

Revision 1.1

February 10, 2025

This book is a chapter-by-chapter but not necessarily paragraph by paragraph paraphrase of the book *The Great Controversy*. The language was simplified and in this case the volume was reduced by about 50%.

The history covered by this book begins with the persecution of Christians following the time of the apostles.

What I did find very interesting was adding the references to publicly available sources. *The Great Controversy* is a history book, among other things, and what is a history book without references. Normally people don't look up references when they read a book, but I decided to try to make them more accessible by providing a hyperlink to the relevant content if possible. Since the book itself is well over a hundred years old, with the original copyright having expired, naturally the original references are also all in the public domain. This means that many if not most of the references exist in publicly accessible digital format from places like books.google.com and archive.org. What I only discovered toward the very end was how well Artificial Intelligence worked to help find the original reference material. Anyone who has been paying attention to tech news has most likely heard of OpenAI's ChatGPT (<https://openai.com/chatgpt>), and many more. Well, Microsoft has a version of the AI enhanced search engine available at <https://copilot.microsoft.com/>, which is branded by them as an "AI-powered copilot for the web." I was able to paste references into their chat search field, and most of the time it was able to find a publicly available source for the book. Once the book was found, if it was available on google books or archive.org, I could create a hyperlink that would take the reader directly to the content being referenced, even highlighting specific words. Finally, I went through the Appendix which contains additional comments and references provided by the Ellen G. White Estate, some of which were newer and not necessarily out of copyright. In that case, I discovered that archive.org even had some of those books for loan like a library. Of course, all the hyperlinks will be much more useful if reading this book on a computer or tablet. Many of the hyperlinks contain embedded search text, which is not visible, but will result in showing highlighted text if clicked on.

A free pdf of the original book can be obtained here:

https://media4.egwwritings.org/pdf/en_GC.pdf

If you find any errors or broken hyperlinks, you can let me know by sending email to gfeedback@btlb.org.

Stephen Ing

Introduction

Before sin, Adam was able to talk directly with God, but after he sinned, humans could no longer speak face to face with God. But He did not abandon us because He had a plan in place to save us. We would still have a connection to heaven to learn of this plan. [2 Peter 1:21](#) ... prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God. [2 Peter 1:21 NLT](#).

The earliest writings in the Bible came to us through Moses, where we learn of creation, the early history of the world, and the law of God. In the 2,500 years before that, messages from God were mostly passed down by word of mouth from father to son. After Moses, God continued speaking through chosen people over the next 1,600 years concluding the Bible with the book of Revelation written by the Apostle John.

The Bible was written by people, “inspired by God.” [[2 Timothy 3:16](#)]. This information came in the form of dreams and visions, sometimes with symbols that represent something else, and numbers, which were then written. The Ten commandments, however, were spoken and written directly by God, and copied word for word in the writings of Moses.

The truths of the Bible, written by human hands, is a joining of divine and human. This same combination can be seen in Jesus, as written by John, [John 1:14](#) So the Word became human and made his home among us. ... [John 1:14 NLT](#).

Written over 1,600 years by very different people, ranging from King David and Solomon to the shepherd Amos. The highly educated Moses who also spoke directly with God as to a friend [[Exodus 33:11](#), [Numbers 12:8](#)], to the disciples Peter and John who were humble fishermen, but privileged to live and work with Jesus for three and a half years. Some truths or stories were presented by more than one writer, with some differences, that can appear to be contradictions. But the thoughtful reverent student can find the harmony.

The Bible is God’s message of salvation to humanity, written by imperfect human beings impressed by the Holy Spirit. It comes to us as a perfect whole to meet the needs of people from all cultures, languages, and generations since it was assembled. Just because we have this perfect whole of God’s word now, does not mean we still don’t need the Holy Spirit to understand more and deeper teachings from its pages. However, the Spirit does not replace the Bible. The Bible itself provides the standard by which to judge whether ideas or teachings of spirits are from God. The Bible warns not to believe every spirit, but to test whether they are from God [[1 John 4:1](#)]. [Isaiah 8:20](#) Look to God's instructions and teachings! People who contradict his word are completely in the dark. [Isaiah 8:20 NLT](#).

