actually came suddenly to His temple and the Judgment for the Living began and the “new message” for that time came.

Those who are familiar with the Branch message are aware that Br. Roden taught that the Judgment for the Living began in 1955 when the 430 years from the actual beginning of the Protestant Reformation in 1525 came to an end. His reasons for believing such are well documented in his writings, so we direct the readers to those studies on our web site (<http://www.the-branch.org>) for his explanation of the matter.

Accordingly, with the ending of the 430 year period of the “siege” in 1955, the purification events in Eze.5, Mal. 3:3,5,6, and the parable of the harvest should have taken place beginning at that time. In Eze. 5, the first event to occur in the purification was Ezekiel shaving his head and beard and taking the 1st third part of it and burning it with “fire” in the midst of the city (Jerusalem).

10

Fire is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, which can either purify someone by separating them from their dross, or destroy them by searing their consciences, making them unable to repent (1 Tim. 4:2).

“For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.” Deut. 4:24.

As is always the case with the unrolling of the scroll, “when Truth cannot save, it kills” (2 TG 15:10).

Thus it is that the “fire” which saves or destroys is “inspired truth” (1 TG 8:22).

As the judgment of the living is the “harvest” (Tract 3, p. 87), and the first thing that is to occur in the harvest is that the “sickle” is to be thrust in and the tares bound into bundles, then events in Eze. 5:1-4 must also be a portrayal of that aspect of the harvest. Bear in mind that even though the tares are bound in bundles at the beginning of the harvest, they are not destroyed at that time.

“First the sickle is put to the grain, and next the grain is bound into sheaves, then threshed, after which it is put into the barn; and thereafter the chaff and the tares are destroyed.” Tract 3 65.

“...the harvest and the Judgment are counterparts...” 2 Answerer, p. 42.

Therefore, the “fire” that saves or destroys, and the “sickle” by which the harvest is performed and the wheat and tares are separated, are representations of the same thing – inspired truth – the unrolling of the scroll – the “new message” in (not of) the time of the Judgment for the Living. That is, both the “fire” and the “sickle” are representations of the “new message” that comes after the message (the Rod) that announces the coming of that “new message” has been made during the Judgment of the Dead, and comes after the “Judgment of the Dead is past,” “is over,” in the time of the Judgment for the Living.

“Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” Jer. 23:29.

THE 1ST THIRD PART

“Thou shalt burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled. Eze. 5:2.

In Eze. 5, the first thing that Ezekiel is to do with the 1st third of the shaven hair is to burn it “in the midst of the city [Jerusalem],” while in Mal. 3:5 the first ones that the Lord is to be a swift witness against are the “sorcerers.” In order to understand how these two things were accomplished and directly relate to each other we must first identify what the term “Jerusalem” applies to, and also what people must be doing in order for God to consider them to be “sorcerers.”

While Br. Houteff correctly identified “Jerusalem” as being the SDA ministry in general (1TG 6:25), that term also includes the Davidian leadership, as they too are a part of the SDA ministry. Indeed, the Davidians expect to be the ministry (“eleventh hour servants”) of the one and only remnant movement during the Loud Cry. Furthermore, God appointed Br. Houteff to the SDA leadership (ministry), regardless of the fact that the SDA leaders would not recognize said appointment. Moreover, in 1931 Br. Houteff declared that the SDA ministry was no longer the “storehouse” (the ministry that was to be supported by the tithe) and some time thereafter granted ministerial credentials to those Davidians who qualified for them.

That the Davidian leadership under Br. Houteff was also considered to be a part of “Jerusalem” can also be understood by the fact that in Jesus’ day there were two major factions in Jerusalem (the ruling city) – the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and both of them exercised a degree of leadership in Jerusalem. Therefore, the term “Jerusalem” can apply to the ministry, in general, depending on the context, and not just the SDA ministry. In this case, as “Jerusalem” is not contrasted with any other entity, then it must refer to the ministry as a whole.

11

This brings us to the term “sorcerers.” The root of Hebrew word rendered “sorcerers” is also translated “witch.” Concerning “witchcraft,” it is written –

“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.” 1 Sam. 15:23.

The word translated “witchcraft” therein is also translated “divination.” While many think of witchcraft and divination in the limited sense of certain occultic practices that have been openly witnessed throughout the ages, God looks beyond all of that and applies the term and its underlying principle – “rebellion” – to the leaders of His people who are preaching self, rather than faithfully following the Lord’s leading. To wit –

“Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.” Jer. 14:14.

The same thought concerning falsely prophesying being as “witchcraft” (rebellion) and “divination” is brought forth in Eze. 13:1-7 –

“And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD;

“Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!

“O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD. They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The LORD saith: and the LORD hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word.

“Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The LORD saith it; albeit I have not spoken?”

In summing up the points thus far revealed we find that when the “siege” of 430 years was to end the 1st third part of the hair was to be burned by fire (“inspired truth” – an unrolling of the scroll) in the “midst of the city” (Jerusalem – the ministry) when the Lord was to come to His temple (church) as a swift witness against the “sorcerers” (the rebellious preachers of self).

That very thing happened in 1955 after Br. Houteff died and Ben Roden was called to bear the message of the opening of the Judgment for the Living and associated truths. He first brought the light (fire) to the Davidian leadership in the autumn of 1955, and the SDA leadership one year later. It was their rejection of the unrolling of the scroll that, as it were, burned them up. The result in both cases was their spiritual destruction.

From the beginning of Ben Roden’s work, Florence Houteff and the other Davidian leaders fought against the Branch message by misapplying Br. Houteff’s writings and keeping the people from investigating it, even going so far as putting forth their own “lying divination” regarding the fulfillment of the Eze. 9 slaughter and the kingdom being set up in the promised land in 1959. Shortly thereafter, when their “lying divination” didn’t come to pass, they denounced the Rod message and messenger and acted illegally to dissolve the association and appropriate its assets to themselves, calling some of the ill-gotten gain “wage adjustments.”

Isaiah spoke of another type of “fire” and the results of following private interpretations –

“Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.” Isa. 50:10, 11.

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Not only does rejecting the Lord’s “fire” (truth) burn one up, but trying to make a substitute or a counterfeit of the heavenly “fire” through the sparks of one’s own kindling just brings sorrow. Yea, even Lucifer is to be destroyed by a fire that comes forth from himself –

“Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. Eze. 28:18

It was during that time that Br. Roden prophesied, by the Scriptures, of the foolishness that the Davidian leadership would venture upon should they continue to reject the fundamental Rod principle that “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.” (1 TG 10:27). Thus, in rejecting that first principle they subjected themselves to the destructive aspect of the Holy Spirit (fire). While that was bad enough, they compounded the evil by walking in the sparks of the false prophecy that came forth from Florence Houteff.

Another result of the attitude of the Davidian ministry during the time when Ben Roden was denouncing their sorcery was that they cut off support to any Davidian workers who accepted the Branch message. Then, after her false prophecy failed to materialize, Florence Houteff and others appropriated the bulk of the 1st tithe to themselves under the guise that they were owed it as “wage adjustments.” They even left some Davidian ministers in the field in trying circumstances because they cut off their wages. In doing that they became those who the Lord was to also bear a “swift witness” against – those who “oppress the hireling in his wages.” The Branch message also bore witness against those deeds.

Along with being a swift witness against the “sorcerers” and those who “oppress the hireling in his wages,” Malachi says that when the Lord comes suddenly to His temple He was also to testify against those “that oppress ... the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me.” (Mal. 3:5). Regarding that aspect of the Lord’s working at the time when that prophecy was to be fulfilled, we have previously read that Br. Houteff said that the Lord, “unveiled His people’s shocking irresponsibility towards the unfortunate ones among them, and their taking advantage of others whenever possible. ...” That very thing happened just as the Lord said it would.

Not only did Florence Houteff and many other Davidian leaders denounce Br. Houteff and sell off the association’s assets after he died and her false prophecy failed to materialize, but they also took the 2nd tithe funds that amounted to around \$470,000 and managed to divide up most of it

among a very small number of people. That 2nd tithe fund was for the poor and elderly in the church, among other benevolent usages. As that situation was unfolding, Ben Roden was moved to testify against their thievery and, among other things, wrote a study based on Zech. 5:1-4 titled The Flying Roll which showed that the Lord had faithfully foretold of the situation and its outcome. Thus, along with testifying against the “sorcerers” and them that “oppress the hireling in his wages” when the Judgment for the Living opened in 1955, the Branch message testified against “His people’s shocking irresponsibility towards the unfortunate ones among them, and their taking advantage of others whenever possible,” just as the Lord prophesied it would. That sad situation existed among the Davidian leaders partly because they were not thinking that the message to the “Angel” (ministers) of the Laodiceans also applied to them.

As a consequence of rejecting the Branch message, the Davidian leadership lost whatever spiritual ground they may have gained under Br. Houteff’s leading. Not only were Florence Houteff and those on her illegal Executive Council spiritually burned up when they rejected the unrolling of the scroll and chose instead to walk in sparks of their own kindling, but a number of other Davidian ministers suffered a similar fate as they went about putting themselves forward as being new leaders of the movement and establishing their independent associations, using private interpretations of the Rod message and their former positions in the work to gather others about them so as to fleece them and keep them from hearing and keeping up with “the progressively revealed Truth.” (1 TG 12:18). Some of them professed to be vice-presidents (or whatever), in spite of the fact that they created those positions themselves. They did that because they knew better than to claim to be the association’s president for that would have meant that they would have to be a true prophet with a true timely message.

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Thus, another part of the “harvest” parable was being fulfilled. That is, after the “sickle” (the “new message”) was thrust in at the beginning of the harvest (the separation) the tares were being bound in “bundles.” As those who formed the different so-called Davidian associations had no Biblical mandate to do so, nor living prophetic voice at their heads, then those “bundles” could be nothing more than gatherings of “tares” who were fighting against the unrolling of the scroll that was sent to garner the wheat into the “barn.”

Though some of those initial pretenders faded away, a few of the more forceful among them have remained. M. J. Bingham was one. Until his death, he put himself forward as being the “porter,” which (to him) meant that he was the one left in charge, even though he could not show from the Bible by both types and prophecies where his work was clearly delineated, though he did attempt to do so. Since his death his wife has been doing the likewise.

On one hand they have been putting forth new interpretations of Scriptures in addition to those in the Rod, yet on the other hand they teach that the Judgment for the Living has not opened yet. What is significant about this is that Br. Houteff said that his message was announcing the coming of the “new message” when the Judgment for the Living opens, but he did not allow any room for any other light to come between his announcement of the “new message” and its actual coming. If the Lord had intended to bring us additional light after the Rod message came but before the Judgment for the Living opened, He surely would have told Br. Houteff to tell us that rather than

having him tell us that the opening of the Judgment for the Living was “imminent,” was “about to begin,” was “almost here.” Those descriptive words were used 60+ years ago, yet many Davidians say that those words are still “Present Truth” and will continue to be such until who knows when. We say that because without the proper application of the 430 years prophecy to mark the actual opening of the Judgment of the Living the Davidians are truly a ship without a course.

Don Adair is another one of the pretenders. He took advantage of the chaos caused by Florence Houteff and her associates to reprint the Rod literature and gain a following around himself.

In the 1960s, when the court erroneously and unlawfully decided to divide up the 2nd tithe fund among those who had been members prior to 1962, Ben Roden decried the situation and called upon Davidians to refuse to take back that 2nd tithe money that they had given to the Lord for the poor and elderly. Yet, Don Adair took his portion, and M. J. Bingham and his wife may have done the same. Both of those men began by walking in the sparks of their own kindling and rejected the Branch message, and the “fire” spread from them to those who they came in contact with as their “bundles” grew.

Therefore, there are many people today who profess to be “Davidians” because they received the Rod literature and studies from them, yet have left their fellowships and have set up their own associations on the same shaky foundations. The irony of this situation is that neither Don Adair nor M. J. Bingham had the legal right to grant fellowship certificates from the true Davidian association to themselves, let alone anyone else. The whole “Davidian” world today is based on fraud. That is not to say that there are not many who are studying the Rod message who God considers to be Davidians because they are living up to the light of the Rod as the Spirit has convicted them, it’s just that they don’t have any lawful roots to the original association.

Similarly, in the fall of 1956, when the SDA leadership was presented with the same unrolling of the scroll concerning the opening of the Judgment for the Living and kindred truths, they too were burned up because they also rejected the most fundamental principle of the movement – that being that the remnant church is to have within it the “Testimony of Jesus” (the Spirit of prophecy). Their rebellion manifested itself in their openly denying the truth of Christ’s ongoing ministry and atonement in the heavenly sanctuary, and the work of the Spirit of prophecy in the church when they met with the Evangelicals (Martin and Barnhouse) at that same time. They had already prepared themselves for that fall by rejecting the Rod message, and now they had reaped the results of that rebellion by being burned up by the fire of Truth.

Moreover, they had also set themselves up for that fall when they rejected the 1888 message that put the law in its proper setting in regards to the Gospel. Jones and Waggoner had come showing that it was not the feast days nor any law that was nailed to the cross, but it was our sins. So when Ben Roden called for the church to return to keeping the Bible feast days in antitype under the New Covenant with its new priesthood

(the Melchizedek priesthood), the SDA ministry fell backwards and let down the sword of truth

wielded in the Protestant Reformation.

One example of their fall was the situation that involved M. L. Andreason. He was at one time the Secretary for the SDA General Conference and one of their most prominent Bible scholars. He was also foremost in putting together the 1929 Sabbath School Quarterly that contained the light that God eventually unfolded into the Rod message.

In 1942, twelve years after Volume 1 of the Shepherd's Rod was first published and the issues of the SDA ministry's gross departures from their foundational principles and practices were raised, a meeting took place between M. L. Andreason and Victor Houteff. The written report of that meeting by this high official of the SDA church clearly showed that the ministry of the SDAs was willing to, and actually did, confederate and conspire among themselves to push aside the Davidians and their call for reforms within their own church rather than openly addressing the grave issues of the departure from some of the most fundamental SDA doctrines and practices. In that report he stated that, though he believed many of the issues of reform raised by Victor Houteff were either insignificant or untrue, there were other serious issues raised which should not be addressed as such would not look good for the SDA ministry. Therefore, he recommended not addressing any of the issues at all.

Then, after some of the leading SDA brethren met with the Evangelicals in 1956 and published the book, Questions and Answers on Doctrine, wherein they denied some of the most prominent points of doctrine that defined the SDA movement, M. L. Andreason wrote a sharp rebuke of that book and their actions. Because he did that, he was stripped of his ministerial credentials and wages, though they restored his credentials to him after he had died a short time later. That controversy had a greater negative effect on the SDA ministry and congregations than many are willing to admit. The reason we say that is because Andreason and others were preaching what came to be known as "Last Generation Theology," which teaches that the last generation can and must be sinless before Christ comes in the clouds of heaven. That basic teaching is also at the heart of the Rod and Branch messages. So, when the SDA leadership rejected what Andreason was teaching in that regards, they were also rejecting the Rod and Branch messages.

That situation has brought about division and weakness within the SDA ministry that they have not recovered from to this day. Thus, they too were burned up by the destructive power of the Holy Spirit because they rejected the sanctifying truth, not only in the Rod and Branch messages, but in the testimonies of Ellen White that would have led them to accept the unrolling of the scroll in those messages had they heeded her counsels as how to properly look for and investigate new light.

This truly was the opening of the Judgment for the Living at the end of the “siege” and the fulfillment of the first part of Eze. 5:1, 2 – the burning of the 1st third part in “the midst of the city.” Those rebellious acts of the SDA and Davidian ministries at the very time the Branch message came and announced the end of the siege and the opening of the Judgment for the Living werenot mere coincidences. They were out-workings of the divine plan to humble the glory of man to the dust so that God could magnify the law and make it honorable, while at the same timeshowing His great mercy and longsuffering over the decades since those things occurred byallowing them time to see the sad results of their sorceries and thefts (the spiritual dearth andweakness in the congregations) and to repent.

THE 2ND THIRD PART

“and thou shalt take a third part, and smite about it with a knife.” Eze. 5:2.

This verse is a bit obscure in the KJV. Where it reads “smite about it,” some may assume that the “it” refers to the third part of the hair. But it should read, “smite about her,” referring to the “city” (Jerusalem). The word “about” refers to the area surrounding the city, rather than inside of it. The same word is used to refer to the area “round about” Jerusalem, rather than within it in Eze. 5:5 –

“Thus saith the Lord GOD; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her.”

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Therein we have the same distinction between the words “in the midst of” and “round about her” since the Hebrew text there reads the same as in verse 2 in regards to the locations where the judgments take place. See also Nu 2:2; 11:31, 32; Jos 21:11, 42; 1Ki 4:31; Ps 34:7; and Ps 97:2 for places where the Hebrew word translated “about it” in Eze. 5:2 is translated to mean an area outside of, and surrounding another area.

We’re pointing this out because the judgment upon the 1st third was to take place “in the midst of the city [the ministry],” while the 2nd phase of the judgment was to take place in the area surrounding (“about”) the city (the ministry) – that is, the active laity. Note that the type of judgment on the 1st part of the hair is different from that on the 2nd part of it, though there is a similarity.

That is, the difference is that the 1st portion of the hair was to be burnt in the fire, while the 2nd portion was to be smitten with a “knife.” The Hebrew word translated “knife” in verses 1 and 2 is translated “sword” around 401 times of its 413 occurrences, and is also the same word translated “sword” in v. 2. So, we will use the word “sword” herein to refer to it so as to maintain the Bible consistency.

The similarity between the 1st and 2nd phases of judgment is that both the “fire” and the “sword” represent “inspired truth.” Another difference between the two phases is in the fact that a “sword” represents something generally used in time of conflict (war), while fire, though also used in warfare, has a much broader usage.

In 1955, when the “new message” of the opening of the Judgment for the Living came to both the Davidian and SDA leaderships, there was no real conflict over it going on in the church in general because it went to the leadership first. But, when it went to the rest of the congregations there was a warfare against it instigated by both of those ministries because they were actively working to keep the light from the people. This is especially true when Ben introduced the feast days.

