

The Prophetic periods and TIME~SETTING
IN HIS IMAGE MINISTRIES: Adam Mills

Those faithful, disappointed ones, who could not understand why their Lord did not come, were not left in darkness. Again they were led to their Bibles to search the prophetic periods. The hand of the Lord was removed from the figures, and the mistake was explained. **They saw that the prophetic periods reached to 1844, and that the same evidence which they had presented to show that the prophetic periods closed in 1843, proved that they would terminate in 1844.** EW 236

I saw that they were correct in their reckoning of the prophetic periods; **prophetic time closed in 1844**, and Jesus entered the most holy place to cleanse the sanctuary at the ending of the days. EW 243

The computation of the prophetic periods on which that message was based, placing the close of the 2300 days in the autumn of 1844, stands without impeachment. **The repeated efforts to find new dates for the beginning and close of the prophetic periods, and the unsound reasoning necessary to sustain these positions, not only lead minds away from the present truth, but throw contempt upon all efforts to explain the prophecies.** GC 457

"And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer" (Revelation 10:5, 6). **This message announces the end of the prophetic periods.** 2SM 108

In the summer of 1844, Adventists discovered the mistake in their former reckoning of the prophetic periods, and settled upon the correct position. The 2300 days of Daniel 8:14, which all believed to extend to the second coming of Christ, had been thought to end in the spring of 1844; but it was now seen that this period extended to the autumn of the same year, [SEE APPENDIX, NOTE 1.] and the minds of Adventists were fixed upon this point as the time for the Lord's appearing. The proclamation of this time message was another step in the fulfillment of the parable of the marriage, whose application to the experience of Adventists had already been clearly seen. As in the parable the cry was raised at midnight announcing the approach of the bridegroom, so in the fulfillment, midway between the spring of 1844, when it was first supposed that the 2300 days would close, and the autumn of 1844, at which time it was afterward found that they were really to close, such a cry was raised, in the very words of Scripture: "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." 4SP 248,249

I was then shown what did take place in heaven as **the prophetic periods ended in 1844.** I saw that as the ministration of Jesus in the Holy place ended, and he closed the door of that apartment, a great darkness settled upon those who had heard, and had rejected the messages of Christ's coming, and they lost sight of him. 1SG 158,159

In the Scriptures are presented truths that relate especially to our own time. **To the period just prior to the appearing of the Son of man, the prophecies of Scripture point, and here their warnings and threatenings pre-eminently apply. The prophetic periods of Daniel, extending to the very eve of the great consummation, throw a flood of light upon events then to transpire.** The book of Revelation is also replete with warning and instruction for the last generation. The beloved John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, portrays the fearful and thrilling scenes connected with the close of earth's history, and presents the duties and dangers of God's people. None need remain in ignorance, none need be unprepared for the coming of the day of God. RH 9/25/83

I was a firm believer in definite time in 1844, but this prophetic time was not shown me in vision, for it was some months after the passing of this period of time before the first vision was given me. There were many proclaiming a new time after this, but **I was shown that we should not have another definite time to proclaim to the people.** All who are acquainted with me and my work will testify that I have borne but one testimony in regard to the setting of the time. 10MR 268, 269

The world placed all time-proclamation on the same level and called it a delusion, fanaticism and heresy. **Ever since 1844** I have borne my testimony that we were now in a period of time in which we are to take heed to ourselves lest our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon us unawares. **Our position has been one of waiting and watching, with no time-proclamation to intervene between the close of the prophetic periods in 1844 and the time of our Lord's coming.** We do not know the day nor the hour, or when the definite time is, and yet **the prophetic reckoning shows us that Christ is at the door.**

We have not cast away our confidence, neither have we a message dependent upon definite time, but we are waiting and watching unto prayer, looking for and loving the appearing of our Saviour, and doing all in our power for the preparation of our fellow men for that great event. We are not impatient. If the vision tarry, wait for it, for it will surely come, it will not tarry. Although disappointed, our faith has not failed, and we have not drawn back to perdition. The apparent tarrying is not so in reality, for at the appointed time our Lord will come, and we will, if faithful, exclaim, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us" (Isaiah 25:9). 10MR 270

I have also been pronounced a deceiver because I have said, "The Lord will soon come; get ready, get ready that ye may be found waiting, watching and loving His appearing." But in the Revelation I read this statement, "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12). "Behold, I come quickly blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (Revelation 22:7). "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Revelation 3:11). Was the One who bore this testimony a deceiver, because the "quickly" has been protracted longer than our finite minds could anticipate? It is the faithful and true witness that speaks. His words are verity and truth. 10MR 270,271