Some have claimed to receive light directly from the Holy Spirit, and no longer need the Bible. They are guided by thoughts and impressions that they claim are from God, but it is not the Spirit of God that motivates them. Because the work of the Holy Spirit is so important to the church, it is one of the areas that Satan targets to introduce error but also to cause people to question the real work of God's Spirit.

The Holy Spirit was active during the time that the Scriptures were being given. It was also necessary during the New Testament era when the Gospel was being spread. Even after the Bible was completed, the Spirit of God continued the valuable work of teaching, warning and comforting God's people.

Jesus gave these promises about the Holy Spirit to His disciples: [John 14:26](#) But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative--that is, the Holy Spirit--he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. [John 14:26 NLT](#). [John 16:13](#) When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. [John 16:13 NLT](#). [Matthew 28:20](#) ... I am with you always, even to the end of the age." [Matthew 28:20 NLT](#). Clearly Jesus has not been with us physically since He rose up into heaven, but the Holy Spirit has and will continue to be until the end of the world. With the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Peter said, [Acts 2:38](#) ... "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ This promise is to you, and to your children, and even to the Gentiles--all who have been called by the Lord our God." [Acts 2:38-39 NLT](#).

When the gifts of the Spirit were poured out on the day of Pentecost, Peter mentioned the prophecy by Joel [[Joel 2:28](#), [Acts 2:16](#)]. But this was only a small or partial fulfillment of when the Holy Spirit will be poured out on the great day of the Lord.

Throughout earth's history, Satan has taken out his anger on God's people, but the Holy Spirit has been given to them to help them stand against the power of the evil one. As the church nears her final deliverance, Satan will work with greater power, because he knows he only has a short time left [[Revelation 12:12](#)]. For 6,000 years, Satan, who was once the highest among the angels, has been working to misrepresent God and cause ruin. But in the final conflict, all his efforts, everything he has learned, all his cruelty, will be used against God's people. At this time, as they give the message of warning to the world of the Lord's second coming, they are in special need of the Holy Spirit to prepare them to stand before Him at His coming, "without spot and blameless." [[2 Peter 3:14](#)].

From time to time, Ellen White was shown, the working, in different ages, of the great controversy between God and Satan. His hatred of Jesus has been taken out on followers of God throughout earth's history. Satan's lies and tricks make wrong seem right, replace God's law with human laws, and end up getting man to worship the creature rather than the creator. He wants humanity to think that God is evil, to fear and hate Him, and to think they are free from having to keep His law. In the last days Satan will use what he has learned works best, but he will be more determined, and his lies more clever, [Mark 13:22](#) ... so as to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones. [Mark 13:22 NLT](#).

As she was shown visions of the past and the future, having to do with the controversy between God and Satan, Ellen White was told to share them with others, especially in a way that will shed light on the coming struggle. She chose events from the history of the Christian church, that showed the failures, but also the successes that excited the anger of Satan. She wrote about how the church fell into darkness and devoted a large part of the book to show how the light of the Bible, through brave people, brought reformation to the church. She then recapped the story of the beginning of evil, and some of Satan's great lies, followed by what can be expected in the last days.

The history of the reformation is well known and accepted by the Protestant world. This history was studied and quoted by Ellen White in her book and sometimes no specific credit was given. When writing about those carrying forward the work in her own time, similar use was made of their writings.

The purpose of the first part of this book is to present the past in a way that will show how history can lead to future events. It is also useful to see how the history presented fits into the great controversy. This can then light the path of those who will carry on the work of reformers from the past, possibly at the expense of their own earthly possessions or life.

It was the goal of Ellen White to paint a picture of the controversy between good and evil, and to expose the lies and tricks of Satan, so that he can successfully be resisted. She also wished to show how God can be fair, loving, and unchanging in dealing with evil in this world, in the light of the origin of sin and the great controversy. And finally, so that people can be delivered from the power of darkness and praise and love Him who will give an inheritance of light.

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Chapter 1—The Destruction of Jerusalem

[Luke 19:42](#) "How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ Before long your enemies will build ramparts against your walls and encircle you and close in on you from every side. ⁴⁴ They will crush you into the ground, and your children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you did not accept your opportunity for salvation." [Luke 19:42-44 NLT](#).

