

To Elder Figuhr and GC Committee (7L-EF L2)

Description

October, 1956

President R. R. Figuhr and
General Conference Committee of Seventh-day Adventists
Takoma Park, Washington, D. C.

Dear Brethren:

As it is written in Ecclesiastes: "To every thing there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven . . . A time to rend and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak." Eccl. 3:1,7.

All the planets of the Universe keep the most accurate time in their movements. The Lord does everything on time. He came on time; He was baptized on time; He was crucified on time; and He and His Father went into the Most Holy Place of the Sanctuary at a given time. Likewise, He will come on time. Even though we know not when that time is, He will, nevertheless, make the date known at the proper time.

"Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming. The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. When God spoke the time, He poured upon us the Holy Ghost, and our faces began to light up and shine with the glory of God, as Moses' did when he came down from Mount Sinai." – Early Writings, p. 15.

"It was at midnight that God chose to deliver His people . . . Signs and wonders followed in quick succession. Everything seemed turned out of its natural course And as God spoke the day and the hour of Jesus' coming and delivered the everlasting covenant to His people, He spoke one sentence, and then paused, while the words were rolling through the earth. The Israel of God stood with their eyes fixed upward, listening to the words as they came from the mouth of Jehovah and rolled through the earth like peals of loudest thunder. It was awfully solemn." – Ibid., pp. 285,286.

Ezekiel was commanded to go speak the Lord's words to the house of Israel (Eze. 3:4). In verse 15 of Chapter 3, we find that neither Ezekiel nor any of his brethren understood the vision. So we, along with many Bible commentators, believe that the book of Ezekiel

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is prophetic from his day. Ezekiel 9 is a prophecy of the Judgment of the Living. If God's people

are to know when the church is to be judged, the time would have to be made known; for it first begins at the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17).

The Church has been proclaiming the Judgment of the Dead for over a century. If God had not given us a starting date, the Third Angel's Message would have had little effect. If we had not been given the beginning of the 1260 years the prophecy would have been of little worth to the church these many years.

How will we ever proclaim the "Loud Cry" of the Third Angel (the Judgment of the Living) to the world if we are never to know when that time begins? We must have a starting date to have a "Loud Cry" message.

Since the Judgment of the Living begins at the house of God, it is obvious that the Lord would give us information as to when it begins; otherwise, it would not be legal or just. The Lord never does anything except He first warns His people through His servants the prophets (Amos 3:7), for He is just in His dealings.

"Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment. Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him." Eccl. 8:5,6.

"Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come." Ps. 102:13.

"Now is the time for the last warning to be given. There is a special power in the presentation of the truth at the present time, but how long will it continue? Only a little while. If there was ever a crisis, it is now." – Testimonies, Vol. 6, p. 16.

"All are now deciding their eternal destiny. Men need to be aroused to realize the solemnity of the time, the nearness of the day when human probation shall be ended. Decided efforts should be made to bring the message for this time prominently before the people. The third angel is to go forth with great power. Let none ignore this work or treat it as of little importance." – Ibid.

"The light we have received upon the third angel's message is the true light. The mark of the beast is exactly what it has been

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proclaimed to be. Not all in regard to this matter is yet understood, nor will it be understood until the unrolling of the scroll; but a most solemn work is to be accomplished in our world. The Lord's command to His servants is: 'Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.' " –

Ibid., p. 17.

Here the Lord's servant says that we have come to a crisis time when the Third Angel's Message is to go forth with great power; and at this time we are to understand more in regard to the mark of the beast, because of the unrolling of the scroll. God's people are to be warned of their transgressions!

Truly this is the time of the Judgment: of the Living and it is plain to see that those who reject this message will receive the mark of the beast.

"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.

"This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14." – Ibid.

You must surely realize, brethren, that if the evil one can keep us ignorant of the time of the investigative judgment for the church, there will be no "special work of purification," of putting away sin among God's people. If he can keep the people in darkness in regard to the time of the atonement for the living until probation for them is closed, then it will be forever too late for them to repent.

This "special work of purification" – putting away sin – is further explained in Testimonies, Vol. 1:

"November 20, 1857, I was shown the people of God, and saw them mightily shaken. Some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, were pleading with God. Their countenances were pale, and marked with deep anxiety, expressive of their internal struggle." – Testimonies, Vol. 1, pp. 179,180.