Should we advance in spiritual knowledge, we would see the truth developing and expanding in lines of which we have little dreamed, but it will never develop in any line that will lead us to imagine that we may know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power. Again and again have I been warned in regard to time setting. **There will never again be a message for the people of God that will be based on time. We are not to know the definite time either for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ.**

I was searching through my writings, before coming to this meeting, to see what I should take with me to Australia, and I found an envelope on which was written, "Testimony given in regard to time setting, June 21, 1851. Preserve carefully." I opened it, and this is what I found. It reads:

"A copy of a vision the Lord gave Sister White, June 21, 1851, at Camden, N.Y. **The Lord showed me that the message must go, and that it must not be hung on time; for time will never be a test again.** I saw that some were getting a false excitement, arising from preaching time, that **the third angel's message can stand on its own foundation, and that it needs not time to strengthen it,** and that it will go with mighty power, and do its work, and will be cut short in righteousness.

"I saw some were making everything bend to this next fall; that is, making their calculations, and disposing of their property in reference to that time. I saw that this was wrong for this reason: instead of going to God daily, and earnestly desiring to know their present duty, they looked ahead, and made their calculations as though they knew that the work would end this fall, without inquiring their duty of God daily.--E. G. White. "Copied at Milton, June 29, 1851, A. A. G."...

The times and the seasons God has put in His own power. And why has not God given us this knowledge?--Because we would not make a right use of it if He did. A condition of things would result from this knowledge among our people that would greatly retard the work of God in preparing a people to stand in the great day that is to come. We are not to live upon time excitement. We are not to be engrossed with speculations in regard to the times and the seasons which God has not revealed. Jesus has told His disciples to "watch," but not for a definite time. His followers are to be in the position of those who are listening for the orders of their Captain; they are to watch, wait, pray, and work, as they approach the time for the coming of the Lord; but no one will be able to predict just when that time will come; for "of that day and hour knoweth no man." **You will not be able to say that He will come in one, two, or five years, neither are you to put off His coming by stating that it may not be for ten or twenty years.** 1SM 188, 189

I have borne the testimony since the passing of the time in 1844, that **there should be no definite time set by which to test God's people. The great test on time was in 1843 and 1844; and all who have set time since these great periods marked in prophecy were deceiving and being deceived.** LS 222

I plainly stated at the Jackson camp meeting to these fanatical parties that they were doing the work of the adversary of souls; they were in darkness. **They claimed to have great light that probation would close in October, 1884.**

I there stated in public that the Lord had been pleased to show me that there would be no definite time in the message given of God since 1844; and that I knew that this message, which four or five were engaged in advocating with great zeal, was heresy. The visions of this poor child were not of God. This light came not from heaven. Time was short; but the end was not yet. 2SM 73

The first and second angels' messages were to be proclaimed, but no further light was to be revealed before these messages had done their specific work. This is represented by the angel standing with one foot on the sea, proclaiming with a most solemn oath that time should be no longer.

This time, which the angel declares with a solemn oath, is not the end of this world's history, neither of probationary time, but of prophetic time, which should precede the advent of our Lord. That is, the people will not have another message upon definite time. After this period of time, reaching from 1842 to 1844, there can be no definite tracing of the prophetic time. The longest reckoning reaches to the autumn of 1844. 7BC 971

Many Adventists have felt that unless they could fix their faith upon a definite time for the Lord's coming, they could not be zealous and diligent in the work of preparation. **But as their hopes are again and again excited, only to be destroyed, their faith receives such a shock that it becomes well-nigh impossible for them to be impressed by the great truths of prophecy. The more frequently a definite time is set for the second advent, and the more widely it is taught, the better it suits the purposes of Satan. After the time has passed, he excites ridicule and contempt of its advocates, and thus casts reproach upon the true time movement of 1843 and 1844. Those who persist in this error will at last fix upon a date too far in the future for the coming of Christ. Thus they will be led to rest in a false security, and many will not be undeceived until it is too late.** 4SP 290,291

Many who have called themselves Adventists have been time setters. Time after time has been set for Christ to come, but repeated failures have been the result. The definite time of our Lord's coming is declared to be beyond the ken of mortals. Even the angels who minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation know not the day nor the hour. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only." **Because the times repeatedly set have passed, the world is in a**

more decided state of unbelief than before in regard to the near advent of Christ. They look upon the failures of the time setters with disgust; and because men have been so deceived, they turn from the truth substantiated by the word of God that the end of all things is at hand.