It was Passover and Jews from many lands were gathered to celebrate. The view from the Mount of Olives in the late afternoon was beautiful. The great walls of Jerusalem with the sun reflecting off the gold of the temple that the Jews took such pride in. [Psalm 48:2](#) It is high and magnificent; the whole earth rejoices to see it! Mount Zion, the holy mountain, is the city of the great King! [Psalm 48:2 NLT](#). [Luke 19:41](#) But as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep. [Luke 19:41 NLT](#). Excitement was high after the triumphal entry, where palm branches were waved, and glad hosannas declared Jesus king. But strangely and suddenly, Jesus was filled with sadness and broke down in tears.

His tears were not for Himself, even though He knew what lay ahead for Him. He understood His role in the system of sacrificing lambs that He Himself had given to humanity. He knew He would be led like a lamb to the slaughter [[Isaiah 53:7](#)], and before that the pain and sadness He would experience in Gethsemane. Jesus cried for those He knew would die in the future destruction of Jerusalem, because of their refusal to accept His salvation.

The entire history of the Jews, as God's chosen people was open to the eye of Jesus, beginning with the promise that was made to Abraham when the sacrifice of his son was stopped [[Genesis 22:9-18](#)]. Jerusalem had been honored by God and He had chosen Zion to be His home [[Psalm 132:13](#)]. Throughout its history, prophets had been sent with warnings, priests had carried out the sacrifices, and from there prayers of worshippers had risen to God. His very presence had been revealed in the cloud of glory above the ark in the Most Holy place in the temple. Had Israel remained faithful, Jerusalem would have stood forever, the chosen capital city of God on earth [[Jeremiah 17:25](#)]. But instead, their history was one of disobedience, rebellion, rejected warnings, and killing the messengers who brought those warnings [[2 Chronicles 36:16](#)]. Finally, God sent the best gift of heaven, no, in fact He poured out all of heaven in that one gift. The Son of God Himself was sent to plead with the chosen people who refused to repent.

The Son of God, before He was born to Mary, was the One who brought Israel out of Egypt. He drove out the wicked people from Canaan before planting Israel

there. He sent prophets to care for what He had planted. "What more could have been done for My vineyard That I have not done for it? Then why did it bear bitter fruit when I expected good grapes?" [[Isaiah 5:1-4](#)]. Finally, He came Himself and worked the soil, pruned it and tenderly cared for it, in a last attempt to save the vine He had planted. For three years Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil [[Acts 10:38](#)]. [Luke 4:18](#) "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, [Luke 4:18 NLT](#). But the leaders of the nation looked down on Him, rejected His teachings, and made fun of His warnings.

Jesus saw in Jerusalem a symbol of the world, unbelieving and rebellious, rushing on toward the judgment of God. He was willing to pour out His life to death, to bring salvation within their reach, but few would accept it. The great sin of the Jews was their rejection of Jesus; the great sin of the Christian world would be their rejection of the law of God.

The first temple had been built during the most prosperous time of Israel's history. King David had collected and set aside huge stores of treasure for the building, and the plans were given to him from God [[1 Chronicles 28:19](#)]. Solomon, the wisest of Israel's kings had carried the plans to completion, building what many considered to be the most magnificent building ever. After it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's army, the temple was rebuilt, but the old among them who had remembered the glory of the first temple wept. There was no supernatural power to mark its dedication, no cloud of glory, no fire from heaven. The ark of the covenant containing the Ten Commandments, with the mercy seat and the golden cherubim were also missing. But through the prophet Haggai, the Lord declared, [Haggai 2:9](#) The future glory of this Temple will be greater than its past glory, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. ... [Haggai 2:9 NLT](#). [Haggai 2:7](#) ... I will fill this place with glory, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. [Haggai 2:7 NLT](#). The second temple was not honored with the cloud of God's glory, but with the physical presence of God Himself.

A couple days before the Passover, Jesus and His disciples were walking out of the Temple. [Mark 13:1](#) As Jesus was leaving the Temple that day, one of his disciples said, "Teacher, look at these magnificent buildings! Look at the impressive stones in the walls." [Mark 13:1 NLT](#). [Matthew 24:2](#) But he responded, "Do you see all these buildings? I tell you the truth, they will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!"³ Later, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives. His disciples came to him privately and said, "Tell us, when will all this happen? What sign will signal your return and the end of the world?" [Matthew 24:2-3 NLT](#). Knowing they could not handle the full truth at that time, Jesus gave them answers

for both events, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, but also of the end of the world.