Therefore, when the Present Truth message came to both the SDA and Davidian laities (those round about the city [the ministry]), they found themselves in the midst of the warfare against it brought on by those in the ministries and had to either join in with the unjust opposition to it and find themselves smitten by that “sword” of truth, or surrender to it and be spared. Note that it says that that sword was only to “smite” the 2nd portion of the hair, not “slay” it. The Hebrew word translated “smite” there is a different word than “slay,” as in Eze. 9:6. Being smitten (wounded) with a sword does not necessarily lead to death.

Thus, due to the controversy caused by the ministry’s (SDA’s and Davidian’s) warfare against the message, many of the laity in the church (those round about the city [the ministry]) were, in one way or another, wounded (smitten) when they were confronted by the sword of truth and fought against it. Those of the laity who would not honestly and prayerfully investigate the message, and who turned a blind eye and deaf ear to the unjust way the ministers were treating those who accepted the message fell backwards in their spiritual walk. The SDA ministers had already rejected the Rod message that warned of the coming of the Judgment for the Living, and now they were bearing the results of their backsliding as that phase of the Judgment was opening. The same thing happened in the Davidian congregations, but even more so because they professed to believe the Rod message that prophesied of the “new message” that was to come when the Judgment for the Living opened, and of the nearness of that event.

Instead of earnestly preparing themselves to give the Loud Cry, the SDAs went backwards toward the world and brought many unsanctified theories and practices into their congregations. Even many of the more spiritual ministers among them gave way to the demands of those who wanted to bring in worldly devices in order to make the church appear more appealing to new people or others who were not fully committed to Christ, His church, and its standards.

Though the Davidian congregations didn’t go back into the world the same way the SDAs did, they followed after the practices of the fallen churches by following leaders who didn’t manifest the true gift of prophecy. As one of the prime tenets of the Rod message is that the church must be led through the Spirit of prophecy or any revival and reformation without that gift among them was bound to fail (1TG 10:21, 27), then the Davidians rejecting the living Spirit of prophecy in the Branch message and choosing to follow the various “vice presidents” (most of whom did not even claim to have that gift) made them “super Laodiceans” – saying that because they had the Rod message they were truly “rich and increased with goods and in need of

nothing" (no more prophets, no more truth). This, too, brought weakness and confusion into the church in general because the Davidians had been telling the church of their great need to have a living prophet among them. But after Br. Houteff died they started telling people that no more prophets were to come, thus confusing them and watering down the Lord's message, making them think that they didn't need the Voice of the living God among them.

Thus, the "sword" of unfolding truth also smote those Davidians who were "about" the city (the ministry), the laity.

THE 3RD THIRD PART

"and a third part thou shalt scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them."

Another result of the rebellion (witchcraft – sorcery) of SDA and Davidian leaderships when they turned away from God's grace as He was sending new light and began to war against those who embraced the additional messages, and the greater part of the laity blindly accepting their mock investigation of the additional messages rather than investigating the messages for themselves, was that many new people who were coming in contact with the SDA and Davidian movements were discouraged from heartily joining either of them, and either turned away from their fellowships or attended meetings without formally joining them.

Ellen White said that the Holy Spirit was not bringing many people into the church at a certain time during her lifetime due to the poor spiritual condition of those already in the church. The situation is even worse today in both the SDA and Davidian congregations. While the SDA church says that there are around 17 million members worldwide, less than 7% of them are in the U.S., where the Rod and Branch messages received the greatest amount of exposure, and where the opposition against them has been the most open and aggressive and the most embarrassing to the SDA church. That makes around 1.1 million members in the U.S. But the SDA U.S. membership has been floating around that number for decades. It's estimated that there is another 3 and 7 million people who attend SDA churches worldwide but who are not baptized members.

But those figures don't include a great number of people who have turned away from the church due to many other factors, most all of which have arisen because of the church members failing to come up to the light they already have and not having the characters one would expect from a body of people who seemingly have so much Bible light shining on them.

While the foregoing numbers and circumstances apply to the mainline SDAs, the situation is similar in the world of so-called Davidians today. At its height, around the time that Br. Houteff died, there were about 1400 Davidians. After Florence Houteff's prophecy of the fulfillment of the Eze. 9 "slaughter" and the kingdom being set up in the promised land happening in 1959 failed to happen many "daughter" "Davidian" associations sprang up, each professing to be 100% Rod believers, yet teaching that there were to be no more prophets until the special resurrection – that the work of "Elijah the prophet" had met its complete and final fulfillment in Br. Houteff's work.

As many of those who were learning the Rod message from those “daughter” associations – who were, each and every one, opposed to the true Rod definition and stated need of the “living Spirit of prophecy,” as faithfully emphasized in the Branch message – they were discouraged from honestly investigating the Branch. The opposition to the Branch message and the unrolling of the scroll has been done mainly by misrepresentation and character assassination. This situation caused many who were coming into the reform movement to go from one of those “daughters” to another, or just leave their fellowship altogether and then to be “scattered in the wind” (as are so many who have come in contact with the decadent SDA movement).

Thus, after the honor, glory, power, and talent (hair) were taken away from the SDA and Davidian ministries when they were burned up in the fire of “ever-increasing light,” and were also taken away from their membership at large when they were smitten with the Lord’s “sword,” the 3rd portion of the hair was “scattered in the wind” and a “sword” was sent out after them. That is, because of the leaders’ lack of Christian character and true spirituality, the result of their stand against unfolding truth, and the same conditions in the congregations who were blindly following those leaders, many people left the church fellowship, choosing not to be around such darkness and conflict. They used those circumstances as an excuse to not participate in the

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work of correcting the situation and found themselves “scattered in the wind.” They refused to humble themselves and seek for evidence that the Lord knew exactly what was going on in His remnant people, and was faithfully and actively working to bring His erring children the remedy through His appointed agencies.

But God didn’t leave them to themselves “scattered in the wind.” He sent the sword of Truth after them. That sword was to give them no rest as it pursued them. That is, the convictions they were under as they were investigating the Advent message, and even the Rod reform message (as the case may be), could not be easily shaken and has kept coming after them as would a pursuing enemy.

It is somewhat like what Jacob must have thought as he wrestled with the Angel who was trying to bless him, even though Jacob thought he was an enemy. At a certain point during the wrestling Jacob must have thought that he had, as it were, bitten off more than he could chew, and wished that he had never engaged in the struggle. Yet, it was too late to just walk away. He had to see the matter through to the end.

Such it has been with those who were “scattered in the wind” – the sword of truth has pursued them wherever they have been scattered. The Lord is not going to cease from pursuing them, as He intends to bless them as the Angel did Jacob, or bring judgments upon them for trying to remain neutral in a time when all decisions are critical. One songwriter stated that principle quite simply – “In ceremonies of the horsemen, even the pawn must hold a grudge.”

THE FOURTH PART OF THE PURIFICATION

“Thou shalt also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts.

“Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; for thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.” Eze. 5:3, 4.

After Ezekiel did what he was told with the 3 third parts of the hair, he was told to take a small remnant of the hair and protect it from the judgments that came upon the rest of the hair by binding it in his garment. Yet, not all of that remnant was to escape judgment thereby for he was told to “take of them” and cast that portion of the remnant “into the midst of the fire.” Note that it does not say that he was to take “them” (implying all of them) but “of” them (implying only a portion of them).

As the “fire” into which the 1st third of the hair was to be cast was “in the midst of the city [Jerusalem],” then that must also be the place where the “fire” was and where that portion of the preserved remnant of the hair was also to be cast. As “Jerusalem” is a symbol of the ministry, then this event must also take place upon another portion of the ministry.

This time, though, it represents the ministry of the preserved portion – the Branch. But, as all of those who became members of the true Davidian association after it received its name change to “Branch” were candidates to become the 11th Hour laborers (ministers in the Loud Cry), then that portion of the preserved hair that was cast into the “fire” represents a portion of those in the whole Branch movement, and not just the leading ministers (though the judgment was to begin there with those who had the greatest light), because all Branches were potentially subject to being a part of that portion of the preserved remnant that was to be burned in the “fire.”

As “the fire” in v. 4 represents the same thing as it does in v. 2, then it must also represent the unrolling of the scroll – progressive truth that either saves or destroys. So, just as the unrolling of the scroll under Ben Roden brought judgment upon the ministries of the SDAs and Davidians, and on their respective members and those others who came in contact with them but did not formally become or remain a part of them, just so did the unrolling of the scroll under Lois Roden do likewise to the members of the Branch – that small remnant of the hair that was hidden in Ezekiel’s garment. While those who had accepted the Branch message under Ben Roden had been preserved from the judgments that had come upon the rest of the church at that time because they were hidden in Ezekiel’s skirt, they too were to be investigated and judged by an unrolling of the scroll – this time under Lois Roden – either being purified by the trying “fire,” or burned up by it.

Many of those who were in the leadership and many who were general members of the Branch under Ben Roden openly rebelled against the unrolling of the scroll when Lois Roden began to teach on the femininity of the Holy Spirit and related subjects. The test even came upon Ben Roden, himself. He, at first, did not receive the light on the femininity of the Holy Spirit, but later did and rejoiced in it.

One of the first and most notable ones who fought against that unrolling of the scroll was their son George, who was the vice president of the association under Ben's presidency. After Ben died in 1978, George put himself forth as the next president of the association, basing said claim on the premise that he was Ben's firstborn. Though he later accepted Lois' teaching on the femininity of the Holy Spirit, he rejected her as being the president of the association.

Some of the other leaders who at first fought against the idea of the femininity of the Holy Spirit and Lois' calling to the leadership were Perry Jones (the association's press secretary) and Clive Doyle (the association's printer). Both of those men and many of Perry's family and all of Clive's family ended up with David Koresh. Perry was one of the first to die on the day of the shootout in 1993. His daughter, Rachel, became Koresh's wife at age 15, and died in the fire, along with her children and other siblings. One of Clive's daughters who had children by Koresh died in the fire, while Clive came out of the building at the time of the fire with some serious burns.

While people's reactions to the message of the femininity of the Holy Spirit was a determining factor in their eventual outcome, there was another issue that was even more consequential in their fate. That is, in 1976, Ben called for the SDA leadership to begin keeping the Lord's Supper daily at their headquarters at the times of the morning and evening sacrifice (9am and 3pm). In 1981, Lois called for all Branches to do the same wherever they were. That included the necessary self-examination symbolized by the washing of feet. That's where many of those leaders stumbled and fell. They failed to allow the Holy Spirit to bring them to the humility of mind and heart whereby they could partake in the Lord's Supper without it being a curse to them. Thus, when the devil came along around that same time in the person of Vernon Howell (aka, David Koresh) they chose to follow his satanically inspired leading, and brought shame and reproach upon themselves and the whole movement (SDAs and Davidians included).

Eze. 5:4 says that the result of that portion (not the whole) of the preserved hair being cast into the fire would be that

"thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel."

During and following the judgment that came upon Koresh and those ex-Branches who followed him in 1993, many in the SDA and Davidian movements, and even some of those in the Branch who rejected Lois' leading, including many on the fringes of the movements, and along with a vast number of other professing Christians (who are also of the "house of Israel"), said, as it were, "Aha!" (see Eze. 25:3, 26:2; and Ps. 35:19- 21). That is, they used that event to blacken the whole movement by saying that Koresh and his followers were true representatives of what accepting the Branch or the Rod or even the Adventist messages leads to. They also used the fact that Koresh was putting himself forward as a "prophet" to vilify the whole idea that God intends to use the gift of prophecy to guide His people. The false representations and outright lies brought forth by those who knew better (or who have had the opportunity to learn the truth of the matter since then) to mar the visage of the Branch since that time from a myriad of sources are too numerous to mention.

Besides those who were bearing a false witness concerning Koresh and his true relationship (or, better said, his lack of relationship) with the Branch, there have been many, within the church, and without, who have blindly accepted the false reports, using them as an excuse to avoid

investigating the Branch message or becoming an active member of it.

“‘Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.’

“False speaking in any matter, every attempt or purpose to deceive our neighbor, is here included. An intention to deceive is what constitutes falsehood. By a glance of the eye, a motion of the hand, an expression of the countenance, a falsehood may be told as effectually as by words. All intentional overstatements, every hint or insinuation calculated to

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convey an erroneous or exaggerated impression, even the statement of facts in such a manner as to mislead, is falsehood. This precept forbids every effort to injure our neighbor's reputation by misrepresentation or evil surmising, by slander or tale bearing. Even the intentional suppression of truth, by which injury may result to others, is a violation of the ninth commandment.” Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 309.

God cannot bless those who in any way take advantage of another's adverse circumstances or calamity in order to justify their own pernicious ways. In the interests of true justice and equity He must turn His face away from them and allow them to suffer the sure results of their words and actions. Ellen White says that even repeating a report which one does not personally know is true or false is also a form of bearing a false witness.

Therefore, the fire of judgment has gone out from that situation to “all the house of Israel” and is having the effect of burning them up because of their saying “Aha” and their false witnesses (see Rev. 21:8). In God's eyes, the glory (covering – hair) they may have had when they were holding up the light of truth (to whatever degree) has been taken away from them, and will continue to be so until, and if, they repent of their sorceries, thefts, and oppression.

As the casting of a portion of the preserved part of the hair into the “fire” was to cause the “fire” to come forth into “all the house of Israel,” then that also must include those in the Branch who did not join with Koresh but who also chose to go some other way rather than following the living Spirit of prophecy. After Ben Roden died in 1978, some of the Branches joined George Roden for a while in his opposition to Lois' message, or simply refused to keep up with the unrolling of the scroll, and, after Lois died in 1986, the fiery trial came upon all of those who had been associated in one degree or another with the Branch. The trial had begun in 1981 when Lois instituted the Lord's supper daily for all Branches, and after she died the real test had come.

After Lois died, rather than getting together and seeking light from the Lord as to what we were to do in that time of crisis, many of those who were previously with the Branch just abandoned the church's identity and property and either followed one or another who was putting him/her self forward as the new leader of the movement or they just followed their own inclinations.

In 1981, around the same time Vernon Howell (aka, David Koresh) first came to the Branch, Charles Pace began preaching what would a few years later (in 1984) become his claim to fame (at least in his mind). When he first presented his message to Lois, she saw that there were some

major errors in it, so she told him to stop teaching it. But he refused to do so, so she had to place him under a censure, which meant that he could still attend the church meetings but not teach at them. After Lois died, he set up his own association in Alabama and called it "Living Waters Branch of Righteousness."

Around 1996, he moved to the Waco area and began to set himself up on New Mt. Carmel Center. In 1998, he moved onto the property during the property trial and has been putting himself forward as being the prophetic leader of the Branch. Just prior to that trial, he dropped the name of his association and took up the name, "The Branch, the Lord (YHWH) Our Righteousness." During that trial the court ruled that the Koreshians were not the trustees of the property, but the issue of who was the true representative of the association was left unsettled. Pace had been a part of that suit but withdrew from it and signed a document in which he said that he was acknowledging the Koreshian's claim. Therefore, Pace took advantage of that situation to move onto the property. Since the court would not allow the true issue of who had the right to the property to be resolved, the law enforcement agents there have been somewhat protecting Pace while he is on the property simply because he has public utilities there in his name. He now claims to be the successor to Koresh.

One of his newest teachings is that Saturday is not the 7th-day Sabbath, but one must use the sun in its quarterly cycles (the two Equinoxes and the two Solstices) and count the 3rd day after each of those as the Sabbath. He says that since the sun was created on the 4th day, and thus was the day of the Equinox (as Br. Houteff said), then the 3rd day following that 4th day was the 7th day, and, therefore, the Sabbath. While that was true that the 3rd day after the Equinox was the Sabbath of the creation week, the Equinox has nothing to do with the weekly cycle thereafter. Irrespective of that, he concludes that we must also reckon the Sabbath by

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the sun's quarterly cycles. He says that the Sabbath calendar is "reset" on each new Equinox and Solstice. We are only mentioning this because of his being on New Mt. Carmel Center at this time and, therefore, influencing many people. It is quite obvious that he is walking in the "sparks" of his own kindling. But he did not come to be in that condition overnight. He has been rejecting the unrolling of the scroll for quite a while.

In 1990, Pace published something called, *It Is Finished*. That presentation revealed that Pace was saying that Christ was no longer interceding His blood for us, and that to keep the wine emblem of the Lord's Supper would be an "abomination." He had been teaching that we no longer need to keep the Lord's Supper at all since shortly before Lois' death, and had stopped keeping it himself. He has bounced back and forth between keeping it and not keeping it, and has changed his views regarding the blood emblem (the wine). But all of that goes back to the time when, in 1981, Lois instituted the Lord's Supper daily, for that is when Pace began to put himself forth as having "new light" and did so against the counsels of the church's president, Lois Roden. He, like those who ended up with Koresh, would not properly examine his own condition, and humble himself.

Further evidence that he has been walking in the sparks of his own kindling is that he has also

been teaching that the “slaughter” of Eze. 9 took place upon the Koreshians in 1993 at the hands of the five men with swords of that chapter, which he says were the “ATF” and “FBI.” He says that in spite of the fact that Br. Houteff said that the men of Eze. 9 who perform the slaughter are “supernatural beings” (2 Answerer 41, 42), and that “they are like the three angels of Revelation 14:6-11 (Tract 3: 67), something the ATF and FBI were not. He also applies Nahum’s prophecy to that 1993 event. Thus, the fire that has gone out to “all of the house of Israel” when that portion of the preserved hair was cast into the fire has burned away any sense Charles Pace and those with him had, and that condition has spread to others he has come in contact with at Mt. Carmel Center and in the media. But he is not in the least bit alone in this.

Note that we are not saying that the 1993 fire that resulted in the death of Koresh and many of his followers is the “fire” that is referred to in Eze. 5. They (that is, the hair which represents their righteousness) were tried by the “fire” of truth that they rejected to follow Koresh, and, thus, were spiritually burned up long before the 1993 fire. They were also burned up by the sparks of kindling that came forth from Koresh and even from themselves also for they, too, had to create private ideas and theories of their own to justify their acceptance of Koresh’s. That is, they had to lie to themselves in order to accept his lies. It was thus they were spiritually burned up before that 1993 incident.