Those who so presumptuously preach definite time, in so doing gratify the adversary of souls; for they are advancing infidelity rather than Christianity. They produce Scripture and by false interpretation show a chain of argument which apparently proves their position. But their failures show that they are false prophets, that they do not rightly interpret the language of inspiration. The word of God is truth and verity, but men have perverted its meaning. These errors have brought the truth of God for these last days into disrepute. Adventists are derided by ministers of all denominations, yet God's servants must not hold their peace. The signs foretold in prophecy are fast fulfilling around us. This should arouse every true follower of Christ to zealous action.

Those who think they must preach definite time in order to make an impression upon the people do not work from the right standpoint. The feelings of the people may be stirred and their fears aroused, but they do not move from principle. An excitement is created; but when the time passes, as it has done repeatedly, those who moved out upon time fall back into coldness, darkness, and sin, and it is almost impossible to arouse their consciences without some great excitement.

In Noah's day, the inhabitants of the old world laughed to scorn what they termed the superstitious fears and forebodings of the preacher of righteousness. He was denounced as a visionary character, a fanatic, an alarmist. "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." Men will reject the solemn message of warning in our day as they did in Noah's time. They will refer to those false teachers who have predicted the event and set the definite time, and will say they have no more faith in our warning than in theirs. This is the attitude of the world today. Unbelief is wide spread, and the preaching of Christ's coming is mocked at and derided. 4T 307,308

We have been looking many years for a Sunday law to be enacted in our land; and now that the movement is right upon us, we ask, What are our people going to do in the matter? Do you realize that the night will soon come, when no man can work? Have you that intensity of zeal, that piety and devotion, which will enable you to stand when opposition is brought upon you? If God has ever spoken by me, the time will come when we shall be brought before councils, and every position of truth which we hold will be severely criticised. The time that we are now allowing to go to waste should be devoted to the charge God has given us, of preparing for the approaching crisis. Much time should be spent in prayer, that our garments of character may be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

We should especially seek God for grace and power to be given his people now. God lives; and we do not believe that the time has fully come when he would have our liberties restricted. The prophet saw "four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." Another angel ascending from the east, cried to them, saying, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." This points out the work we now have to do, which is to cry to God for the angels to hold the four winds until missionaries shall be sent to all parts of the world, and shall have proclaimed the warning against disobeying the law of Jehovah. But every conceivable thing that the enemy can bring against the people of God, to hinder them in their work, will be employed. The Lord, on the other hand, bids all to be awake and to watch; for it was while men slept, that the enemy sowed tares. RH 12/11/88

Time has not been a test since 1844, and it **will never again be a test**. The Lord has shown me that **the message of the third angel** must go, and be proclaimed to the scattered children of the Lord, but it **must not be hung on time**. I saw that some were getting a false excitement, arising from preaching time; but the third angel's message is stronger than time can be. I saw that this message can stand on its

own foundation and needs not time to strengthen it; and that it will go in mighty power, and do its work, and will be cut short in righteousness. EW 75

The opportune time for us to work is now, just now, while the day lasts. But **there is no command for any one to search the Scripture in order to ascertain, if possible, when probation will close. God has no such message for any mortal lips. He would have no mortal tongue declare that which he has hidden in his secret councils.** RH, October 9, 1894

The Pioneers

The admonition of the Saviour is to "watch." And this is the attitude of Seventh-day Adventists. They believe all prophetic time closed Oct. 22, 1844, with the closing of the twenty-three hundred days; hence they have had no part in time-setting. Their position is, and ever has been, that of "watching," - watching fulfilling prophecy, watching the signs of the times, watching the advancement of the third angel's message, which is to lighten the earth with its glory, and ripen the harvest of the earth. {1904 J.N. Loughborough, Last Day Tokens 188.1}

“... there is absolutely no prophetic period which reaches this side of 1844.” E.J. Waggoner

“... we believe that definite time is in the Bible, that it is given for a specified object, that all the periods have expired, and that we have reached the events which they were all given to mark.” Uriah Smith

"To their credit it should be said that Seventh-day Adventists do not believe in setting time definitely since 1844."-The Lords Day, p. 38. {a quote from D.M. Canright: 1933 W. H. Branson, In Defense Of the Faith 320.2}

Present day SDA Church stance

“Setting dates of future events are not part of the church's teachings.” Adventist News Network Staff