In answer to their question, He gave them clear signs, which they didn't understand at the time but did later when the sign was upon them. [Matthew 24:15](#) "The day is coming when you will see what Daniel the prophet spoke about--the sacrilegious object that causes desecration standing in the Holy Place." (Reader, pay attention!)¹⁶ "Then those in Judea must flee to the hills."¹⁷ A person out on the deck of a roof must not go down into the house to pack.¹⁸ A person out in the field must not return even to get a coat. [Matthew 24:15-18 NLT](#). Jerusalem had been under siege by the Roman general Cestius when suddenly for no apparent reason he withdrew. While Jews pursued and attacked the retreating Romans, a clear opportunity presented itself for the Christians to escape. Acting on Christ's warning, not one Christian died in the destruction of Jerusalem. With so many Jews gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, and their attention on the Romans, Christians were able to flee without anyone troubling them. They ended up finding safety in the city of Pella, in the land of Perea, beyond the Jordan.

That generation of Jews were not being punished for the sins of their parents who crucified Jesus. In their hatred and cruelty toward the disciples of Jesus, they had rejected the last offer of mercy. God's protection was withdrawn, leaving them under the power of Satan and his angels, the leader she had chosen. It wasn't just Roman against Jew, or Roman and Jew against Christian, but there were even groups of Jews fighting and killing each other. Some were so evil and violent that they even killed worshippers at the altar in the temple. Even in the family there was suspicion, envy, hatred, rebellion, and murder. Friends and family betrayed each other, and parents and children killed each other.

When the siege of Jerusalem was resumed by Titus at the time of Passover, millions of Jews were assembled there. The normal food supplies in the city might have lasted years, but because of jealousy and revenge between the different groups of Jews that were fighting each other, much of it had been destroyed. Terrible acts of torture were done to take food from the weak and powerless, usually by men who were well fed, simply to add to their stores. Thousands died from famine and disease. Husbands stole from their wives and wives from their husbands. Children would take food from their aged parents. Mothers would eat the placenta after the birth of a child and not share it. [Deuteronomy 28:56](#) The most tender and delicate woman among you--so delicate she would not so much as touch the ground with her foot--will be selfish toward the husband she loves and toward her own son or daughter.⁵⁷ She will hide from them the afterbirth and the new baby she has borne, so that she herself can secretly eat them. She will have nothing else to eat during the siege and terrible distress that your enemy will inflict on all your

towns. [Deuteronomy 28:56-57 NLT](#). Some would even eat their own children. [Lamentations 4:10](#) Tenderhearted women have cooked their own children. They have eaten them to survive the siege. [Lamentations 4:10 NLT](#).

In an effort to scare the Jews into surrendering, prisoners who resisted were whipped, tortured and crucified in full view of the city. This happened to hundreds of people until there was hardly space to put up anymore crosses. It was as if the Jews were paying for their careless words spoken to Pilate: “His blood be on us and on our children.” [[Matthew 27:25](#)]. Titus would have liked to put an end to the fearful scene before him. He was filled with horror as he looked at the heaps of dead bodies lying in the valley. He also did not wish to destroy or even defile the temple if the Jews would come out and fight anywhere else. Josephus begged them to surrender to save the city and the temple, but his words were answered with curses, and even darts were thrown at him.

Disgusted with the stubbornness of the Jewish leaders and the terrible crimes taking place in the city, Titus finally decided to storm the temple stronghold. He gave orders that if possible, the temple should be preserved, but during the night the Jews came out and attacked. In the battle that followed, fire was thrown by a soldier through an opening onto a porch and immediately the cedar-lined room was a blaze. Titus rushed to the scene and commanded the soldiers to put out the flames, but his commands were ignored. In their fury the soldiers threw more fire into other rooms, then began slaughtering those who had taken shelter in the temple. Soldiers who had never been in the temple before saw the gold reflecting the light of the fire, and began to think of the wealth of treasure that must be in the temple. One pushed a lit torch between the hinges of the door, and in an instant the whole building was in flames.