All of the leaders of the various so-called Davidian groups today are in the same condition, and for the same reason. They have been using the incident with Koresh to speak out against the unrolling of the scroll in the Branch (especially under Lois Roden), but not in truth or righteousness.

In 1997, those so-called “Davidians” in Missouri who call themselves “Bashan” published a 48 page magazine titled, Conflict in Texas, A Report and Analysis of the Koresh Movement. Of note are two articles therein titled, Historic Division Between the “Branch” and The Davidian Seventh Day Adventists, and, History: Roden to Koresh, From Rodenville to the Conflagration; and A Feminine Holy Spirit? While those articles rightly speak against David Koresh, they are full of false representations when it comes to the history and teachings of Ben and Lois Roden. We have written a candid review of those articles called, Taking Up a Reproach, that is posted on our web site, to which we direct the reader’s attention.

Another man who is putting himself forward as the leader of the “Davidians” and has been using the 1993 event to disparage the Branch is Don Adair. Historically, he has opposed the Branch work under Ben Roden, even to the extent of fighting against the message of the restoration of the Bible feast days (which Br. Houteff said were taken away from the early church and supplanted by pagan festivals, and were to be restored to the remnant church [see 2TG 6:20]) by saying that Ben was “Jewish” and that he was trying to bring us under the “Old Covenant” – this, in spite of the fact that Br. Houteff said that the feasts are to be kept “in antitype” (2TG 37:14, 15), which is how Ben Roden also said they were to be kept.

Don Adair has a 28-page publication called, Keep The Feast Laws Today? No!. Therein he doesn’t even address the fact that Br. Houteff said that the early church kept the feast days that were taken away from them because of their transgressions, and were to be restored to the remnant church. Instead, after showing that Br. Houteff said that the feasts are to be kept in antitype only, Adair says if one is to keep the Passover he must slaughter and eat a lamb – something which Ben Roden neither taught nor practiced. Throughout that

publication he repeatedly states that the feast days (along with the animal sacrifices) were “nailed to the cross.” A long time ago Jones and Waggoner showed that it was not any law that was nailed to the cross, but it was our sins (“the handwritings of ordinances that was against us” – Col. 2:14). Adair’s whole presentation is nothing but one convoluted attack on Ben Roden and the feast days.

After the 1993 event, that man began using that incident to not only discourage others from even investigating the Branch message, but has been saying that what happened to Koresh and his followers is a result of the teachings of Ben and Lois Roden. After saying that Koresh had gained control of New Mt. Carmel Center and had become the “new leader of the Branch Davidians” (which is false), he says,

“They also continued to keep the sacrificial ceremonial feast laws. By doing this, they not only rejected the true Elijah (Br. Houteff) who said to ‘remember’ the moral law; but they also rejected Jesus as their Messiah! And this left the Branch Davidians vulnerable to the deceptions of satan, who substituted Jesus, their true Messiah, for a false messiah (David Koresh). And since he claimed that he was their ‘sinful messiah,’ then that is the reason why the Branch Davidians are not Christians! Now the great mystery is answered! And now no one need be mystified and wonder anymore why the Branch Davidians followed a false messiah.” Keep The Feast Laws Today? No!, p. 28. (Boldface belongs to the quote)

Note that he says that because the Branch Davidians kept the “feast laws” they “rejected Jesus as Messiah,” and, thus, ended up with Koresh. If Adair was to be honest, he would admit that only a very small number of those who had been with the Branch ended up with Koresh. Also, if he had bothered to learn the facts of the matter he would have found that when Koresh originally broke away from the Branch in 1984 he named his distinct faction, “Davidian Branch Davidian Seventh Day Adventists,” but dropped that name after Lois Roden died, and took up our name. But Don Adair’s self-seeking is so great that it seems like he can’t present anything about the Branch in truth and righteousness. Though at a prior time he was smitten by the sword as it smote around “about the city” (he being in the Davidian laity at that time), now he has been burned up by the fire that has come forth unto “all of the house of Israel.”

Those two “Davidian” groups and their leaders are not alone in using the incident with Koresh to blacken the Branch. There are other similar “Davidian” groups doing the same thing. Yet, they are all claiming to be the true successors to Br. Houteff, even though they are holding some private interpretations of the Scriptures and even the Rod message, and, at the same time they declare that there has been no new light since Br. Houteff died, nor will there be any until he is resurrected. They too have been spiritually burned up by that all consuming fire.

“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.” 2TG 21:13.

Regarding those who profess to be teaching the Rod, but do not do so righteously, Br. Houteff said,

“... such as do choose to engage in private interpretation are respectfully asked to desist from teaching in the name of the Rod and at its expense. Let them like honest men, teach in their own names and at their own expense.” 5 Answerer 56.

If the leaders of the various “Davidian” groups were true “100%” Rods, they would heed that counsel.

Along with those people and their groups, the Adventist ministry has used the event involving Koresh and his followers to disparage the Branch and dissuade people from investigating it. Not long after the 1993 incident they published an article in the Review and Herald written by George Reid titled Branch Davidians,

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Who Are They? That article begins with a brief review of what Br. Houteff taught and the church’s rejection of it. Then Reid jumps right to Koresh, wholly avoiding mentioning Ben and Lois Roden and their teachings.

One reason for said avoidance is that, even though Ben Roden was disfellowshipped from the SDA church for accepting the Rod message, he was highly respected by many in the Adventist ministry and church in general. In 1995, Samuelle Bacchiocchi, one of the church’s most respected and influential scholars, published the first of two books in which he advocated for keeping the Bible feast days. In the introduction to the first book he states that when he first presented the idea of keeping the Bible feasts days to his colleagues he was surprised to find that many of them said that they were already privately keeping them. He shouldn’t have been surprised, though, because Ben Roden had been teaching that the church should return to keeping the feasts since around 1960, and many in the church secretly accepted his counsel.

Elder R. F. Cottrell, a famed Adventist theologian, said that Ben Roden was “a Prince in Israel, indeed!” Some leading men in the Texas Conference of SDAs even attended and spoke at his funeral. Shirley Burton, communications director for the SDAs, was contacted the day after the 1993 shootout between the law enforcement officers and Koresh and his followers concerning how Koresh did not represent what the Branch is truly about, and that things were not as they appeared. She said that she realized that and stated that she understood that Koresh’s group was, to use her words, “an aberration” of the Branch. Yet, to this day, many of the SDA leaders refuse to be as candid as she was and accept the truth of the situation with Koresh, but continue to use that situation to impugn the Branch to both their congregations and the public at large. The same is true of much of the rest of those in the congregations.

There has been much talk about Jesuits (one of the major actors in the “Counter Reformation”)

having infiltrated the SDA church. There have even been incidents of such being exposed. Those tares (the uncircumcised and unclean) have been sown when men slept. Yet few Davidians take it to heart that Jesuits and others whose work it is to prevent the true last-days revival and reformation from happening have also infiltrated “Davidia.” Why would the devil stop his disruptive, divide-and-conquer work with the mainline SDAs? That would certainly be out of character for him, for the candidates for the 144,000 are certainly his target wherever they are since their being sealed with the three-fold seal (Rev. 3:12) is essential for the Loud Cry to come about.

It has been through men and women who have put forth the appearance and speech that denotes righteousness, but which, in reality, is far from it, that the true revival and reformation has been hindered. The high-mindedness that suits the unconverted heart has found its ways into the heart of every phase of the movement. But we have the promise that the “names of Baalim” will be taken away from the church, and she will be known by the fact that God has dealt with the enemies within and without her.

The fire that went out to all of the house of Israel was not confined to those sister churches, but even spread, in one way or another, to all of the others who God considers as being of His “house.” That is, many of them have blindly accepted the deceptive media reports concerning Koresh being a true leader of the Branch and have used such to strengthen their unbelief in God’s working through the Spirit of prophecy, and their own errors concerning the law of God – i.e., the Sabbath, feast days, clean and unclean meats, the state of the dead, etc. Many so-called “cult-busters” have used the 1993 incident to disparage the whole Advent movement, and their testimony has been picked up and used similarly by many in various churches. Thus, they, too, have been scorched by that fire.

THE STRAIGHT TESTIMONY

Ezekiel was further shown the following concerning the ministry that God has called to be the light to the world –

“Thus saith the Lord GOD; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her. And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that are round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them. Eze. 5:5-7.

The “judgments” and “statutes” that “Jerusalem” has changed “into wickedness” “more than the countries that are round about her,” are not only the Ten Commandments, but also those of the law of Moses as applicable under the New Covenant and explained by Jesus and His apostles and prophets. One prime example is that the Adventists and Davidians have certain spiritual laws (instructions – Torah) laid down through the Spirit of prophecy as to how to deal with those they believe to be in error, and how to investigate “new light.” Yet they refuse to follow those instructions and be honest towards those in the reform movement with whom they disagree. The same is true to a large degree with those in the Branch in that regards.

God has promised that He will lead His people through the gifts of the Spirit, yet those ministries have chosen to follow the theories and opinions of men in the place of inspired truth. Therefore, they are in violation of the 1st Commandment in that they are worshipping a god other than the living One. They have also set up idols of opinion and idols of men and idols of positions and of things and have bowed down to them in violation of the 2nd Commandment. A list could be made of all of the ways the SDA and Davidian ministries (and even many of the professed Branches) have changed all of the Lord's statutes and judgments to ones that fit their ideas and practices. Br. Houteff faithfully pointed out the SDA ministry's departure from the Spirit of Prophecy's counsel on how to keep the Sabbath and on dress and health reform. Yet, today many who profess to be Davidians are not much different than the average SDA in these regards.

"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye multiplied more than the nations that are round about you, and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments, neither have done according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you." Eze. 5:7.

Not only has "Jerusalem" not followed the Lord's judgments and statutes, she has not even followed "the judgments of the nations that are round about" her – meaning that they have done things that would even be against the laws of the nations around her. At a minimum, those things include slander, libel, theft, and fraud.

"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations.

"And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations." Eze. 5:8, 9.

For those who understand the Rod message, and what Ellen White said about the purification of the church, these verses need no explanation regarding the Lord executing judgments upon His people that the nations are going to see. But, what is notable about the Lord saying that at this point in the chapter is that this stern pronouncement follows what Ezekiel did with the hair. That is, the Lord taking away the covering (hair) and thereby humbling His people has been a rebuke and a warning of the greater judgment revealed in the following verses that is to come should the people not take to heart what has really been happening and what their true condition and needs are. That greater judgment which the Lord has not done as yet, and which He will not do the like anymore, is His "strange act" (Isa 28:21).

"Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds.

"Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity." Eze. 5:10,11.

The figure of fathers and sons eating each other depicts a time of self serving, looking out for one's self without the least regard for the welfare or even the life of another. The Lord is so disgusted with the situation that he is inclined to scatter "the whole remnant" to the wind, and "diminish" it without pity. That is a fearful situation. Concerning that situation Ellen White said,

"Satan will work his miracles to deceive; he will set up his power as supreme. The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal,

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but nevertheless it must take place. None but those who have been overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony will be found with the loyal and true, without spot or stain of sin, without guile in their mouths. We must be divested of our self-righteousness and arrayed in the righteousness of Christ." 2SM 380.

It also a time of great distress and trial, as stated in the next verse —

"A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee; and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them." Eze. 5:12.

While in v. 2 the 1st third part is burned with "fire" in the midst of the city before the portion of the preserved remnant of the hair was also cast into the fire (v. 4), in this verse, after that 4th part of the purification began we see that the 1st third part is to "die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee." That is, while the 1st third was initially burned with "fire" in the midst of the city, the judgment upon them in v. 12 after the fire went out to all the house of Israel took on the characteristics of "pestilence" and "famine."

Pestilence and famine often go hand in hand. When there is a shortage of good healthy food to eat people will generally turn to eating unclean foods, thereby bringing sickness and disease (pestilence) upon themselves.

"I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick; Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels.

"Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

"Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom,

"Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned

incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.” Isa. 65:2-4.

When the Lord says that he has “spread out” His “hands,” He is specifically speaking of attempting to reach His people through freshly-inspired Truth for it is by the “hands” (writings) of the prophets that God reaches out to us. But people have chosen to eat unclean things rather than the wholesome foods the Lord supplies, and thus have brought pestilence upon themselves.

While those verses show one cause that can bring pestilence (eating unclean foods), Eze. 5:12 speaks of a time of not only great pestilence, but also one of “famine,” which comes from a lack of food. As the unclean foods spoken of therein are symbolical of impure doctrines that bring sickness and disease, so is the “famine” symbolical –

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.” Amos 8:11.

The reason why the character of the judgment upon “Jerusalem” changed from one by “fire” to one by “famine” is due to the fact that since the 1993 incident when the fire went forth unto “all the house of Israel” the Branch has received a “knockout blow” which has greatly curtailed our ability to put wholesome food in the Lord’s house (see Mal 3:10). Moreover,

“Everything that can be done against God’s message of today will be done with even a greater vengeance than was manifest against Heaven’s message in the days of Christ’s first advent, for the Devil knows that if he loses now, he loses forever — that he is to have no other

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chance. Unparalleled, therefore, is the urgency that every eleventh-hour church member now quickly and solidly brace himself against the Enemy’s effort to deliver a knockout blow. We must be alert, too, to realize that the blow is to come from surprisingly unsuspected foes — from professed friends of the gospel, who are no less pious than were priests in Christ’s day. It is, moreover, but to be expected that the Adversary will employ every agency possible to prevent the Lord from disclosing to view His now obscure 144,000 first-fruit servants, who are to go gather in the second fruits (Rev. 7:9). The Enemy will try everything conceivable to confuse, becloud, and cover up the Truth, especially on the subject of the 144,000.” WHR 33.

Thus, not only were those ministries (the 1st part) burned up when they were cast into the “fire,” they have also been experiencing spiritual sickness and disease (pestilence) due to eating polluted spiritual foods and following unhealthy spiritual practices, and famine because of having a lack of true spiritual food. As that fire was to go out unto “all the house of Israel,” then the same kind of “pestilence” and “famine” must be being experienced in the Branch. It’s not that abundant life-producing foods have not been available, but that people, no matter what part of the movement they are in, have been

“sanctify[ing] themselves, and purify[ing] themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse ...” Isa. 66:17.

The “one tree” represents “their Truth-hating minister” (2TG 22, 26). That is, they have been hiding behind someone who has been fighting the unrolling of the scroll that calls for a casting away of preconceived ideas, private opinions and theories.

The purification is also described as

“THE SHAKING”

“And in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.

“And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim.

“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.” Isa. 17:4-6.

Just as not all of the preserved hair was cast into the fire, even so a very small portion of “berries” was to survive the “shaking” during which the glory of Jacob was to be made thin and lean. And, so it is today.

“In Isaiah 24 we are told that there would be a shaking as of an olive tree and but few men would be left.” 13SC 3, 4:10.

“The butter and honey, then, must be symbolic, and what can they symbolize but the Word of God, the source from which Jesus learned to choose the good and to refuse the evil? He has set the example, and Inspiration plainly warns that ‘butter and honey shall everyone eat that is left in the land.’ Isa. 7:22. Obviously, those who do not eat this spiritual butter and honey shall be taken out of the way, shall not be left in the land. ‘Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.’ Isa. 24:6.” 2TG 19:4.

Br. Houteff spoke of this situation when “the glory of Jacob shall be made thin ...” in his comments on another verse –

“Jer. 30:17 – ‘For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds saith the Lord; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.’

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“The adversaries will make sport of Zion because apparently no one will be looking after them, and they will have no following or friends — no one to plead their cause.” 13 SC 1, 2:14.

Here the Lord is speaking of “Zion,” the highest part of the church, and not “Jerusalem,” the

ministry in general. The text doesn't refer to a place but to people because Br. Houteff uses the words "them" and "they" when speaking of "Zion."

"Isa. 49:13 – 'Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted His people, and will have mercy upon His afflicted.'

"Not that the Lord will comfort His people, but that He has already comforted them, He has filled them with Truth.

"Isa. 49:14 – 'But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.' "Before they are sealed, those who are to be the inhabitants of Zion (the 144,000)

think God has forsaken them. God's answer to them, though, is this:

"Isa. 49:15 – 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.'

"Even though some, rather than praying for the re-establishing of Zion, are actually praying against it, nevertheless they, too, will soon find out that God is entirely for it."

"Isa. 49:16 – 'Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me.'

"From all natural appearances it seems that God has forgotten Zion, the place of His earthly throne; that He has left His enemies to abuse His people and to deface Zion's exalted hill, but the Lord Himself assures that for Zion's sake and for her people's freedom, was He nailed on the cross." 1TG 46:8

Evidently, something quite consequential must have happened to "Zion" after "He has filled them with Truth" yet "before they are sealed" to make them think that God has forsaken them and allowed their enemies "to abuse His people and deface Zion's exalted hill." As "Zion" represents the highest part of the church, the place from where the Lord leads His people through His anointed, then the "Zion" referred to in those texts is the Branch which finds herself in the very condition of people making "sport" of her and abusing her.

Moreover, due to the confusion Vernon Howell (aka David Koresh) caused by putting himself forth as Lois Roden's successor, and drawing away those in the Branch who would not honestly examine themselves, confess their sins, and repent, shortly before Lois Roden died there were literally only "two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof" – "few men left" – just as the Lord had prophesied would be the case. Additionally, with Charles Pace currently on New Mt. Carmel Center and spreading his many errors under the guise of the Branch, many people are being discouraged from even investigating the teachings of Ben and Lois Roden and the present writer. It is just as Br. Houteff said it would be – "The adversaries will make sport of Zion because apparently no one will be looking after them, and they will have no following or friends — no one to plead their cause." Yet, despite all of that, Zion still must be in existence or else there would be nothing or no one for others to mock and abuse.