"Some, I saw, did not participate in this work of agonizing and pleading. They seemed indifferent and careless. They were not resisting

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the darkness around them, and it shut them in like a thick cloud. The angels of God left these, and I saw them hastening to the assistance of those who were struggling with all their energies to resist the evil angels, and trying to help themselves by calling upon God with perseverance. But the angels left those who made no effort to help themselves, and I lost sight of them. As the praying ones continued their earnest cries, a ray of light from Jesus would at times come to them, to encourage their hearts, and light up their countenances." Testimonies, Vol. 1, pp. 180,181.

These agonizing ones realize that the investigative judgment is going forward in behalf of the living; and not knowing what hour their cases might come up in the Heavenly Sanctuary, they are in agony. But the careless ones are those who do not realize or even believe that the atonement is going on for the living; in spite of the fact that Sister White plainly tells us that the judgment would some day begin at the house of God (The Great Controversy, p. 490).

“So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God.” – The Great Controversy, p. 480.

The Lord’s servant, Sister White, explains the same event in another way: “I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this will cause a shaking among God’s people.” – Testimonies, Vol. 1, p. 181.

The “STANDARD” here referred to is the Ten Commandment Law and the Testimony of Messiah for by this the living are judged.

“Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it,” and this is what causes a shaking among God’s people. So, when the investigative judgment is completed at the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17) to the end, the true people of God will go forth proclaiming the Sabbath more fully in the Loud Cry.

We see plainly by this, brethren, that the “straight testimony” mentioned, is none other than the Investigative Judgment of the Living. This shaking takes place in the church at the same time our

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names and our deeds are being investigated in the courts above.

It is inevitable then that there is to be a message of warning “of sounding of trumpets” (Lev. 23:24), as it were, declaring “the hour (time) of His judgment (Harvest) is come.” Rev. 14:7.

“And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.” Rev. 14:15,16.

A message of present truth is announced, proclaiming that the “eleventh hour” has struck for the church and now is the time to come to the Sanctuary in figure and confess our sins, so that we may be covered by the Righteousness of Christ as He atones for us, and thus we receive the Mark of God (Eze. 9:3,4).

This short period of investigation will bring the purification of the church and a holy sanctified ministry, as a result of the “straight testimony.”

“The testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance, and all that truly receive it, will obey it and be purified.” – Testimonies, Vol. 1, p. 181.

A message of life and death is to be presented to the church and upon that solemn message the

“destiny of the church hangs.” It takes people to make up a church; therefore, each individual’s destiny hangs upon his acceptance or rejection of that message.

If the message had originated with the General Conference, it would cause no shaking, for all would accept it. This is why the Lord has never in all the history of the church, brought a great change through the same organized body existent at the time. It is just as impossible for the leadership today, to bring about a change in “ideas, theories, habits, and practices.” (Christ Our Righteousness, p. 121). Yet, Sister White teaches that the work must be reorganized for the final proclamation of the Third Angel’s Message (Judgment of the Living) to the world.

When Jesus first came to this earth there was a reorganization of the work. When He came to the temple in 1844 to begin the Judgment

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for the Dead, there was a reorganization. Likewise, there must be a reorganization of the work for the lighting of the earth with the glory of the Third Angel. Both the Spirit of Prophecy and the Bible make this subject plain, brethren, and whether or not you agree, the reorganization will come – with or without your help.

“Unless those who can help in — are aroused to a sense of their duty, they will not recognize the work of God when the loud cry of the third angel shall be heard. When light goes forth to lighten the earth, instead of coming up to the help of the Lord, they will want to bind about His work to meet their narrow ideas. Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning. There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the angel who joins the third angel in the message to be given to the world. God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands. The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness. Those who are accounted good workers will need to draw nigh to God, they will need the divine touch. They will need to drink more deeply and continuously at the fountain of living water, in order that they may discern God’s work at every point.” – Testimonies to Ministers, p. 300.

Here we see that the Lord has taken the reins in His own hands and He will “bring about and perfect His work of righteousness.” All may have a part in this last great work, but not the control of it; for the Lord has in His hands the controls. If we are ever to know when to start this work of reformation, we must be told.

“The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.” Ps. 99:1.

“Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come.” Ps. 102:13.

Here we see that there is a time for the Lord to take the reins in His own hands. Yea, a “set time,” for Him to begin His reign over the church. Then for anyone to use Sister White’s writings to prove that we will not know when He begins this work, is to say we will not know when the Judgment of

the Living begins. To such an one the Lord says:

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“If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.” Rev. 3:3, last part.

“God calls for watchmen who, in the power of the Spirit, will give to the world the last warning message; who will proclaim the time of night.” – Testimonies, Vol. 8, p. 304.

“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” 1 Pet. 4:17.

We must know the time in order to warn the people, for the Lord instructs:

“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand.” Joel 2:1.

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” Rev. 14:6.

“Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” Rev. 14:7.

The first angel’s message, the Judgment of the Dead, was proclaimed in 1844. But John calls it “another angel” which shows that the “hour of His judgment” was to be proclaimed again after 1844 – or at the beginning of the Judgment of the Living – to “them that dwell on the earth,” the church first and then as the Scripture reads, “to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.”

“We see before us a special work to be done The fourteenth chapter of Revelation is a chapter of the deepest interest. This scripture will soon be understood in all its bearings, and the messages given to John the revelator will be repeated with distinct utterance.” – Review and Herald, October 13, 1904: Reprinted in Review and Herald, Jul 12, 1945.

After the shaking Sister White writes: “My attention was the turned to the company I had seen, who were mightily shaken. I was

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shown those whom I had before seen weeping and praying with agony of spirit. The company of guardian angels around them had been doubled, and they were clothed with an armor from their head to their feet. They moved in exact order, firmly, like a company of soldiers. Their countenances expressed the severe conflict which they had endured, the agonizing struggle they had passed through. Yet their features, marked with severe internal anguish, now shone with the light and glory of heaven. They had obtained the victory, and it called forth from them the deepest

gratitude, and holy, sacred joy.” – Testimonies, Vol. 1, pp. 181,182.

“The number of this company had lessened. Some had been shaken out, and left by the way. The careless and indifferent, who did not join with those who prized victory and salvation enough to perseveringly plead and agonize for it, did not obtain it, and they were left behind in darkness, but their numbers were immediately made up by others taking hold of the truth and coming into the ranks. Still the evil angels pressed around them, but they could have no power over them.” – Ibid., p. 182.

“I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth in great power. It had effect.” – Ibid.
“I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered: ‘It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence

of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel.’ ” – Ibid., p. 183.

“Clad in the armor of Christ’s righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict. ‘Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners,’ . . . she is to go forth into all the world, conquering and to conquer.” –

Prophets and Kings, p. 725.

This arrangement of the above quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy places them in their proper setting and in strict fidelity to the word of God.

To Summarize:

Our High Priest stands up to atone for the living which begins at the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17; Rev. 14:16).

There is a definite time – a “set time” for this most solemn work to begin. Revelation 14 is to be repeated, and understood in all its bearings (Ps. 102:3; Review and Herald, Oct. 13, 1904).

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A shaking takes place in the church because of the presentation of the straight testimony.

The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs that should work deep repentance, is lightly esteemed (Testimonies, Vol. 1, p. 181).

“There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the angel who joins the third angel in the message to be given to the world. God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands. The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness. Those who are accounted good workers will need to draw nigh to God, they will need the divine touch. They will need to drink more deeply and continuously at the fountain of living water, in order that they may discern God’s work at every point.” –

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 300.

God takes the reins in His hands, nevertheless, by the simple means He uses to perfect His work of righteousness, and surprises those that want to control the work.

This shaking brings the purification of the church. Clad in the armor of Christ's righteousness the church (those that survive the shaking) go forth into all the world conquering and to conquer (Prophets and Kings, p. 725).

Brethren, do not disregard or even lightly esteem this warning message, for upon it hangs the destiny of the church – yes, and even of the world. There is a definite date set for the atonement, for the building of Zion.

Therefore, the date set for the atonement of the dead, October 22, 1844 (The Great Controversy, p. 400) coincides with the Judgment of the Living for the church, October 22, 1956, in fulfillment of the prophecies in the book of Ezekiel.

Yours to stand in the Judgment of the Living,

Ben L. Roden

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