The whole hilltop blazed like a volcano as the fire jumped from one building to the next. Roman soldiers whose hatred for the Jews had reached a peak, slaughtered any Jew in sight, including men, women, old, young, rebels, and priests. After the temple fell, the rest of the city quickly fell into the hands of the Romans. More than a million died in the siege and the slaughter that followed. Nothing was left of the city and the temple except for the foundations. Those who survived were taken captive, sold as slaves, taken to Rome to be fed to wild beasts as entertainment, or scattered throughout the earth as homeless wanderers.

The suffering and devastation of the Jews was a result of their own choices and actions. [Hosea 14:1](#) Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, for your sins have brought you down. [Hosea 14:1 NLT](#). It was not necessary for God to create punishment for Israel. Their rejection of Him, which resulted in His favor and protection being withdrawn, left them under the horrible and cruel power of Satan.

Even today, it is the power of God that prevents humanity from falling fully under the control of Satan. The destruction of Jerusalem is a fearful warning to all who are resisting the pleadings of divine mercy. Like Israel of old the wicked destroy themselves. By a life of sin, they have placed themselves so out of harmony with God, that in the end His glory will be a destroying fire to them.

The world is no more ready to receive the message for this time, than the Jews were to receive the warning given by Jesus about Jerusalem. When it comes, the day of God will catch the ungodly by surprise. Jesus left His followers with signs and warnings, that allowed them to escape the final destruction of Jerusalem. At the same time, He gave signs and warnings for those who will be living at the time of the final destruction of the world. But to those who ignore His warnings, ¹[1 Thessalonians 5:2](#) ... the day of the Lord's return will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. [1 Thessalonians 5:2 NLT](#).

Chapter 2—Persecution in the First Centuries

When Jesus shared the signs of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, He included a statement that would apply to some followers in the time between the two events. [Matthew 24:9](#) "Then you will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be hated all over the world because you are my followers.

[Matthew 24:9 NLT](#). The hatred from the world that Jesus experienced, would often be taken out on His followers as well. Those who follow Jesus should be prepared to experience the same humiliation and suffering that their Master did.

The history of the church easily shows the fulfillment of those words spoken by Jesus. Satan and his followers saw what would happen if the gospel would win, so they did their best to destroy it or at least slow its spread. Christians were burned with fire, stripped of their possessions, driven from their homes, tortured, put in prison, and killed. Noble and slave, rich and poor, educated or not, all classes were persecuted or killed without mercy.

Even though the early Christians were persecuted by the Jews as Jesus was, persecution backed by true government authority didn't really begin until around the time that Paul was killed. This persecution which was started by the emperor Nero continued with more or less intensity for hundreds of years. Just as Jesus was falsely accused, His followers were accused of the most terrible crimes and said to be the cause of many natural disasters. With these false or ridiculous accusations, Christians became targets of hate and suspicion, and many innocent people were betrayed for financial reward. They were crucified, fed to wild beasts or burned alive for entertainment. When Christians tried to hide, they were hunted like wild animals. They hid in the desert, mountains, caves, and even underground tunnels where their dead were buried. [[Hebrews 11:36-38](#)].

Under the most terrible persecution these followers of Jesus remained faithful. In caves deep in the earth where they often hid without light of the sun, they suffered without complaint. They encouraged each other with the thought that trials and persecution only brought them closer to their rest and eventual reward. Like God's servants of old, [Hebrews 11:35](#) ... others were tortured, refusing to turn from God in order to be set free. They placed their hope in a better life after the resurrection. [Hebrews 11:35 NLT](#). They remembered the words Jesus spoke, [Matthew 5:11](#) "God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. ¹² Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way. [Matthew 5:11-12 NLT](#).

Satan's efforts to destroy the church by violence failed. As those who remained faithful willingly gave up their lives, others rose up to take their place, and the Gospel continued to spread. "The blood of Christians is seed."¹ Those who were killed for their faith, were safe and secure in the reward they would receive when Christ returns, and their example even led some to join the faith that they formerly persecuted.