Br. Houteff also spoke elsewhere of this situation regarding the Lord's anointed and the message he or she bears –

“Do not, though, forget that the message which he proclaims will in itself bear the Divine credentials of Truth, and that no priest or prelate can decide for you who the Elijah may or may not be. No, not even the appearance of what his message is doing or

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not doing, or whether it is prospering or disintegrating, can be taken as evidence that God is in it. Neither can numbers of adherents for such have never signified a right cause at any time, not even in the day Christ Himself preached the Gospel of the Kingdom. The message he brings is the only thing to go by.

“And since the Enemy cannot get around the Truth, he does all he can to blacken character and to pick flaws in personalities. The prophet's message nevertheless cannot be judged by the behaviour of its professors, for even the Apostles misconducted themselves before the ascension of Christ. The multitude, too, that followed Moses was anything by exemplary; in fact, in many instances they were disgraceful. And the “holy men of God” who wrote the Scriptures were faulty men. Even Moses himself was not faultless. Regardless, though, he was still Moses, and his was the only message and movement for the day.

“Likewise, irrespective of considerations of personnel faults, frailties, and failings, Elijah's message and movement will be the only God-sent ones, the only ones to fear, to love, to stand by, to live or to die for. No, there will be no other shield when heaven opens and the storm breaks in all its dread fury upon the world, to unavoidably pour down its lethal lightning from the skies.” GCS 8, 9.

Yet, in spite of all the counsels given concerning the great need for the active prophetic voice in the church, and for people to both look for it (1TG 12:18) and support it, the above quoted Scriptures and inspired commentary speak of a time when rebellion is the order of the day.

While the situation of the fire going forth unto all the house of Israel has brought about Jacob's leanness and a famine and pestilence, Malachi spoke of another cause of the famine (a shortage of food) –

“‘Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.’ Mal. 3:8-10. ...

“Note that not to the Levites, or to some other place or people but into God's storehouse are the tithes and offerings to be brought. And for no other reason than that His storehouse may have the means to dispense spiritual food, “meat in due season.” These words definitely and positively show that the only support which the message of the purification for the church has for caring on

its work is the tithes and the offerings from His faithful people; that in no other way could the message be dispensed; that in no other way could the expenses be paid.” JL 9:3, 4.

With so many being discouraged from investigating the Branch message, and so many pretenders and usurpers around stealing the tithes, it is no wonder that there is a famine due to the fact that the “meat in due season” that is available is not being liberally dispensed.

“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.” Matt. 9:37, 38.

Early in his ministry Br. Roden showed that Ezekiel’s prophecies concerning the coming of the king of Babylon and taking “Jerusalem” captive applied to the coming of the Branch message of the Judgment for the Living (7 Letters to Florence Houteff; 11th Hour Extra – Riddle #1). According to the word of the Lord through Jeremiah, had the rulers of Jerusalem submitted themselves to the king of Babylon (the Lord’s anointed), they would have been preserved and would have prospered. Yet, because they would not submit to the Lord, He, through Jeremiah, told the leaders of His people what would happen to them or anyone else who refused to submit to the one to whom God had given the kingdom –

“And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the

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king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.” Jer. 27:8

Jeremiah was also shown that later, when some of the Jews thought to escape the captivity of the king of Babylon by fleeing to Egypt (a symbol of the world – 1SR 16), they too were to be pursued by the sword, just as the 3rd part of the hair that was scattered into the wind was to be pursued by the Lord’s sword –

“Then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die.” Jer. 42:16.

Thus, not only is the sword to pursue those who, like the 3rd part of the hair, seek to avoid the controversy regarding the sins of the leadership and others by going back to the world, but famine (a lack of spiritual food) is to overtake them also.

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Heb 10:31. Yet, through it all, Ezekiel was shown, as it were, a light at the end of the tunnel –

“Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.” Eze. 5:13.

The Lord will be comforted when His fury comes to “rest” (settle) upon them, for he knows that they will then know as a surety that He has truly “spoken” in His zeal. They will truly know that whom He loves, He rebukes and chastens (Rev. 3:19).

Previously, in Isa. 28 we saw where the Lord tries His people through the unrolling of the scroll until he has brought them to a point where He can rescue them from their errors. Now we’ll look a little further into that prophecy and what has been said regarding it. After saying that the leaders of His people are drunk and that “they err in vision, they stumble in judgment,” the Lord continues –

“For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

“Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

“For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

“But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.” Isa. 28:8-13.

“Those to whom this happens have no excuse.

“In His message to Judah, God is to point out ‘the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and...the refreshing.’ Is not that the very message God has sent us to carry to our Adventist brethren today? But, sadly, they will not hear.

“Sister White, in commenting upon these verses has this to say: ‘...’”For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people. To whom He said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.” Why? — Because they did not heed the word of the Lord that came unto them.

“This means those who have not received instruction, but have cherished their own wisdom, and have chosen to work themselves according to their own ideas. The Lord

gives these the test, that they shall either take their position to follow His counsel, or refuse and do according to their own ideas, and then the Lord will leave them to the sure result....’ —

Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 418, 419.” 12 SC 8, 9:8

While Br. Houteff correctly says that the message Isaiah bore was to “Judah” (Isa. 1:1), those verses of Isa. 28 he is quoting and commenting on and applying to the SDA church are actually directed to “Ephraim” (10 tribes – Israel), and not “Judah” (see Isa. 28:1, 3). Though Br. Houteff taught that the term “Judah” applied to the SDA church, and the term “Israel” applied to the Protestants, Ben Roden pointed out that since the 144,000 are from all the tribes of Israel and are to all be sealed while they are in the SDA church (i.e., Sabbath-keepers), then both of the terms “Israel” (Ephraim) and “Judah” must apply to the SDAs. He further explained that when the Rod message came it caused a division in the church similar to the one when the 10 tribes (Israel) separated themselves from the 2 tribes (Judah). Thus he showed that the Davidians were “Judah” and the SDAs were “Israel.” As those verses of Isa. 28 are directed to the drunkards of “Ephraim,” and the tribe of Ephraim was the leader of the 10 tribes, then Br. Houteff was correct in applying those verses that Isaiah addresses to “Ephraim” in Isa. 28 to the “Adventist brethren” (ministry) and not the Protestants, who he had been teaching were “Ephraim.” Therefore, it is evident that the Lord had to give Ben Roden the true light concerning the SDA brethren being “Ephraim” and the Davidians being “Judah” after the Rod message came so as to be correct with the terminology in this chapter as to whom it applies.

Furthermore, both Br. Houteff and Ellen White applied this prophecy concerning “the word of the LORD” coming to the SDA church “... precept upon precept, line upon line ...” to the work of the Spirit of prophecy, as we see in the following –

“The Lord has been sending us line upon line, and if we reject these principles, we are not rejecting the messenger who teaches them, but the One Who has given us the principles.” 7T 136

“Is it not a fact that no other people at any time in the history of the church have received as much truth as God has given us in our time? Line upon line, precept upon precept, instruction upon instruction, have been given us, so that we, as a people, may know and understand the ways of the Lord, obey His voice, keep His charge, commandments, statutes, and laws; thus becoming the “children of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise.” When this is realized in the hearts of men then they will fulfill the charge given to Peter. Peter said, “Thou knowest I love Thee.” Jesus saith unto him, “Feed My sheep.” Shepherd’s Rod book, Vol. 1, p. 76.

In Eze. 5:13 we found that after the Lord brings upon the church the judgment spoken of previously in that chapter, He says,

“Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.” Eze. 5:13.

In Isa. 28, the result of the Word of the Lord has come to His remnant people, “... precept upon precept, line upon line ...” is that they were to

“go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.” Isa. 28:13.

We have already seen that those things were to happen to them because they wouldn’t keep up with the light which would have brought them “the rest ... and ... the refreshing.” But now that the Lord has “... taken and snared” His people – stripped them of their glory (hair) and burned a 3rd of

them, smitten another 3rd, has sent out a sword after the last 3rd, then taken some of the preserved portion and also burned it up, and a fire has gone out from there to “all the house of Israel” – what is the Lord to do next? He has taken away the “power, honor, glory, and talent (God-given gifts)” so that even though the church is gaining numbers around the world, her spiritual condition is about the same as it was after John the Baptist was beheaded and Christ crucified – spiritually dead. As after that portion of the preserved hair was cast into the fire, the fire

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went out to “all the house of Israel,” then it must be that “all the house of Israel” is in that sad spiritual condition, though it may not appear to be that way.

“...this simile of the dry bones [Eze. 37:1-14] 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 dry bones Ezekiel saw in vision. Those who have had committed to them the treasures of truth, and yet who are dead in trespasses and sin, need to be created anew in Christ Jesus.” RH, January 17, 1893. [brackets added]

Eze. 37:11 reveals how many “dry bones” are “working out what they term salvation after their own ideas,” and are represented by the dry bones in that chapter –

“... these bones are the whole house of Israel”

“This means those who have not received instruction, but have cherished their own wisdom, and have chosen to work themselves according to their own ideas.” TM 418, 419.

If God has concluded that the “whole house” of Israel is in that undone condition because we have not “received instruction” (“... precept upon precept, line upon line ...”) we must accept that testimony against us or perish without the message to the Laodiceans –

“Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.” Rom. 3:4.

We have been told what rejecting the unrolling of the scroll was to result in – that is, that the church

would

“go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.” Isa. 28:13.

Why? Because when William Miller didn’t accept the 3rd angel’s message, those who looked to him stopped where they were. When Ellen White died, most Adventists stopped there, When Victor Houteff died, most Davidians stopped there. When Ben Roden died, most Branches stopped there, When Lois Roden died, most of the remaining Branches stopped there. Add to those circumstances the fact that when people would not progress with the unrolling of the scroll

they leaned on their own understanding, walked in the sparks of their own kindling, or followed some personage whose inspiration was not from above.

That is, because the heaven-inspired one who was leading at any particular time didn't see all things, and even spoke some things that later needed to be corrected because the matter they were commenting on was beyond their present vision (i.e., was not "Present" truth), people made idols of them and refused to accept any "new light" that came after them in the unrolling of the scroll. Of course, the Lord also foreknew of that situation and spoke of it through His servant –

"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 [Hebrew –Torah – instruction], and make it honourable." Isa. 42:18-21.

Br. Houteff explains this principle –

"No prophet of God has ever forged a complete prophetic chain of events, with

no links missing. It has taken many inspired writers to complete the long chain of 31

prophecy. The mind, therefore which takes the position that Sister White [or any other inspired writer] has done what no prophet in or out of the Bible has ever done, does so at the utter disregard of actual Biblical procedure and also of revealed Truth.

"She herself says that "no man, however honored of Heaven, has ever attained to a full understanding of the great plan of redemption, or even to a perfect appreciation of the Divine purpose in the work for his own time. Men do not fully understand what God would accomplish by the work which He gives them to do; they do not comprehend, in all its bearings, the message which they utter in His name."—The Great Controversy, p. 343.

"Some persons, being of the parrot kind, utter parrot-like statements, never stopping to think what they say, and seemingly never caring whether their statements stand or fall. Such are they who say that no other event or events can come before, between, or after those set forth in Sister White's [or anyone else's] writings. ...

"As no prophet's writings ever predicted the entire Truth needed by the church to carry her clear through to the Kingdom, and as other prophets followed, either enlarging upon or adding to the prophecies already recorded in the Scriptures, then for anyone to turn down the good tidings of the Kingdom on the grounds that this phase of the Kingdom is not found in Sister White's writings [or anyone else's] is for him to take the same inexcusable and fatal stand as did the Jews. It is to say, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Rev. 3:17. It is this attitude that compels God to spue out of His mouth the lukewarm, satisfied Laodiceans. ...

"Of necessity, any statements relative to a subject which is still out of sight in the unfolding of the Scroll, are made only in incidental terms of truth as it is at the time seen or commonly understood.

And if the common understanding of these incidental statements be wrong, the writer cannot be held responsible for that which he has borrowed from others or seen but very dimly and therefore expressed very indefinitely. ...

“This circumstance is natural and common to every writer treating of Present Truth, beginning with the Old Testament writers, and continuing ever since, and will thus be until every component part of the Truth is made known. ...

“Every Christian should remember that as the Truth is ever-advancing, It will not be found today where It was yesterday, and that therefore Christ’s followers must advance with It. They will not follow the examples of the Jews and the Romans.

“When Moses wrote the first part of the Bible, he was not given all the light which God intended to reveal to His people through the ages. With each approaching hour for the Truth to advance, came first one prophet, then another, in a long succession ending with John the Baptist. Then came Christ, the apostles, the reformers, William Miller, and Sister White, each one in turn teaching truths which could not be borne out entirely by the writings of any one predecessor. To find all the Truth thus progressively revealed, the writings of all must be collaborated.

“Failing to advance with the advancing Truth, each generation of Jews found fault with its respective prophets, culminating with the apostles and the very Son of God Himself. The Jews justified their criminal actions on the ground that the claims of their prophets, of Christ, and of the apostles, were not founded upon Moses’ writings. So while boasting of Moses’ writings, they denied and killed the prophets who came after him—a solemn warning to us, lest doing as they did, we meet their fate!

“The main question therefore is not as to whether Sister White’s or Moses’ or this one’s or that one’s writings contain all the messages for this day, but rather simply as to whether they are found in, and supported by, the Bible.

“The Rod consequently does not claim that its message is found in its entirety in the writings of any one particular prophet, but rather in the writings of all the prophets—‘here a little, and there a little.’ Isa. 28:13.

“Let none, therefore, treacherously use Sister White’s writings [or anyone else’s], as the Jews used Moses’ writings, against the advance of Truth, and to their own eternal hurt.” 2 Answerer 75-82. [brackets added]

The Lord, through Isaiah, continues –

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“But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.

“Who among you will give ear to this? who will hearken and hear for the time to come?

“Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto

his law.

“Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle:

and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.” Isa. 42:22-25.

Jacob doesn’t even know that he has been burned by the “fire,” nor taken the true condition of the church to heart. So it is with a vast majority of the church at large – they don’t know that they are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:17), and none of them say, “Restore.”

While Eze. 5 and those verses of Isa. 42 portray what appears to be a hopeless situation, the prophecy of the resurrection of the dry bones in Eze. 37:1-14 holds out some hope. But it does so only for those who are honest enough to admit their true condition, individually and collectively. That is, the dry bones say,

“Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost, and we are cut off for our parts [margin – to ourselves].” Eze. 37:11.

Those dry bones must represent living people who are spiritually dead because only the living have a consciousness of their condition and can say “we are cut off for our parts,” as do those dry bones in Eze. 37:11, for

“the dead know not anything.” (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” Ps. 146:4.

It may be noted that in the figure presented it is the dead “dry bones” that are speaking, and not whole living people. Literal living “bones” can’t speak, let alone dead ones. Therefore, the “bones” must be symbolical, as Ellen White saw them.

Eze. 37:1-14 portrays the whole Advent movement, beginning with William Miller and culminating in the church’s return to their land. As we address that prophetic overview of the movement in our study, Dry Bones Extra, which is on our web site, we direct the reader’s attention to it. But there is one important point in those verses that is relevant to the subject at hand.

“...there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath [Hebrew, ruah – Spirit] in them.” Eze. 37:7, 8.

Note that after the work of reforming the bodies was accomplished, they still lacked the breath of life.

“Herein lies a lesson: Ezekiel’s prophesying directly to the bones brought a certain physical reconstruction and movement, but that was all. Man’s teaching to man [even inspired teaching]

produces certain outward changes, reformations, and improvements; but man [even if he is a prophet] cannot give life. Such would be the effect of the word apart from the Spirit [breath], were they to be separated. And this explains an abortive evangelistic endeavor [a valley of reformed, breathless bodies].” The Coming of the Comforter, Leroy Froom, p. 236. [brackets added]

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Every honest Seventh Day Adventist, Davidian, or Branch has to admit that reading or memorizing the inspired writings of Ellen White, A. T. Jones, E. J. Waggoner, V.T. Houteff, or Ben or Lois Roden in and of itself, will not give one spiritual life if one is not willing to be moved and converted by the Holy Spirit. Many people have read the very Word of God, the Bible, but have not experienced its sanctifying power of conversion. And, likewise, all of those who are honest will also have to admit that the writings of Inspiration have not thus far produced a people who are yet fully awake and in unity.

Truly, then, it is only the true Christians (“the whole house of Israel”) that are honest enough to admit that they are as those dry bones, and that are truly able to say, “Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost, and we are cut off for our parts [margin – to ourselves].” Those who cannot honestly admit this situation must not be part of this resurrection of “the whole house of Israel.” They are the ones who are saying that they are “rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing” – be they Adventists, Davidians, or Branches. This is further borne out in the following testimony.

“The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension [the dryness of their bones] nor mourn over the sins of others [which divide the body of Christ – cut off its parts] will be left without the seal of God.” 5T 211.

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” Ps 51:17.

“And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone (Zec 3:9) which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.” Luke 20:17, 18.

At His first advent, Christ, the Stone, came in person. Now He comes to us in His word through the Holy Spirit (“the invisible Christ”).

“For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.” Zech.: 3:9.

The “stone” church (Dan. 2:34, 45) has “complete” vision because they have the “complete” “stone” message in which God alone has done the engraving (writing). Those who fall upon that “stone,” though broken, will be raised in Ezekiel’s resurrection. None others will.

This truth is furthermore witnessed in Ezekiel, chapter 9, wherein it is stated that the only ones who survive the marking and slaughter therein depicted are those who “sigh and cry for all the

abominations that be done in the midst thereof" (Ezekiel 9:4). Included in "all the abominations" are not only the sins of others that may be obvious, but also our own sins that may be easily seen and those that are hidden from view.

"Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? ... For whereas there is among you envyings, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For one saith, I am of Paul; and another I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" 1 Corinthians 1:13, 3:3, 4.

Can any Davidian honestly deny that those who profess to believe the writings of V. T. Houteff are divided into numerous factions which hold each other in contempt? Can any Seventh Day Adventist honestly deny that they are also bound in numerous bundles, following this or that pastor, scholar, elder, or writer? Can the Branches say that they are any better when the Lord has declared that they have done worse than the Adventists and Davidians and have "justified thy sisters" (Ezekiel 16:44-63)? Did Christ die to bring a unity such as this, which is no unity at all? Of course not! Is the fault in the messages of the prophets? No.