When Satan saw that he could not slow the progress of the church by violence, he changed his method of attack. If the followers of Christ could be tricked to believe false truths and get others to do as well, he would still accomplish his goal. Persecution stopped and in place of it he offered worldly riches and power. When it became popular and accepted to be a Christian, people who were not truly converted joined in name, while not accepting all the beliefs. They claimed to believe but were not convicted to give up sin or change their lives. Unconverted believers claimed that they had to give up some things to become a Christian, so they proposed the church should also make some compromises so that all could be united in the belief in Christ. While some stood firm, others were willing to compromise in order to be part of a larger and more powerful movement. Those who were used to worshipping idols, simply changed the objects of worship to images of Jesus, Mary and the saints. New doctrines, and ceremonies adapted from pagan worship were added to the church.

Those who became Christians for the wrong reasons strove for positions of power. Then the church began to persecute those who remained faithful and true to the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. Eventually, the Bible was no longer accepted as the standard of truth and faith. But there remained a faithful few who refused to accept the creeping compromises and realized that they could no longer be members of current Christian church. There were not many, and they had no wealth, power or titles, but their character and beliefs made the church look bad. Even as the Jews hated and killed Jesus, and as Cain hated and killed Abel, now the true followers of God were persecuted and killed by the church.

When Isaiah prophesied of the Messiah, he called Him "Prince of Peace," [[Isaiah 9:6](#)] and when the angels announced His birth, they sang, "peace on earth." [[Luke 2:14](#)]. Is this not a contradiction to the words of Jesus: [Matthew 10:34](#) "Don't imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not to bring peace, but a sword. [Matthew 10:34 NLT](#). How then can the gospel be called a message of peace, in light of Jesus' words and with all the conflict and persecution associated with it? If you look at the words and actions of Jesus, He did teach peace and love. But the

¹ Tertullian, Apology, chapter 50. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0301.htm>

ways of Satan are just the opposite, and his followers hate the purity that rebukes their sin. In this sense, the gospel can be called a sword.

Many have rejected a God, who allows the kind and pure in heart to suffer, while the wicked get rich and take advantage them. But Jesus warned His disciples, “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” [[John 15:20](#)]. We cannot know all the ways of God, but the life of Jesus is evidence of His love, and we should not doubt His goodness, just because we cannot completely understand. We should trust Him because a day of judgment is coming, when [Romans 2:6](#) He will judge everyone according to what they have done. [Romans 2:6 NLT](#).

Maybe a more important question that should be asked by many who are not being persecuted is, why? The apostle Paul wrote: [2 Timothy 3:12](#) Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. [2 Timothy 3:12 NLT](#). One reason is that the church has compromised to the world's standard and doesn't awaken any opposition. The religion in our day is not pure and holy as it was in the days of Christ and His apostles. Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church and the spirit of persecution will be revived.

Chapter 3—A time of Spiritual Darkness

The apostle Paul wrote that before Christ would return, there would be a falling away, and the man of sin would be revealed. [2 Thessalonians 2:4](#) He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God. [2 Thessalonians 2:4 NLT](#).

As persecution ended and Christianity entered the courts and palaces of kings, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ. In its place she adopted the riches, luxury and pride of pagan priests and rulers; and in place of God's laws, she chose human ideas and traditions. After Constantine was converted in the early part of the fourth century, persecution ended and there was great rejoicing. But the world dressed in a form of righteousness had joined the church, and the corruption advanced quickly.

This compromise between paganism and Christianity created the man of sin that Paul prophesied. This creation was the masterpiece of Satan, after all it was what he had wanted from the beginning of the controversy, to be equal to or even above God. In the temptation in the desert, Satan tried to elevate himself above Christ by getting Jesus to bow down to him. But Satan was more successful with the church, by getting them to seek wealth and power by going after the support of great men of the earth. In the end she was ruled by the Bishop of Rome, the representative of Satan. The church of Rome holds the belief that the pope is the head of the church and can do no wrong.² Some popes have even claimed titles such as "Lord God the Pope," and there is a Catholic publication titled to that effect.^{3 4}

Those who honor and reverence God, should meet this enemy with the same words used by Jesus in the wilderness. [Luke 4:8](#) Jesus replied, "The Scriptures say, 'You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.'" [Luke 4:8 NLT](#). [[Deuteronomy 6:13](#)]. Satan knew that the Holy Scriptures would allow men to see through his deceptions and withstand his power. And for hundreds of years, the Roman church banned the Bible, using the argument that it had to be interpreted by its own priests and teachers. With the Bible out of the way, the church could say and teach anything it wanted, and no one could question it.

² White, Ellen Gould, *The Great Controversy*, Appendix: Revisions adopted by the E. G. White Trustees November 19, 1956, December 6, 1979, and January 8, 1993, p 679.

[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3070\(132.3072\)&index=0](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3070(132.3072)&index=0)

³ <https://archive.org/details/jstor-30065560/page/n1/mode/2up>

⁴ White. <https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3070&index=0>,

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/_NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA763&printsec=frontcover

Daniel prophesied of a little horn that many believe represented the papacy, who “shall intend to change times and law.” [Daniel 7:25]. To encourage converts from among those who worshipped idols, images and relics were introduced to Christian worship, made official by the second council of Nicæa.^{5 6 7} To get around the second commandment which forbids image worship, the church removed it and split the tenth into two to keep the number of commandments ten. Then the fourth commandment was changed when the church changed the day of worship from the seventh to the first. This won support from heathens who celebrated a festival known as the “venerable day of the sun.” This was justified to Christians by making it a festival in honor of the resurrection of Christ. To ease the transition, both days were celebrated for a time. To pave the way for the rejection of the Sabbath commandment, Satan had gotten the Jews to make keeping the sabbath such a burden, that many Christians were willing to set it aside as a Jewish thing.^{8 9}

Satan, through the papacy had succeeded, he had dared to change the only commandment which mentions God as the creator of the world and everything in it [Exodus 20:11]. Even Protestants, who left the Roman church in protest, continued going to church on Sunday. They claim the resurrection as the reason the day is holy, but there is no Biblical evidence that Jesus or the apostles made such a change.

In the sixth century, the papacy had become firmly established, and the bishop of Rome was declared to be the head over the entire church. Paganism had been replaced by the papacy, “And the dragon gave the beast his own power and throne and great authority.” [Revelation 13:2]. The 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 13:5-7 had begun.¹⁰ Christians were forced

⁵ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3070\(132.3074\)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA763&printsec=frontcover](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3070(132.3074)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA763&printsec=frontcover)

⁶ Mendham, John, *The Seventh General Council, the second of Nicæa*, London: William Edward Painter, 1850, Historical Introduction.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_seventh_general_council_the_second_o/PcQHAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover

⁷ Hefele, Charles Joseph, *A History of the Councils of the Church*, Vol V, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1896, p285.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_History_of_the_Councils_of_the_Church/N95DAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA260&printsec=frontcover

⁸ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3074\(132.3077\)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA764&printsec=frontcover](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3074(132.3077)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA764&printsec=frontcover)

⁹ Ayer, Joseph Cullen, *A Source Book for Ancient Church History*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1922, p 284. https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_Source_Book_for_Ancient_Church_History/vmQuAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA284&printsec=frontcover

¹⁰ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3078\(132.3082\)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA771&printsec=frontcover](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3078(132.3082)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA771&printsec=frontcover)

to either accept the decrees of the church, or be thrown into dungeons, and be horribly tortured until they admit their error or die. Persecution of Christ's faithful resumed with greater fury than ever before. For hundreds of years, the true church of Christ was forced to hide. [Revelation 12:6](#) And the woman fled into the wilderness, where God had prepared a place to care for her for 1,260 days. [Revelation 12:6 NLT](#).

In the church, the gospel was lost sight of, and penance and other rituals designed to appease an angry God were established in its place. Members were taught that church held the power to give salvation or not, and that forgiveness of sins was only available from priests chosen by the church. These practices were designed to bring money into the church, and great wealth and power came to the church as a result.

Near the close of the eighth century, the papacy claimed that the bishops of Rome had always possessed the power and authority they currently held. To prove this claim, documents containing decrees from councils that never actually occurred were created and then "discovered."^{11 12 13 14 15} Over time, the darkness of false doctrine grew worse. Image worship became more generally accepted and candles were burned before them as prayers were offered to them. Priests and bishops were pleasure-loving and corrupt, so what could be expected of the people who looked to them for guidance?