We are called to be "doers of the word, and not just hearers" James 1:22. We are called to hear not only "the rod" (Micah 6:9) but, also, "Who hath appointed it." Failure to do this – to seek the power of God

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(the Holy Spirit, Who hath appointed the prophets – the rod) that was present in every manifestation of His voice – has resulted in this valley of breathless, reformed bodies. Yet this is not the end of the matter.

One of the main things the Spirit has called us to do is to,

"AWAKE, AWAKE"

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." Isa. 52:1.

To understand this verse and those that follow it we need to know when these two calls to "awake" are to take place.

"At the time this awakening call [Isa. 52:1] goes forth throughout the land, Inspiration announces that the harvest time has arrived for the angels to put out and to keep out of Zion and Jerusalem the uncircumcised and the unclean, a work which Inspiration variously entitles: (1) cleansing of the sanctuary (Dan. 8:14), (2) purify the sons of Levi (Mal. 3:1-3), (3) purification of the church ("Testimonies," Vol. 5, pg. 80), (4) Judgment in the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17), (5) harvest (Matt. 13:30), casting out the bad fish from among the good fish (Matt. 13:47, 48), separating the sheep from the goats, — the Judgment for the Living.

"The sinners, we know, have always been and are still among God's people. That the fulfillment of

this Scripture, therefore, is in the very near future, is shown from the fact that the truth of this chapter is now unsealed and carried to the church, endeavoring to awaken the people of God and to impress them with the fact that soon the harvest will commence ..." 1TG 38:21, 22. [1947] [brackets added]

"Should we not now consider ourselves the most fortunate people in the world for knowing these things beforehand? Shall we not be glad and thankful for having been warned beforehand that we have come almost to the time of the harvest, and that we have been given the opportunity to make ready for it? Shall we not be glad that we are not left in darkness, and that we are now plainly shown that these are the closing hours of the pre-harvest period, that the harvest will soon begin?" 1TG 21:19. [1946]

There are a few points therein to note. The first is that those two calls to "awake" were to come after Br. Houteff's time – after he made the "pre-harvest" announcement of their coming when the "harvest time" (the Judgment for the Living) arrives. The second is that there must be a living prophet around to bring us the "new message" that tell us that the "harvest time has arrived" because he says that it is "Inspiration" that will make that announcement, and "Inspiration" declares that,

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

"The day of the Lord, we are told in these verses [Mal. 3:1-3] is a day of refining, of purifying, of sifting. ...

"All may for a surety know both 'the day' and the Elijah as he proclaims it, because to our surprise he will point out that every Bible prophet describes the day and also tells what the Lord would have us do while it is approaching and subsequently while we are going through it. All will see that no one but Elijah can proclaim the day." GCS 11, 12. [brackets added]

As we saw from our review of this quotation in the introduction to this study, it's clearly revealed that the work of Elijah ("the Messenger of the Covenant," "the Holy Spirit (the invisible Christ)" in Heaven's visible representative – 1 Answerer, 78, 79) is not only to declare the "day" "while it is approaching" (as Br. Houteff faithfully did), but to also declare the day "subsequently while we are going through it" – something Br. Houteff did not do before he died, nor will he do after he is resurrected because that "day," the time when the Judgment passes from the dead to the living, the "day" when the Lord comes suddenly to His

temple to refine, purify, and sift His people will have begun long before he comes up. We are not saying that Br. Houteff will not take up his work again in the kingdom, but rather that the Judgment for the Living, the purifying time for the "sons of Levi," begins before he comes up because the purified ones go through and survive "the time of Jacob's trouble," while those who come up in the special resurrection (including Br. Houteff) do not, for they do not come up until the end of that

particular “trouble” when they are delivered by the “voice of God” (EW 285).

Therefore, as “Elijah” is to proclaim the “day” (the Judgment for the Living) “while we are going through it,” then the Lord must bring another “visible representative” endowed with the gift of Inspiration to continue the work of “Elijah” during that phase of the work or it could not be said that “Inspiration announces that the harvest time has arrived.” And, so it has been since 1955 – God has been continuing to speak to us through the gift of prophecy (Isaiah 62:1; 12 SC, 3:3; 1 TG 42:4).

Those who are familiar with the Branch message know that Br. Roden announced that the Judgment for the Living began in 1955. That was when the 1st of those two calls to “awake” was made in the “harvest time.” In 1977, Lois Roden received the vision of the Holy Spirit that prompted her to proclaim her message. That was the 2nd call to “awake” in the “harvest time.” Concerning the calls to “awake” in Isa. 52:1, Br. Houteff also says the following –

“This particular prophecy discloses that while the church, Jerusalem and Zion, is asleep and naked with the unclean in her midst, and in captivity among the Gentiles (away from her own land), an awakening cry, a message, comes urging her to arise and put on her beautiful garments, for the wicked, declares the cry, will no more come into her, for they are to be utterly cut off.” 2TG 44:43.

Thus, there was yet another call to be made after those two calls to “awake” have come, and that 3rd “message” is to urge the church to “arise” after she awakes, as we see in the next verse –

“Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.” Isaiah 52:2.

“Zion and Jerusalem of today are not only naked, but they are filthy: they lie down in the dust [just as the reformed, lifeless bodies in Eze. 37:8], as it were, are still in captivity and do not even know it! And so the daughters of Zion and Jerusalem, the denomination as a whole [“the whole house of Israel” – Eze. 37:11], is asked to arise from the dust, and to sit on her throne, to free herself from the yoke of her captivity, the bands of her neck. She needs to realize that the day of her redemption is now here, and that she is now to be made free, never again to be ruled by men.” 1TG 38:25. [brackets added]

That call to “shake thyself from the dust ...” is the 3rd call in the Judgment for the Living – the 3rd doubling of the “sword” that is to judge the church (Eze. 21:14). In Eze. 21, the “sword” is only to be made ready three times (no more, no less), just as the call in the “harvest time” is threefold. We’ll look further into the details of Eze. 21 later on in this study. The first two calls in Isa. 52:1 (“awake, awake”) are made to Jerusalem and Zion, just as is the third call (v. 2).

The above quoted testimony tells us where “the denomination as a whole” is – lying in the dust. This is exactly where the reformed, breathless bodies (“the whole house [denomination] of Israel”) are, lying in the dust, as portrayed in Ezekiel 37. The harmony of these Scriptures, as brought forth by the Spirit who has inspired them, reveals not only the identity of the reformed, lifeless bodies, but also the means by which they are resurrected –

“Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they

may live.” Eze. 37:9.

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As our study, Dry Bones Extra, addresses the specifics of the resurrection of the dry bones, and the meaning of the above quoted verse, we will, again, direct the reader to that study. Following is some of what Ellen White said about our need for a spiritual resurrection.

“A Renewal of the Straight Testimony

“The Lord calls for a renewal of the straight testimony borne in years past. He calls for a renewal of spiritual life. The spiritual energies of His people have long been torpid, but there is to be a resurrection from apparent death.

“By prayer and confession of sin we must clear the King’s highway. As we do this, the power of the Spirit will come to us. We need the Pentecostal energy. This will come, for the Lord has promised to send His Spirit as the all-conquering power.

“Perilous times are before us. [the time of Jacob’s trouble is at the very doors] Everyone who has a knowledge of the truth should awake and place himself, body, soul, and spirit, under the discipline of God. The enemy is on our track. We must be wide awake, on our guard against him. We must put on the whole armor of God. We must follow the directions given through the spirit of prophecy [the “... precept upon precept, line upon line ...”]. We must love and obey the truth for this time. This will save us from accepting strong delusions. God has spoken to us through His word. He has spoken to us through the testimonies to the church and through the books that have helped to make plain our present duty and the position that we should now occupy. The warnings that have been given, line upon line, precept upon precept, should be heeded. If we disregard them, what excuse can we offer?

“I beseech those who are laboring for God not to accept the spurious for the genuine. Let not human reason be placed where divine, sanctifying truth should be. Christ is waiting to kindle faith and love in the hearts of His people. Let not erroneous theories receive countenance from the people who ought to be standing firm on the platform of eternal truth. God calls upon us to hold firmly to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority.” 8T 297, 298. [brackets added]

Therein we find that the renewal of spiritual life that we need is a renewal of a life of “faith and love” made possible by our following the “directions given through the spirit of prophecy” – the “... line upon line, precept upon precept ...”

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

That is exactly what the reformed, lifeless bodies of Eze. 37:8 need – the breath (Spirit) of the divine life breathed into them.

Previously we learned that instead of following the heavenly fire as the scroll unrolled that would

have purified those who received it, people chose to walk in the “sparks” of their own kindling, which Ellen White calls “human reason” that takes the place “where divine, sanctifying truth should be.” We also learned that that supplanting the truth with human reasonings has touched every phase of the movement as the scroll unrolled. So, what is the Lord to do now to remedy this situation?

The Lord, through Isaiah, further laid out the matter in clear terms as to why the situation is as it is, how He has brought evidence before His people that they cannot gainsay regarding the unrolling of the scroll, and what He is to do.

“Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness. For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts is his name.” Isa. 48:1, 2.

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In addressing His people therein God calls them “Jacob,” meaning that they are of a character that is in need of a name change, even though they are called by the new name of the overcomer, “Israel.” He further describes their character as being less than righteous and honorable even though they think highly of themselves. He then lays out His complaint against them –

“I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass.

“Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.” Isa. 48:3-5.

Br. Houteff faithfully declared what was to transpire when the Judgment for the Living opened, and things have progressed just as he said they would. That is, he said that there would be a separation at the beginning of the harvest brought about by an unrolling of the scroll and the coming of the “new message” at that time and by some people’s rejection of it. Thus, when the Davidian leadership rejected the Branch message they folded up and those other Davidians who privately interpreted the Rod message either went back into the Adventists church, the world, or ended up in one of the many “100% Rod” splinter groups. The Adventists similarly went backwards at that time, renouncing the sanctuary truth and the testimonies of Ellen White and allowing worldly ways and means to pervade the church, yet, none therein say, “Restore.”

“Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them. They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them.” Isa. 48:6-7.

The revelation of the events of Eze. 5 which were to occur at the end of the siege of Eze. 4 that

we are currently examining, and especially as those things that relate to Mal. 3:5, 6 and the other relevant Scriptures concerning the events of the unrolling of the scroll in the Judgment for the Living when the Lord was to come suddenly to His temple have been hidden from view until this time. Therefore, as no former inspired commentator has explained the things in chapter 5, etc., none can say, "Behold, I knew them" – "Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it?"

"Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb." Isa. 48:8

There is the reason why it was necessary for the Lord to unroll the scroll "precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little," causing His people to "go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken" – He knew that they "wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb." That's why the testimonies of the Spirit were given from the earliest days of the movement – to show us the reality of that condition. And why did the Lord do that? Because,

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." Rev. 3:19.

"Notice that the Lord visits the church not when she is in good spiritual standing with Him, but when she is in her greatest idolatry. Indeed, He could not visit her at a more opportune time, because only when she is in greatest darkness can she possibly discern light. And her condition, you know, can never improve unless He should call on her. Thus it was in John the Baptist's day, also when the Protestant reformation came, and thus it is today. God knows how to save. Saving is His chief concern." 2TG 6:21.

The result of that great love is to bring us to the true experience of justification by faith so that we might attain to the righteousness of Christ.

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"What is justification by faith? — It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. When they begin to praise and exalt God all the day long, then by beholding they are becoming changed into the same image. What is regeneration? — It is revealing to man what is his own real nature, that in himself he is worthless." Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers, No. 9, p. 62.

Now that God has shown each us the "worst" of our cases – that we have been unable to keep up with unrolling of the scroll – and has laid our glory in the dust, and has us where He can do something for us that we can't do for ourselves, He has one more offer of grace for those who will accept His testimony against them –

"For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.

“Behold, I have refined thee, but not with [as] silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

“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.

To “defer” one’s anger is different than causing it to die down altogether, as is restraining one’s self from cutting one off. The only reason why the Lord would put off for a latter time (“defer”) His coming judgments is so that His name will retain its honor.

“And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

“And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” Ex. 34:5-7.

From the time that volume 5 of the Testimonies to the Church was published in the 1880s, the church has been warned about the purification of the church as portrayed in Eze. 9. Beginning in 1930, the Spirit brought about an abundance of light further reiterating not only the certainty of that cleansing coming, but of it being a necessity for the church to attain to her high calling in the last days. Yet, in harmony with His name, the Lord has been “merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” Ex. 34:6, 7.

Notwithstanding the Lord’s great graces and mercies, the church, at large, in each of its divinely-ordained divisions, has suffered a degree of loss and embarrassment due to rebellion and outright apostasy. Why? Because men and woman have thought more highly of themselves than they ought to have. And why is that? Because they failed to keep Jesus and His sacrifice and the power of His resurrection in their hearts and minds – instead, placing human theories and practices where the simplicity of the Gospel and the Presence of the Holy Spirit should be.

This condition, though, was, somewhat, to be expected because the church was still coming out of the “falling away” that happened during the “dark ages.” Though the reformers such as Luther, Knox and others restored some of what had been lost during that time, at the time the Seventh day Adventists came on the scene there were still “many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn.” (RH, July 26, 1892)

Long ago we were told that

“In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired.” PK 678.

Br. Houteff pointed out that it was not only the divine institution of the Sabbath that was taken away from the church, but it was also her Biblical feast days –

“From these verses [Hos. 2:8-12] 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.” 2 TG 6:20, 21. [brackets added].

“In fulfillment of the prophecy contained in verse eleven, God permitted the little horn of Daniel seven to change times and laws, and permitted the saints of the Most High to be in his hand until “a time and times and the dividing of time.” Dan. 7:25.” 2 TG 21:11.

“Just as God chastened her in olden time by permitting Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to abolish the ceremonial system by destroying ancient Jerusalem and its temple, just so did He chasten her in the Christian era by permitting Rome to gain control over her and to supplant her true religious system by a counterfeit – a pagan priesthood and a pagan sabbath. Then was His word fulfilled: ‘I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.’ Since these ordinances (her feast days, her sabbaths, etc.) were part of ‘a compacted prophecy of the gospel, a presentation in which were bound up the promises of redemption’ (The Acts of the Apostles, p. 14), and since Hosea’s symbolization has brought us into the Christian era, the ceasing of the ordinances therefore typifies Rome’s supplanting the truth.” Tract 4:25, 26. (Parentheses belong to quotation)

He also said that those feasts (“ordinances”) that were taken away from the church were also to be restored to her, and that one of those “feasts” was the Lord’s Supper (12 SC 6, 7:11). Ellen White also spoke of true Lord’s Supper being taken away from the early church –

“The Scriptural Ordinance of The Lord’s Supper had been supplanted by the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass.” The Story of Redemption 334.

“The mass is a bad thing; God is opposed to it; it ought to be abolished; and I would that throughout the whole world it were replaced by the supper of the gospel.” Martin Luther quoted in GC 189.

There is a reason why the devil not only made an attack upon the Sabbath but also upon the Lord’s Supper –

“The ordinances that point to our Lord’s humiliation and suffering are regarded too much as a form. They were instituted for a purpose. Our senses need to be quickened to lay hold of the mystery of godliness. It is the privilege of all to comprehend, far more than we do, the expiatory sufferings of Christ.” DA 660.

“Our Savior instituted the Lord’s Supper, to be often celebrated, to keep fresh i n the memory of His followers the solemn scenes of His betrayal and crucifixion for the sins of the world. He would have His followers realize their continual [day by day] dependence upon His blood for salvation....

“The salvation of men depends on a continual [day by day] application to their hearts of the cleansing blood of Christ. therefore, the Lord’s Supper was not to be observed only occasionally [every few months] or yearly, but more frequently than the annual Passover.” 3 SG 227-228. [brackets added]

“Duties are laid down in God’s Word, the performance of which will keep the people of God humble and separate from the world, and from backsliding, like the nominal churches. the washing of feet and partaking of the Lord’s Supper should be more frequently practiced.” EW 116.

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In that last quote we have the practical reason for observing the Lord’s Supper – that being that it will keep us “humble and separate from the world, and from backsliding.” Had the church attained to and abided in those conditions, there never would have been a problem with the unrolling of the scroll as it occurred. But the church has never reached that standard because their keeping of the ordinance has always been polluted with remnants of “the Mass,” which was one of the primary means whereby the saints were worn out (Dan. 7:25).

While the Sabbath is a memorial of creation wherein God demonstrated the principle of the cross by resting from self, the Lord’s Supper is a memorial of re-creation – another, even greater demonstration of God’s ability to rest from self. That is why the Catholic Church places so much emphasis on their counterfeit of the Lord’s Supper (the Mass) and on their substitute sabbath, Sunday. That is, they know that the life of the early church was contingent upon their relationship with God and with each other through the sacrifice of Christ, and that the remembrance of His suffering and glory in the breaking of bread and taking of the cup was at the heart of the New Covenant fellowship. That’s why, in seeking to bring down the power of the saints (Dan. 7:25), the devil used those bishops who were forsaking the holy Covenant (Dan. 11:30) to attempt to change the Sabbath and corrupt the true nature and purpose of the Lord’s Supper.

Speaking of the Lord’s Supper, Br. Houteff says,

“... no one seems to know when and how to observe the sacrament. Some observe it every Sunday or every Sabbath, some occasionally, some every quarter and so on. It seems logical to say that when God commands us to ordain it anew He will tell us also how and when to observe it properly.” 1TG 3:6.

The SDA practice of observing the Lord’s Supper every quarter (3 months) stems from the Methodist and Baptist traditions of the 1800s when their circuit-riding preachers would only come around to the churches every 3 months. As they could only keep the ordinance when it was presided over by a properly ordained elder, they would not keep it according to their man-made tradition unless such an elder was present. The SDAs never changed that practice, even though

the Spirit of prophecy said that they should keep it “more frequently.”

The Davidians, though, have been no better off than the SDAs in keeping the ordinance because they still keep it with them when they are able to. But neither of them get the true benefit of the preparatory service (the footwashing), because the true keeping of that service includes an honest self-examination and confession of sin, something which the average Adventist is not about to do with a Davidian, so the Spirit cannot do the work upon their hearts at those times. Moreover, most Davidians (especially the leaders of the various factions) are not about to confess any sins they may have committed against any Adventists to any Adventists (or to any other Davidians they disagree with, for that matter) because they feel it would weaken their influence.

It is a strange situation among those who want to be identified as “Davidians” – those who are supposed to be overcoming, or have overcome, the Laodicean condition – that Br. Houteff said that they were not ready to have the Lord’s Supper among themselves because they were in such an undone condition that it would prove to be a curse to them rather than a blessing. Yet, after over 55 years since Br. Houteff’s death, the Rod message, on its own, has not brought those who profess to believe it to a state where they can keep the Lord’s Supper among themselves so that they may reap the great blessings that are in it. What is even stranger is the fact that none of their so-called leaders today seem to be concerned about what they and those they are blindly leading are missing by not keeping the divine commandment to remember the Lord through said appointment.

“When believers assemble to celebrate the ordinances, there are present messengers unseen by human eyes. There may be a Judas in the company, and if so, messengers from the prince of darkness are there, for they attend all who refuse to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. Heavenly angels also are present. These unseen visitants are present on every such occasion. There may come into the company persons who are not in heart servants of truth and holiness, but who may wish to take part in the service. They should

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not be forbidden. There are witnesses present who were present when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples and of Judas. More than human eyes beheld the scene.

“Christ by the Holy Spirit is there to set the seal to His own ordinance. He is there to convict and soften the heart. Not a look, not a thought of contrition, escapes His notice. For the repentant, brokenhearted one He is waiting. All things are ready for that soul’s reception. He who washed the feet of Judas longs to wash every heart from the stain of sin.

“None should exclude themselves from the Communion because some who are unworthy may be present. Every disciple is called upon to participate publicly, and thus bear witness that he accepts Christ as a personal Saviour. It is at these, His own appointments, that Christ meets His people, and energizes them by His presence. Hearts and hands that are unworthy may even administer the ordinance, yet Christ is there to minister to His children. All who come with their faith fixed upon Him will be greatly blessed. All who neglect these seasons of divine privilege will suffer loss. Of them it may appropriately be said, ‘Ye are not all clean.’” DA 656.

Since the vast majority of “Davidians” today say that no more light is to come until the resurrection, and Br. Houteff said that

“no one seems to know when and how to observe the sacrament,” and that,

“there seems to be no need for ordaining the Lord’s Supper privately among ourselves, perhaps not before the hour comes for the penitent to be separated from the impenitent, as taught by the types – by the Passover in Egypt, and by the Passover on the night when Judas was to go out, never again to walk with the twelve” (1 TG 3:6),

special

then they will never learn when and how to keep it before the final separation, nor experience the true benefits of it that they need to survive the great and dreadful day of the Lord. What is notable about the types he points out that are relative to the keeping of the Lord’s Supper is that in both of those types not all of those who took part in those events were pure at the time they kept them. Those who kept the Passover in Egypt were a mixed multitude, many of whom (Israelite and Gentiles) later rebelled against the Lord’s leading through Moses in the wilderness. In Jesus’ time, one among the twelve was unfit for the service. Yet, the time had come for the events to take place. In Jesus’ time it was the instituting of the ordinance that actually brought the separation within the body of professed believers.

“Now, if never before we should see that where there is a type there is also an antitype ...” 1 TG 47:15.

We have said all of this about the Lord’s Supper in reference to the Lord deferring his anger and refraining from cutting off his people because the light has now come as to the “when and how to observe the sacrament.” God is giving His people one more chance to repent and cast away their idols and private opinions of when and how it should be kept and receive the benefits thereof that will draw them closer to the Lord and to each other so that the world may see what the cross of Christ has made possible – that being,

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” John 13:35.

Br. Houteff described how that love should be made manifest in order to keep the Lord’s Supper so that it would be a blessing for us, and not a curse –

“We cannot lead the Lord. He is to lead us. We of ourselves never know what is right and what is wrong unless we are told. Easy enough, if we do whatever we are told to do, no more and no less,

we shall be accounted worthy. So far, our God-sent message has not brought to our attention the ordination of the Lord's Supper, but it is pleading with us to depart from the abominations, to cast aside all our idols, to put away all our private ideas and opinions, to wholeheartedly return to the Lord." 1TG 3:4, 5.

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While he said that the Rod message had not brought the keeping of the Lord's Supper to their attention in his day, that is past "Present Truth" today. That is, the Lord has shown us both when and how to keep it, and most importantly, why to do so, and is calling us to "keep thy solemn feasts."

Ben Roden began by showing that the Lord's Supper was to be kept at the annual Passover as said practice had replaced "the national festival of the Jews" (1 Cor. 5:7, 8; A Call to Supper, p. 1, 4, 5; DA 652; PP 539). He later called for it to be kept at all of the feast days and Sabbaths. In 1976, he called for the General Conference to keep it daily at the time of the morning and evening sacrifices (the 3rd and 9th hours) at their headquarters. Then, in 1981, Lois Roden called for all to keep it daily at those times. Then, beginning in 1990, the call came to the whole church to depart from all vestiges of the "mass" which had "supplanted" the Lord's Supper, and return to the true meal and fellowship aspect (the agape, love feast) of "a supper of the Lord."

It's not that this issue is the only one of significance in the Judgment for the Living, but it's that this subject is so all embracing to every facet of the judgment and the restoration of "all things" and "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3), that to disregard its significance or the truth of the when and how and even the why of it is to cast aside the very remedy for that which ails us. Those three steps mentioned above in the restoration of the true nature and practice of the Lord's Supper during the Judgment for the Living, and their significance in the judgment are revealed in Eze. 21.

"And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

"Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem, and drop thy word toward the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel, And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked." Eze. 21:1-3.

That "sword" is the "Word of God" that is brought forth in the Judgment for the Living. It is to affect both "the righteous and the wicked" (the "whole house of Israel"), cutting them off.

"Seeing then that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my sword go forth out of his sheath against all flesh from the south to the north: That all flesh may know that I the LORD have drawn forth my sword out of his sheath: it shall not return any more." Eze. 21:4, 5.

This world-wide circumstance ("all-flesh" knowing that the Lord has drawn forth His sword) that is to occur during the Judgment for the Living is also revealed in Micah's prophecy –

"Hear ye now what the LORD saith; Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills

hear thy voice.

“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 6:1, 2.

There we find that the Lord’s “controversy with his people” is to be proclaimed before the “mountains” and “hills” – those other than the mountains and hills of Israel.

“Sigh therefore, thou son of man, with the breaking of thy loins; and with bitterness sigh before their eyes.

“And it shall be, when they say unto thee, Wherefore sighest thou? that thou shalt answer, For the tidings; because it cometh: and every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall be weak as water: behold, it cometh, and shall be brought to pass, saith the Lord GOD.” Eze. 21:6, 7.

The announcement of the coming of that “sword” is to bring distress, not joy, to the soul. “Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

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“Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD; Say, A sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished [polished, renewed]: It is sharpened to make a sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter: should we then make mirth? it contemneth the rod of my son, as every tree.” Eze. 21:8-10.

That that “sword” (the “Word of God”) which is to come in the Judgment for the Living is mentioned twice therein, and that it was to be both “sharpened” and “furbished,” shows that the message which that “sword” represents was to come in two stages – the second one polishing, renewing it.

“And he hath given it to be furbished, that it may be handled: this sword is sharpened, and it is furbished, to give it into the hand of the slayer.” Eze. 21:11.

This sword is meant for judgment.

“Cry and howl, son of man: for it shall be upon my people, it shall be upon all the princes of Israel: terrors by reason of the sword shall be upon my people: smite therefore upon thy thigh.” Eze. 21:12.

Rather than Ezekiel being told to be glad about the coming destruction, he is told to be in distress over it for it is to be upon “all the princes of Israel” (the ministers) and the “terror” of that sword is to be upon all those whom the Lord calls “my people.”

“Because it is a trial, and what if the sword contemn even the rod? it shall be no more, saith the Lord GOD.” Eze. 21:13.

Those who believe that the Rod message is without error will stumble over this verse and verse 10, for they declare that the “sword” is to judge even the Rod. We say that they will stumble over this because they have been misapplying Br. Houteff’s words that the Rod message contains

“ALL truth or there is NO truth in it, save the quotations of truth.” 1 Symbolic Code 8.

He follows that statement with an explanation of what he meant therein –

“Therefore, if we admit one truth revealed by the ‘Rod,’ then we must accept it ALL. If God has been able to guide His servants in the past into ALL truth, He is able now. Therefore, we take the position that the message in the ‘Rod’ is free from error in so far as the ideas put forth are concerned.” Ibid.

Br. Houteff therein allows for a certain kind of “error” being in the Rod, but not in the general “ideas” thereof. Also, a little further on we will look at some things he says concerning the idea that God has at any time in the past led His people into “all” truth.

A good example of a certain type of “error” in the Rod may be seen in Br. Houteff’s statement as follows –

“This solemn typology reveals yet other significant parallels: just as the Exodus Movement was bereft of their visible leader a short time before it entered the land of Canaan, so also was the Advent Movement bereft of its visible leader as it neared the borders of the Kingdom; and just as Joshua was called then to guide the feet of God’s weary pilgrims to their homeland, just so must another arise at this time in fulfillment of the type, to lead home the feet of God’s saints today.” 3 Answerer 22.

Therein he makes it appear that Ellen White (the visible leader of the Advent Movement) was a type of Moses who died on the border of the promised land, and that another one (Joshua) must come to finish the task of bringing God’s people to the kingdom. That statement, taken by itself, would imply that his work that followed Ellen White’s would be the antitype of Joshua’s work. He somewhat reinforces that notion by

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following it with a statement wherein he makes it appear that the Rod message is the one that will lead the purified church the rest of the way to the kingdom –

“In all the annals of church history since the Exodus Movement, the Rod message is the only one which calls for just such a Movement, and which exactly fits the type. (See Tract No. 8, Mount Sion at the Eleventh Hour, and Tract No. 9, Behold I Create All Things New).

“Unmistakably, therefore, the clear light shedding forth from type, from testimonies of the prophets, and from history, identify the message of the Rod as the only one ordained to lead the latter day church, freed from sin and sinners, into the land of promise, when ‘the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.’ Luke 21:24.” 3 Answerer 23.

But, what complicates this matter is that elsewhere he equates the time from 1850 to 1890 as being the antitypical time from the birth of Moses until he was 40 years old when he killed the Egyptian and fled from Egypt, not to return until another 40 years later with the Rod in his hand, which, in the antitype, he applies to the coming of the Rod message in 1930 –

“Forty years after his first attempt to deliver the children of Israel, Moses was finally sent back into Egypt and was then enabled to break the Egyptian yoke. Adding these 40 years to 1890 A.D., we are brought to 1930, the year in which The Shepherd’s Rod, Vol. 1, was first published, declaring throughout the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination that “the year of My redeemed is come,” the day in which “the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people.” Isa. 63:4, 11:11. So Moses’ call to actually deliver Israel from Egyptian servitude coincides with the arrival of The Shepherd’s Rod, demanding obedience to God’s law, declaring the truth of the 144,000, and announcing that this is the time for their deliverance from Gentile rule.” Shepherd’s Rod Tract 1 69, 70.

“Finally, Moses’ arrival in Egypt and his success in freeing the Hebrew host and restoring order and religious liberty in 2513 A.M., coincides with the arrival of The Shepherd’s Rod in 1930 A.D., and with its endeavor to effect revival and reformation and to free Israel of today.” Ibid. 71.

“Purporting to be the antitype of the first exodus, The Shepherd’s Rod takes its name from Moses’ rod.” 1 SR tract 6.

It’s clear from those statements, and many other similar ones, that he understood that the Rod message was the antitype of Moses’ rod that led the Israelites out of Egypt. Yet, in the type, it was not Moses with the Rod that led the movement that was “freed from sin and sinners” into the land of promise, but it was Joshua with the Ark after Achan and his household perished.

The thought that Ellen White was the Moses who died on the borders of the promised land (3 Answerer) conflicts with his teaching that the Rod coming in 1930 to “deliver from Egyptian servitude” was the antitype of Moses and his Rod. That is, if Ellen White had fulfilled the antitype of leading the church out of Egypt with a Rod and then died “as it neared the borders of the Kingdom,” then Br. Houteff’s message would not have also been said antitype, but would have been the antitype of that which followed Moses and the Rod – that being, Joshua and the ark. Also, if the coming of the Rod message is the antitype of Moses’ return to Egypt with his rod (which it is) then it cannot also be the antitype of Joshua and the ark, for Joshua’s work did not run simultaneously with Moses’, but followed after it. Bear in mind that Br. Houteff was only announcing the coming of the “new message” in the Judgment for the Living – the “last message.” Moreover, Moses never had the privilege of leading a congregation that was “freed from sin and sinners” with his rod. Likewise, Br. Houteff never had that privilege either. Furthermore, Br. Houteff said that the leadership of the church in his day was the antitype of the Pharaoh whom Moses confronted –

“If the first Pharaoh makes a perfect type of the church leadership in the days of the apostles then

we must accept the last Pharaoh who knows not Joseph, as a perfect type of the church leadership who have turned from following Christ, their Leader.” 1SR 106.

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Moses with his Rod was the one who went before Pharaoh to deliver the Israelites, not Joshua and the Ark.

Thus, if Br. Houteff’s saying that the Rod contained “all truth or there is no truth in it” is to be taken in an absolute sense, then the contradiction pointed out above would put it in the latter category – “no truth.” But such is certainly not the case.

There is but one conclusion we can come to from all of the above, and that is that he was seeing more than one phase to the work of the Rod – one being the antitype of Moses’ work, and the other being the antitype of Joshua’s work. Clearly, then, according to the types, since the work of Rod message was to be two- fold (the second phase following after the first one had done its work), and since Br. Houteff only fulfilled that part of the overall type that occurred before the purification, then there must be another work (Joshua’s) to bring the people up to and through the time of the purification when the antitypical Achans are judged and thereafter to bring the saints into the kingdom. Bear in mind that Moses died before they crossed the Jordan, then Joshua took over and led the people across the Jordan with the ark, and then, after that, Achan was judged – all of that before they settled in the promised land. Note that it wasn’t Moses’ rod that brought them across the Jordan before the purification of the camp, it was the ark under Joshua’s leadership. “Where there is a type, there is the truth.”

“...let it be remembered that the Exodus Movement [from Egypt], the type, was in two sections, the first section being led by Moses, and the second by Joshua, and that is was the last, the purified, section... that possessed the land.” Answerer No. 3, p. 20.

While some may be offended by our saying that not all things in the Rod are correct, we are just doing our duty to

“Prove all things; [and] hold fast that which is good.” 1Thes. 5:21. Ellen White said,

“In regard to infallibility, I never claimed it; God alone is infallible. His word is true, and in Him is no variableness, or shadow of turning.–Letter 10, 1895.” 1SM 37.

Br. Houteff, likewise said that he never used the word “infallible” when saying that the Rod contained “all truth or there is no truth in it” (10 SC 7:12). But many “Davidians” today most certainly treat Br. Houteff’s writings as though he were “infallible.”

“Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are.” James 5:17.

Another example of this, relevant to this study, is his teaching on “the Daily” of chapters 8, 11, and 12 of the book of Daniel. He applies the word “Daily” to the “Sabbath” which was taken away from the church. The problem with that is that the Hebrew word translated “daily” (tamid) is never used to refer to the Sabbath. Its basic meaning is “continual,” or “continually.” While the Sabbath is

observed “continually” week by week, the word tamid refers to something that was to be done “day by day” – continually.

Br. Houteff assumed that the word “daily” applied to the Sabbath (2SR 133) because its being taken away from the church and Sunday being substituted for it was concurrent with the casting down of the truth and the sanctuary and the setting up of the “the abomination that maketh desolate” (Dan. 8:11-13). But there was something else that was being taken away during that same time (508 AD), and something else that was being set up. But the Lord didn’t bring that something else to his attention. That is, the Lord’s Supper was being taken away from the church and was being “supplanted by the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass.” “The Mass” is “the abomination that maketh desolate” for it is the very heart of the “pagan priesthood” and Sunday worship – they would be nothing without it. Moreover, “the Mass” is a “daily” (continual) observance, as was the Lord’s Supper in the early church (Acts 2:42, 46), and the Sabbath is not.

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The reason why “the mass” is “the abomination that maketh desolate” is because it takes away the knowledge of Christ’s work in the heavenly sanctuary. That is, concerning Christ’s ministration in the heavenly sanctuary, Ellen White says,

“Our Saviour was not to be sacrificed a second time; and it is only necessary for those who seek the blessings of his grace to ask in the name of Jesus, pouring forth the heart’s desire in penitential prayer. Such prayer will bring before the Lord of hosts the wounds of Jesus, and then will flow forth afresh the life-giving blood, symbolized by the flowing of the living water for Israel.” – Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 411.

The Catholics say that the mass is a “fresh” sacrifice of Christ that is performed by their priests. The main problem with that “abomination” (that “idolatrous sacrifice”), is the fact that is a bloodless sacrifice after the nature of Cain’s offering that takes away the knowledge of Christ’s true daily offering of His blood which, when received by faith, will truly humble the soul that realizes what Christ is going through for us in His daily ministration in the heavenly sanctuary.

Thus, the truth regarding the supplanting of the Sabbath with Sunday worship involves much more than the change of the day itself, but also includes the way the Sabbath is to be kept holy and how worship on it is to be conducted so as to “keep fresh” in our minds (3SG 227-228) Christ “daily” work on our behalf. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful that the Sabbath could have been replaced by Sunday had not the true nature and purpose of the Lord’s Supper been supplanted by “the Mass,” for it was “the Mass” that the devil used to take the eyes of the church off of Christ’s work in the heavenly sanctuary and direct them to men who were exalting themselves above each other and the law of God.

In his saying the words “the Daily” refers to the Sabbath, Br. Houteff was trying to establish the fact that the words “the Daily” did not refer to “Paganism,” nor to Antiochus Epiphany’s desecrating the Jew’s altar, as the Adventist and other commentators had been erroneously teaching. In doing so, he was also attempting to show that why the taking away of the “Daily” applied to 508 A.D. and to no other time. Concerning that date and that which led to the setting up of the “abomination that

maketh desolate,” Br. Houteff says,

“The truth expressed by the “Daily” and the “Sanctuary” were trodden down “by reason of transgression” in the period of the broken state of Rome up to 508 A.D.; for the imperial government came to an end in the year 476.” 2SR 139.

The following is from the study, Time Prophecies in Daniel 12, from the Biblical Research Institute. It was written by Gerhard Pfandt, and published in 2005. It identifies what was occurring between the fall of Rome in 476 A.D. and 508 A.D. that finalized the errors that led to the taking away of “the Daily.”

“In Daniel 8:11 ‘the daily’ refers to Christ’s intercessory ministry which was usurped by the work of the priests through the mass and the confessional. By sacrificing Christ anew in every mass, the papacy has removed Christ’s heavenly ministry in the thinking of the people. How long has this been going on?

“In May 1998, Pope John Paul II issued his pastoral letter Dies Domini in which he challenged Christians “to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy.”

“In the same letter he speaks about the attendance at Sunday mass. Early in the history of the Christianity, he says, people had to be reminded to attend mass. Sometimes the Church had to resort to specific canonical precepts: ‘This was the case in a number of local Councils from the fourth century onwards (as at the Council of Elvira of 300, which speaks not of an obligation but of penalties after three absences) and most especially from the sixth century onwards (as at the Council of Agde in 506). These decrees of local Councils led to a universal practice, the obligatory character of which was taken as something quite normal.’

“Here the pope says that particularly from the beginning of the sixth century on there were universal statutes which made it obligatory for people to attend mass. As

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Seventh-day Adventists we say that in the sixth century the daily was taken away and the abomination of desolation was established. We begin the 1290 years with 508. Why? Primarily, because deducting 1290 from 1798, which is understood to be the end of the 1260 and 1290 years, brings us to 508.

“What happened in 508? In 496, Clovis, king of the Franks, became a Roman Catholic. All the other Germanic tribes who had dismantled the Roman Empire were Arians and therefore in opposition to the pope in Rome. Clovis defeated the Visigoths and became the first civil power to join up with the rising Church of Rome. France, therefore, is called the oldest daughter of the Roman Catholic Church.

“After his great victory over the Goths in 507 ... together with his Burgundian allies, Clovis came to Tours, probably in the middle of 508, to hold a victory celebration. There he met Byzantine envoys who presented to him the decree naming him an honorary consul [of Rome]. The joining of the civil and the religious powers (Franks and papacy) at that time was an important step in ‘setting up

the abomination of desolation,' which refers to the unscriptural teachings of the papacy and their enforcement through the union of church and state. It is one of the ironies of history that France, the power that helped the papacy at the beginning of the 1290 years, was the power that brought about its demise at the end of this time period, when Napoleon in 1798 had Pope Pius VI taken prisoner." Time Prophecies in Daniel 12, by Gerhard Pfandt.

As the Catholic Church was making their local decrees concerning the keeping of "the mass" universal in 506 and onwards (the time between the fall of Rome and 508 A.D.), and as they were gaining the political power to enforce those decrees on society at large in 507 and 508, then we have the historical evidence that the taking away of "the "Daily" in 508 had to do with the Papacy supplanting the Lord's Supper (a supper of the Lord – the agape) with the "idolatrous sacrifice of the mass."

The following is the specific canon that was adopted at the Council of Agde that addresses this matter.

Canon 47. "On Sundays all laymen must be present at the whole Mass, so that they are not allowed to depart before the blessing. If, nevertheless, they do so, they shall be publicly censured by the bishop."

Therein we find that attendance at "the Mass" was the primary focus of Sunday keeping. Though the Catholic Church says that they transferred the solemnity of the Sabbath to Sunday, it is rare to find Catholics, or even Protestants, who observe Sunday as a period of time of total rest from all things secular. The common practice among Sunday keepers is to attend "Mass" (or "Church") for the service, and then do whatever they want to the rest of the day.

So, why would the Holy Spirit allow such an error concerning "the Daily"? "Because it is a trial" (Eze. 21:13). Those who take Br. Houteff's statements about the Rod being "all truth," or "no truth" out of the context of the basic idea that he was trying to convey, and the specific points he was trying to counter (that being the church's previous interpretation of the leopard-like beast of Rev. 13, or the truth of the 144,000 and the purification of the church,), do so in order to fight against the unrolling of the scroll by making Br. Houteff into an infallible idol to which people must bow down. But, in reality, they are not making him into such an idol, but, rather, they are doing so with their interpretations of his writings.

In comparing his work with that of John the Baptist, Br. Houteff said that "Our message must be as direct as was that of John." GCS 43. "John the Baptist was given a work similar to ours,..." 1TG 42:19. "Therefore the truth stands out boldly that the direct fulfillment of this chapter [Isaiah 40] is found in our time, thus making John's work an ensample of our work – John's work the type, ours the antitype." 1TG 36:4. [brackets added]

"But the work of John was not sufficient to lay the foundation of the Christian church. When he had fulfilled his mission, another work was to be done, which his testimony could not accomplish. His disciples did not understand this.

When they saw Christ coming in to take the work, they were jealous and dissatisfied. The same dangers still exist. God calls a man to do a certain work; and when he has carried it as far as he is qualified to take it, the Lord brings in others, to carry it still farther. But, like John's disciples, many feel that the success of the work depends on the first laborer." DA 181, 182.

"Now, if never before we should see that where there is a type there is also an antitype." 1 TG 47:15.

Just as the work of John the Baptist "was not sufficient" to accomplish the work that he was coming to announce, so the work of the Rod in announcing the coming of the "new message" in the Judgment for the Living "was not sufficient" to accomplish the work of the "new message" that was to come in the Judgment for the Living after the Judgment for the Dead was "over," "past."

There is yet another questionable point of interpretation in the Rod that is also relevant to this study. That is, from the Rod's perspective, the resurrection of Eze. 37 is to be a literal resurrection, though Br. Houteff doesn't specifically place it anywhere in the stream of time, nor comment on the fact that Ellen White applies the dry bones in that chapter to those who are dead in sins and trespasses. Br. Houteff says that,

"In this resurrection only God's own people, Israel, arise with no sinner among them. Moreover, these do not meet the Lord in the air; they are taken to the land of Israel, Palestine. This resurrection, therefore, is not the same as the resurrection of 1 Thessalonians, of the Revelation, or of Daniel 12. It must be a separate one." 2 TG 7, 8, p. 13.

It's worth noting that he never mentions a literal type for that resurrection as he does for the other future resurrections. "... where there is no type, there is no Truth." (1 TG 47:15). His comments regarding the resurrection in Eze. 37 were only "incidental" to the general subject of the resurrections that he was speaking on, and were not a specific explanation of that portion of that chapter. This is certainly not a situation which might cast any stigma upon the validity of his message and work, for he, himself, taught that an inspired writer sometimes must comment on a Scripture on which he does not have a clear understanding in order to teach the fundamental subject that he is discussing.

Moreover, in saying that those dead "arise with no sinner among them" precludes the possibility that it is the literal "whole house of Israel" (which is how the text identifies the dry bones – see Eze. 37:11) because that would mean that no one of the "house of Israel" would be coming up in the special resurrection (Dan. 12:1, 2) or in the general resurrection of the righteous at the time of Christ's literal second coming (1 Thes. 4:14-17). The apostle Paul spoke of the believing Israelites, such as himself, and believing Gentiles who would be coming up at Christ's visible appearing, not before that time. So, if Paul and all other believing Israelites ("the whole house of Israel") who have died come up in Ezekiel's resurrection (if it were literal), then Paul was wrong about them coming up in the general resurrection of 1st Thessalonians.

Concerning Br. Houteff's statement that those in Ezekiel's resurrection do so "with no sinner among them," it must be noted that many in Israel have died sinners. But God's law says that those who sinned were "cut off" from the congregation. So, whether that resurrection is literal or spiritual, the only ones who come up in it are those who have been accounted righteous. As those

who come up in that resurrection are taken into their own land prior to Christ's second coming when the general resurrection of the righteous occurs, then Ellen White's spiritual application to that resurrection (i.e., those dead in sins and trespasses) must be the weightier testimony regarding it. The next verse of Eze. 21 explains why this and other matters have not been clearly revealed until now.

"Thou therefore, son of man, prophesy, and smite thine hands together, and let the sword be doubled the third time, the sword of the slain: it is the sword of the great men that are slain, which entereth into their privy chambers." Eze. 21:14.

This shows that the sword that is to be used during the Judgment for the Living is to be made ready to be used three times. It is the same sword, but it has gone through three stages of preparation before it is fully

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ready to be used. When it is fully ready to be wielded it enters even into the great men's "privy chambers." The words "privy chambers" refer to places that are enclosed and considered to be safe. Among the "great men" whose "privy chambers" the sword is to enter are those who are lifted up above others – the leaders of the various factions ("privy chambers").

This brings us to the point where this chapter ties into what we were saying about the restoration of Lord's Supper during the Judgment for the Living coming in three stages – the first under Ben Roden, the second under Lois Roden, and the third under the present "scribe."

Br. Houteff said that "no one seems to know when and how to observe the sacrament." After the Judgment for the Living opened, the Lord, through the "new message," began to reveal light on the "when and how" to observe it. Ben Roden began teaching "when" it should be kept by saying that it should be kept at the Passover; then, subsequently, at all the Bible feast days and the Sabbath; then later he said that it should also be kept daily at the times of morning and evening worship, which he said was at 9:00 am and 3:00 pm. But he never wrote on "how" it was to be kept.

In his writings, he, at times, would call the bread and wine an "oblation," and spoke of offering them. There were also discussions as to how one was to hold their hands as they "blessed" the emblems, but he didn't publish anything on those matters. It may also be noted that both he and Br. Houteff often used the phrase "nailed to the cross" when referring to the animal sacrifices, while at the same time saying that the typical sacrificial system was transferred to the heavenly sanctuary, quoting Ellen White –

"... what was done in type in the ministration of the earthly sanctuary is done i n reality in the ministration of the heavenly sanctuary." GC, p. 420.

We are mentioning this because nothing but our sins and sin Bearer were "nailed to the cross." But, "... the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the

law.” Heb 7:12.

The blood sacrifices were never “nailed to the cross,” but were “changed” from the blood of animals to the blood of Christ when he entered into the heavenly sanctuary “by His own blood” (Heb. 9:12), therein to offer it “afresh” –

“Our Saviour was not to be sacrificed a second time; and it is only necessary for those who seek the blessings of his grace to ask in the name of Jesus, pouring forth the heart’s desire in penitential prayer. Such prayer will bring before the Lord of hosts the wounds of Jesus, and then will flow forth afresh the life-giving blood, symbolized by the flowing of the living water for Israel.” – Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 411.

The 3rd doubling of the sword has made it quite clear that the bread and wine were given for the sole purpose of them being memorials of what Christ had done while He was on earth, and what He is currently doing in the heavenly sanctuary. They are emblems of His offering Himself (the oblation), and are not such themselves. It was by the introduction of the false notion that the bread and wine were somehow offerings and oblations that the Lord’s Supper was “supplanted by the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass.” The fact that Br. Roden still thought of the bread and wine as offerings and oblations only goes to show that the “sword” needed further furbishing and polishing before it was really ready for use, and that reformation was not complete in his day for “Elijah” had not restored “all things” in regards to the Lord’s Supper under his ministry.

In the 2nd doubling of the “sword” Lois followed after him with more light on “when” to keep it. Br. Roden had been keeping the Daily at the “3rd” and “9th” hours, reckoning those times by the clock starting from 6:00 am. That made 9:00 am the end of the 3rd hour, and 3:00 pm the end of the 9th hour, rather than the beginning of them. So, Ben would keep the Daily from 9:00 am to 10:00 am, and from 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm. When Lois learned that if we were to use 6 am as the starting point, the 3rd hour would be reckoned from 8:00 am to 9:00 am, and the 9th hour from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm, she began to observe the more correct way. But, around the same time she came to understand that the Daily should be reckoned from sunrise, and not

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from 6:00 am, as that time was man-made. Along with that understanding she also became aware that we should be using varying length hours as they did in Bible times, rather than man-made 60-minute hours.

Yet, even with all of that increased light that those two servants brought the church on the Lord’s Supper, the sword was still not sharp enough to do its appointed work. Thus, a 3rd doubling of the “sword” was necessary to make it ready for use. That is, just as the supplanting of the Lord’s Supper with “the Mass” wore out the saints, just so much more will its complete restoration empower the saints to a greater degree than before it was taken away for they will have learned from the errors that caused the true practice to be lost, and will be prepared to rise above those errors forever and bring forth others out of darkness to the light of sanctifying Truth.

Therefore, the Lord has continued to speak to us (Isa. 62:1-3; 1TGr 42:4; Tract 8:3) a 3rd time through the present writer concerning the “how” to keep “a supper of the Lord.” That is, this 3rd and last doubling of the sword has brought us back completely from the “altar” to the “table” from where “a supper of the Lord” was taken away by men who sought to exalt themselves above their brethren. We have been shown that neither the Lord nor any of His disciples ever “blessed” either the bread or the wine, but only “blessed” the Lord (and remembered Christ when they did so) when they daily broke bread (Acts 2:42-47). We have also learned that when the apostle Paul was speaking of examining ourselves when we come together to partake in “a supper of the Lord” so that we may correctly discern the Lord’s “body,” he was speaking strictly of the brethren (the Lord’s body), and not the bread or wine or any mystical or symbolical properties they contain. For an explanation of these matters, please see our study, Blessings and Thanks Giving – The Lord’s Supper, From the Table to the Altar, and Back, Part 4.

As Br. Houteff said,

“The Lord’s bread and cup are to be taken by a people only after they have examined themselves, and have seen to it that they are not causing trouble; that their meeting together is for the better, not for the “worse.” Now, if we have reached that standard of righteousness, then we should by all means ordain the Lord’s Supper among us.” 1TG 3:4, 5.

Both he and Br. Roden, and even Ellen White, said that the biggest cause of “trouble” was private interpretations. Yet that “trouble” still permeates the movement, bringing it great loss. As we noted previously, Jesus said,

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” John 13:35.

One singer said, “I don’t want to learn nothin’ that I gotta unlearn.” Taking that principle one step further towards a perfect love, we should say, “I don’t want to teach someone somethin’ they gotta unlearn.” That’s the principle that should guide us in all of our relationships with one another. That is true love. Jesus never taught anyone a truth that they would later have to unlearn.

So, after the two calls to “awake” (Isa. 52:1), the 3rd call has come to us to

“Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck [your sins], O captive daughter of Zion.

“For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.” Isa. 52:2, 3.

We have been given a limited time of extra grace in which to do that, for the Lord says,

“I have set the point of the sword against all their gates, that their heart may faint, and their ruins be multiplied: ah! it is made bright, it is wrapped up for the slaughter.” Eze. 21:15

There we find that after the sword has been “doubled the third time” its point is then set “against all their gates.” That is, there is no way to escape, the gates are covered.

“Go thee one way or other, either on the right hand, or on the left, whithersoever thy face is set.” Eze. 21:16.

It's now action time. One cannot remain idle, but must go “one way or other.” The signs of the times prove this to be true. Conflicts in the world among the key players in the events of Jacob's time of trouble are heating up, economic structures are on the verge of collapsing, the principles of the divinely-ordained U.S. Constitution are being repudiated, and the law of God is being made void. The decision of which way to go has already been made by each individual because they have already “set” their faces in one direction or the other. Both the wise and the foolish virgins have made their decisions as to whether or not to have any “extra oil” in their vessels (whether or not to look for more light in the unrolling of the scroll) before they started out for the wedding and before they fell asleep. Now that the time has come to wake up each must go “whithersoever” their face is “set.”

“I will also smite mine hands together, and I will cause my fury to rest: I the LORD have said it.” Eze. 21:17.

The smiting of hands together in a sharp, loud clap is used to get the attention of one who is doing something wrong, or is done to express disapproval –

“And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together: and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times.” Num. 24:10.

In Eze. 21:17, the Lord says that after He smites His hands together He will cause His “fury” to “rest,” while in Eze. 5:13 He says that after He brings upon His people the judgments delineated in the preceding verses he will also cause His “fury” to “rest” –

“Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.” Eze 5:13.

After having taken away the church's “power, honor, glory, and talent (God-given gifts),” and having burned up some, smitten others with the sword, sent the sword out after others, and then burned up others in the fire that was to go out to “all the house of Israel,” the Lord will be “comforted,” in part, because he knows that by doing so “they shall know that I the LORD have spoken it in my zeal.”

Evidently, since the church didn't learn her lesson through the 430 year “siege” it was necessary for the Lord to bring those things upon her so that they would know that the Lord is quite serious about taking the reins in His own hands and bringing His people into true unity and love through the gift of prophecy. People today would call that “tough love.” The Lord's “tough love” is most often seasoned with mercy and grace, but not always.

The Lord has been most gracious and merciful in restoring the truth of when and how to observe

the Lord's Supper so that we may reap the benefits of the Lord's blessings that come from its proper observance, and in deferring His anger and restraining Himself from cutting off his rebellious remnant. He has laid the glory of man in the dust by taking away from the church the "power, honor, glory, and talent" so that He can bring them to the true experience of justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ. He has been a "swift witness" against the "sorcerers," etc., and has caused those to whom he revealed His word "... precept upon precept, line upon line ..." to "go, fall backwards, be broken, snared and taken" – a state of affairs that no honest soul can deny.

In bringing those things to pass, the Lord has done everything to bring us to our senses short of actually laying the rebels in the grave through a direct divine act. Though the Lord allowed Koresh and many of his followers to suffer the judgment they brought upon themselves in 1993 because of their foolishness, such was not an act of "supernatural beings" such as those who perform the "slaughter" of Eze. 9. (See 1 Answerer, 42-43)

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THE RESULT OF THIS TIME OF GRACE AND MERCY

Br. Houteff said that

"The object of this Association is to bring about among God's people that reformation called for in the Testimonies for the Church Volume 9, page 126, as the prerequisite movement to sounding the 'Eleventh-Hour Call' ..." The Leviticus, p. 5.

The manifestation of that "prerequisite movement" is the sign that the church is awakening and putting on Christ's righteousness – that the resurrection of Ezekiel 37 is taking place. Here is the description of that movement –

"A Reformatory Movement

"In visions of the night, representations passed before me of a great reformatory movement among God's people. Many were praising God. The sick were healed, and other miracles were wrought. A spirit of intercession was seen, even as was manifested before the great Day of Pentecost. Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families and opening before them the word of God. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth. The world seemed to be lightened with the heavenly influence [Rev. 18:1]. Great blessings were received by the true and humble people of God. I heard voices of thanksgiving and praise, and there seemed to be a reformation such as we witnessed in 1844." 9T 126. [brackets added]

What is of particular note regarding that glorious event is that it occurs before the church is purified, as we learn from the paragraph that follows that one –

"Yet some refused to be converted. They were not willing to walk in God's way, and when, in order that the work of God might be advanced, calls were made for freewill offerings, some clung selfishly to their earthly possessions. These covetous ones became separated from the company

of believers.” *ibid.*

Thus, not only does that “spirit of intercession” bring about that reformation and “genuine conversion,” but it also works to separate the “covetous ones ... from the company of believers” – they go “whithersoever [their] face is set.” This situation shows that that work is to be realized before the tares are destroyed. So, what are we waiting for?

“Isa. 26:13-16 — ‘O Lord our God, other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us: but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name. They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast Thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish. Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, Thou hast increased the nation: Thou art glorified: Thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth. Lord, in trouble have they visited Thee, they poured out a prayer when Thy chastening was upon them.’

“These verses declare that Israel of the promises, not the unbelieving Jew, have increased in number since having been removed from their land, since having been scattered to the ends of the earth. While this chastening (being driven away from their land) is still upon them, they pour out prayer and say:

“Isa. 26:17, 18 — ‘Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in Thy sight, O Lord. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.’

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“Here is shown that the eyes of the penitent are to be opened; they are to see themselves as God sees them, and confess that they have heretofore failed in their efforts, that they have travailed, have been in pain, but have brought forth only ‘wind,’ as it were, while the impenitent think that they themselves are rich and increased with goods, are doing a great deed, and are in need of nothing.

“Yes, the church may now boast of her achievements, or her so-called large membership, but not long hence will she, too, discover that she has failed to finish her work, that the world is still destroying the earth, that her people are unsaved and that rather than having brought forth salvation, she has brought forth nothing but “wind.”

““In the mighty sifting soon to take place, we shall be better able to measure the strength of Israel. The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that his fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor.’ — Testimonies, Vol. 5, pg. 80. ...

“Isa. 26:20 — ‘Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.’

"This plea shows that we are approaching the time of trouble and that God is anxious to have us under cover. The wise will hear Him and will accept the chambers, the protection He provides for them." 2 TG 5:9, 10.

As we previously noted, Ellen White said,

"By prayer and confession of sin we must clear the King's highway." "The Washing of Feet

"This ordinance is Christ's appointed preparation for the sacramental service. While pride, variance, and strife for supremacy are cherished, the heart cannot enter into fellowship with Christ. ...

"There is in man a disposition to esteem himself more highly than his brother, to work for self, to seek the highest place; and often this results in evil surmisings and bitterness of spirit. The ordinance preceding the Lord's supper is to clear away these misunderstandings, to bring man out of his selfishness, down from his stilts of self-exaltation, to the humility of heart that will lead him to serve his brother.

"The holy Watcher from heaven is present at this season to make it one of soul searching, of conviction of sin, and of the blessed assurance of sins forgiven. Christ in the fullness of His grace is there to change the current of the thoughts that have been running in selfish channels. The Holy Spirit quickens the sensibilities of those who follow the example of their Lord. As the Savior's humiliation for us is remembered, thought links with thought; a chain of memories is called up, memories of God's great goodness and of the favor and tenderness of earthly friends. Blessings forgotten, mercies abused, kindnesses slighted, are called to mind. Roots of bitterness that have crowded out the precious plant of love are made manifest. Defects of character, neglect of duties, ingratitude to God, coldness toward our brethren, are called to remembrance. Sin is seen in the light in which God views it. Our thoughts are not thoughts of self-complacency, but of severe self-censure and humiliation. The mind is energized to break down every barrier that has caused alienation. Evilthinking and evilspeaking are put away. Sins are confessed, they are forgiven. The subduing grace of Christ comes into the soul [imparted righteousness], and the love of Christ draws hearts together in a blessed unity.

"As the lesson of the preparatory service is thus learned, the desire is kindled for a higher spiritual life. To this desire the divine Witness will respond. The soul will be uplifted [resurrected]. We can partake of the Communion with a consciousness of sins forgiven. The sunshine of Christ's righteousness will fill the chambers of the mind and the soul temple. We 'behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.

"To those who receive the spirit [Holy Spirit] of this service, it can never become a mere ceremonial. ... Whenever this ordinance is rightly celebrated, the children of God are brought into a holy relationship, to help and bless each other. They covenant that the life shall be given to unselfish ministry. And this not only for one another. Their field of labor is as wide as their Master's was. The world is full of those who need our ministry. The poor, the helpless, the

ignorant, are on every hand. Those who have communed with Christ in the upper chamber will go forth to minister as he did.

“All this was comprehended in the words of Jesus, ‘I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.’ This was the intent of the service He established. And he says, ‘If ye know these things,’ if you know the purpose of His lessons, ‘happy are ye if you do them.’

“Christ by the Holy Spirit is there to set the seal to his own ordinance....It is at these, His own appointments, that Christ meets His people, and energizes them by His presence. ... All who come with their faith fixed upon Him will be greatly blessed. All who neglect these seasons of divine privilege will suffer loss. Of them it may appropriately be said, ‘Ye are not all clean.’...

“The Communion service points to Christ’s second coming. It was designed to keep this hope vivid in the minds of the disciples....In their tribulation they found comfort in the hope of their Lord’s return. Unspeakably precious to them was the thought, ‘As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till He come.’ 1 Corinthians. 11:26.”

“These are the things we are never to forget. The love of Jesus, with its constraining power, is to be kept fresh in our memory. The Desire of Ages, p. 650-61. [brackets added]

What a predicament the Davidians are in! The message they bear forbids them from keeping the Lord’s Supper among themselves, and thus receiving the great blessings that are brought by keeping it. They cannot easily keep it with Adventists if those Adventists know that they are Davidians. Moreover, as they are not in the habit of keeping it among themselves, they are not regularly examining themselves among themselves as they should be. Therefore, they are suffering the very loss Ellen White said would be the case for those who didn’t partake in the Spirit’s work at those times of divine appointment.

The Adventists are no better off because their leaders cannot truly confess their condition that manifested itself in their un-Christian treatment of the Rod and Branch messages and messengers, nor can the laity who supported them in said actions. Therefore, they do not truly profit from their footwashing experiences.

While we have been given a significant amount of light regarding the purification of the church and how it relates to the Passover and the Lord’s Supper, there is yet another aspect of the antitypical Passover. That is that the “Feast of Unleavened Bread” is also called the “Passover” (Luke 22:1). As “bread” is a symbol of truth (doctrine), and “leaven” a symbol of “sin” in its connection with the Passover, then the antitypical Feast of Unleavened Bread would be a seven day feast on pure, unleavened Truth (doctrine). But for the church to experience that wonderful feast, everyone who will be keeping it will have to be free from any desire to preach self.

Yet, that very thing is what is necessary for us to realize the wonderful reformation spoken of in 9 T 126, which is the primary object of the Rod, and, thus, the Branch messages.

“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 The Passover Feast, p. 9.

“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” Eph. 5:14.

“I want to speak to the ears of our people in America in every church. Awake from the dead, and Christ will give you life. Souls are perishing for the light of truth as it is in

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Jesus. We are standing upon the very borders of the eternal world. Fair-weather Christians will not be wanted for this work. The sentimental and tasteful religion is not needed for this time. There must be intensity brought into our faith and in the proclamation of truth. I tell you, a new life is proceeding from satanic agencies to work with a power we have not hitherto realized. And shall not a new power from above take possession of God’s people? The truth, sanctifying in its influence, must be urged upon the people. There must be earnest supplications offered to God, agonizing prayer to Him, that our hopes as a people may not be founded on suppositions, but on eternal realities. We must know for ourselves, by the evidence of God’s Word, whether we are in the faith, going to heaven or not. The moral standard of character is God’s law. Do we meet its requirements? Are the Lord’s people bringing their property, their time, their talents, and all their influence into the work for this time? Let us arouse. ‘If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God’ [Col. 3:1].— Letter 55, 1886. (Written from Basel, Switzerland, to G. I. Butler and S. N. Haskell, December 8, 1886.). White Estate Washington, D. C. July 7, 1983 Entire Ms. 12MR 328.

Those who will not submit themselves to the power of unfolding truth, allowing it to purify them and bring them into true unity with each other, will not profit from this time of extended grace and mercy while God is deferring His anger. Now is the time to receive His testimony against us and seek His presence for healing and restoration. He will not wait forever.

“Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.

“Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants’ sakes, that I may not destroy them all.” Isa. 65:6-8.

While the “wine” is said to represent “the blood of Christ” (1SR 163), it, being “new,” also represents freshly revealed truth for such is what we are given to satisfy our spiritual thirst and make glad our hearts (Ps. 104:15). The Lord declares that because there is “new wine” (new truth) in the “cluster” He will not “destroy them all.” Those who are thus spared will be those who avail themselves of the remedy – keeping their solemn feasts and performing their vows (Nah. 1:15) as such are defined by God’s prophesying Spirit.

“We should therefore understand the signs of the times, perform our vows unto God, keep our solemn feasts, and do everything in God’s order so as to be found righteous, ready to escape the

doom of the wicked, and to march on to the Kingdom.” – 1 TG 24:11 (unrevised).

That unrevised TG shows that Br. Houteff, evidently, thought that the feasts were to be kept during the time when we “march on” to the kingdom – i.e., before we get there. That would certainly make sense, because it is during that same time that we are to “perform our vows.” No one can honestly say that we should put off the performance of our vows until after we get to the kingdom. Yet, many Davidians separate those two requirements, placing the performance of our vows before the kingdom, and the keeping of the feasts after it begins.

So, why did he say that in the first version of that TG, then take that thought out of the revised version? He did so simply because it was not his work during the time of the Judgment of the Dead as he was making the “announcement” of the coming of the Judgment for the Living and the “new message” to call for the feasts to be kept, for that would have been premature. But it is also evident that he saw that the feasts were to be kept as we “march on to the kingdom,” which we are in process of doing.

It may be noted that we have used the phrase, “the Judgment for the Living” in this study rather than “the Judgment of the Living.” We have done that to emphasize the fact that God’s primary purpose in said judgment is to provide us with something that is in every way “for” us – that being Christ’s redeeming, sanctifying intercession. That point may have been missed if we were only to think of the judgment as being

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“of” us, especially when we know the sad reality of our cases. It’s one thing to go into court when we don’t have any defense against the charges against us, but it is quite another when we know that we have a Friend in court who has made it possible for us to be acquitted of all charges.

As we approach the time of Jacob’s trouble we are to expect to be called to the “solemn assembly” –

“Joel 2:15, 16 – ‘Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.

“In these verses, as in Joel 2:1, the command is given to blow the trumpet in Zion. This second trumpet, however, is not to announce the day of God, but to sanctify both a fast and the people, to call a solemn assembly, from which not one is to be excluded from the assembly.

“Joel 2:17 – ‘Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?’

“Here we are plainly told that God’s people are to face persecution and distress, and that unless they keep close to the Lord their very existence may be at stake, God’s name dishonored, and the heathen allowed to rule over them and to challenge their faith in God.” 2TG 8:21, 22.

As we have seen previously, a proper keeping of the footwashing and the Lord's Supper "will keep the people of God humble and separate from the world, and from backsliding." That is the very thing that is necessary to "keep close to the Lord" in the time when our "very existence may be at stake, God's name dishonored, and the heathen allowed to rule over" us. Where else would the people be gathered and be sanctified except at a solemn assembly around the Lord's table?

"Unlike the first trumpet blast of Joel 2:1 which announced the nearness of the Lord's appearing in the Atonement for the living; the second trumpet sound is to awaken God's people to the fact that we are now in the time of harvest for the living. The appeal to repent is so far reaching that universally, in the church, none are to be excluded but all are to be brought to repentance or be left without the wedding garment.

"The guests at the marriage feast were inspected by the king. Only those were accepted who had obeyed his requirements and put on the wedding garment. So it is with the guests at the gospel feast. All must pass the scrutiny of the great King, and only those are received who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness." – Christ's Object Lessons, p. 312.

"The ministers are to weep between the antitypical porch at the entrance of the temple and the brasen altar where the "daily sacrifice," in the type, was kept burning continually (Ex. 29:38-46). They are to plead with the Lord to deliver His people from heathen rule, lest it be said, where is their God? 7LFH 103, 104.

While Joel 2:17 speaks of the need for deliverance from heathen rule in the world in the near future so as to stop the lips that would say "where is their God?", there is even a greater need right now for deliverance from heathen rule in the church that places "human reason" where inspired truth should be, causing people to say "where is their God" who led them out of the darkness into the glorious stream of light shining from heaven through the living Spirit of prophecy?

"The only safe way by which God's servants and His church can be free from error, full of faith without guile in their mouth (all speak the same thing), is the never erring guide — "The Spirit of Prophecy." The acceptance of so-called truth, without inspiration, is the devil's trap of deception, and they who advocate such fallacious teachings are the hardest and most impossible ones to rescue from Satan's bottomless pit; for he makes them believe that confession of their errors would disqualify them for teachers, and dishonor their high standing.

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"He who denies inspired interpretation of the Scriptures is denying the office of the Holy Spirit, and is sinning against Him — committing the unpardonable sin!" 2SR 286.

"... no matter how hard men try to bring about revival and reformation among God's people, their efforts are doomed to failure even before they start if God does not Himself through His prophets take charge of the work." 1TG 10:21.

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

“... the Davidians hold that the belief that the Spirit of Prophecy is to repose in the church to the end of time, is one of the foundation stones of Seventh-day Adventism.” 3 Answerer 58.

CONCLUSION

Herein we have seen the Lord's explanation of what was to happen “when the days of the siege are fulfilled,” and how those things have come to pass. This “new wine” which shows each of us the “worst of our case” should bring forth gladness in us – we who know that

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

“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.

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Rev. 3:19- 22.

If we won't hear what the Spirit says and acknowledge what the Lord has already brought about to lay our glory in the dust, and recognize that He has done so in order for us to know that He has spoken in His zeal so as to bring us to repentance, He will certainly bring upon us the things recorded in the rest of Eze. 5 –

“Moreover I will make thee waste, and a reproach among the nations that are round about thee, in the sight of all that pass by. So it shall be a reproach and a taunt, an instruction and an astonishment unto the nations that are round about thee, when I shall execute judgments in thee in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes. I the LORD have spoken it.

“When I shall send upon them the evil arrows of famine, which shall be for their destruction, and which I will send to destroy you: and I will increase the famine upon you, and will break your staff of bread:

“So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken it.” Eze. 5:14-17.

There is yet hope, Brethren –

“At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.” Jer. 18:7, 8.

So, let it be, brothers and sisters. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!

“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." – The Great Controversy, p 425.

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"Unity Among Laborers.

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.' Jas. 3:13-18.

"The principle here laid down is the natural outgrowth of the Christian religion. Especially will those who are engaged in proclaiming the last solemn message to a dying world seek to fulfill this scripture. Although possessing different temperaments and dispositions, they will see eye to eye in all matters of religious belief. They will speak the same things; they will have the same judgment; they will be one in Christ Jesus. ...

"As ministers, as the church of Christ, labor to be in harmony among yourselves, to be one in heart, one in sympathy. If you cannot all see alike on every subject, do not allow hard feelings to arise. When the cause was young, if there was one who did not view some point of truth as the body viewed it, a day of fasting and prayer was observed. We did not then try to see how far apart we could get; but we prayed, and searched the Scriptures until the light of truth illuminated the darkened mind, and all could see eye to eye. ...

"The truth is a unit, so powerful that our enemies cannot controvert it. Therefore they try to excite jealousies, to create variance, among brethren, that they may be led to separate their affections from God and from one another. In unity there is strength. In Luther's time it was considered a great misfortune when differences arose among the believers, because it strengthened the opposition of their enemies. There was a time when the Reformation was carrying everything before it, and if the leaders had been united, it would have been, through God, a still more powerful agent for the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan; but variance arose among them, and the enemies of truth greatly rejoiced.

"Even so Satan will come in among us, and sow discord if he can. How shall we resist him? By each cultivating love and forbearance in his own heart toward his brethren. ..." "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' The love here spoken of is not that sentimentalism, that low order of love, that attracts the affections from Christ and places them upon one another. The love here described is pure; it arises from having the affections centered upon Jesus, making him first, and last, and best in everything. ...

“Jesus is ready to do great things for us when we lay ourselves upon the altar, a living, consuming sacrifice. “I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.” How? Through the spirit of Christ. It is through the infinite sacrifice of Christ that this high estimate has been placed upon man. When we have his spirit in our hearts, we shall be of one mind in him. We shall not then seek to cover up the defects in our characters; but we shall strive earnestly to overcome them. Our eyes will be fixed upon Jesus, and we shall learn from him to dwell in love and harmony with one another here, and shall finally be permitted to dwell with Christ and angels and all the redeemed throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.” Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists. 124-126.

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.” Isa. 60:1

“Who can truthfully say that our light is not come? that our message is not timely Truth? None who are in contact with It, I am sure. Inspiration is, therefore, inviting God’s people, the Denomination, along with us, to arise and shine.” 1TG 40:16.

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Doug Mitchell

The Branch

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