In the eleventh century, Pope Gregory VII proclaimed that the Roman church was perfect. He claimed, based on scripture, that the church had never erred and never would. He also claimed the power to remove emperors, and that no decision he

¹¹ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3082\(132.3083\)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA764&printsec=frontcover](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3082(132.3083)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA764&printsec=frontcover)

¹² Henderson, Ernest F., *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages*, London: George Bell & Sons, 1892, p 319. https://www.google.com/books/edition/Select_Historical_Documents_of_the_Middl/HzUNAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA319&printsec=frontcover,

p 270.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Select_Historical_Documents_of_the_Middl/HzUNAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA270&printsec=frontcover

¹³ *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol III, New York & London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1909, "Donation of Constantine," p484.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_New_Schaff_Herzog_Encyclopedia_of_Re/oKXNAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA484&printsec=frontcover

¹⁴ *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol IX, New York & London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1911, p343.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_New_Schaff_Herzog_Encyclopedia_of_Re/XUr63GYc9dgC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA343&printsec=frontcover

¹⁵ Gould, Sabine Baring, *Curious myths of the Middle ages*, London, Oxford, Cambridge: Rivingtons, 1874, p 179. https://www.google.com/books/edition/Curious_Myths_of_the_Middle_Ages/cxgHAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA179&printsec=frontcover

made could ever be reversed, but that he could reverse the decrees of anyone.^{16 17 18}
19

An example of this arrogance and power of Pope Gregory, was his treatment of the German emperor Henry IV. Because he had supposedly disregarded the pope's authority, he was excommunicated from the church and removed from his throne. [someone excommunicated from the church was led to believe they could not be saved, nor could they get into heaven] Terrified because his own princes sided against him with the pope, he felt it was necessary to make peace with the papacy. With his wife and a servant, he crossed the Alps in the middle of winter, to humbly appear before the pope. When he arrived at the castle where Gregory was, he was made to wait in an outer court, barefooted and improperly dressed for the cold. Finally, after three days of fasting and confession, the pope pardoned him, but on condition that he could only resume his reign when the pope would give his approval.^{20 21}

How great is the difference between the pride and arrogance of this pope, and the meekness and gentleness of Jesus, who described Himself as pleading at the door of the heart to bring friendship [[Revelation 3:20](#)].

Over the centuries, the errors continued to pile up. The church introduced the belief of man's continued existence after death. If the saints and Mary were alive and conscious in heaven, then why not pray to them. In praying to the virgin Mary, she became an object of adoration. And if the righteous continue to live eternally after death, then the wicked must also, so they were said to be tormented in the everlasting fires of hell. But another doctrine was needed to describe what became

¹⁶ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093\(132.3095\)&index=0](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093(132.3095)&index=0),
https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/_NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA765&printsec=frontcover

¹⁷ Ogg, Frederick Austin, *A Source Book of Medieval History*, New York, Cincinnati, Chicago, Boston, Atlanta: American Book Company, 1907, p 263.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_Source_Book_of_Medi%C3%A6val_History/agdnAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA263&printsec=frontcover

¹⁸ Thatcher, Oliver Joseph, McNeal, Edgar H., *A Source Book for Medieval History*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907, p 136.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_Source_Book_for_Medi%C3%A6val_History/_kw89Qf-2JoC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA136&printsec=frontcover

¹⁹ Bryce, James, *The Holy Roman Empire*, London, New York: MacMillan & Co, 1892, p153.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Holy_Roman_Empire/QX42AAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA153&printsec=frontcover

²⁰ *Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia*, Vol 4, Chicago: F. E. Compton & Company, 1922, p 1632.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Compton_s_Pictured_Encyclopedia/QFJHAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA1632&printsec=frontcover

²¹ *The Lives of the Popes from A.D. 100 to A.D. 1855*, New York: Carlton & Phillips, 1855, p 185.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Lives_of_the_Popes/zc1DAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA185&printsec=frontcover

of those who were not obviously sent to hell, but who had not earned the right to enter heaven, hence the doctrine of purgatory.^{22 23 24} But if people were in purgatory, there must be a way to get to heaven from there, hence the ideas of penance and indulgences.^{25 26 27}

[According to the Roman Church, penance provides justification for confessed sins committed after baptism.^{28 29 30} Penance are actions of worship, humility, hardship or good deeds^{31 32} that one can perform in this life, to pay for sins committed. If you don't perform enough penance to offset the wrongs committed in your life, you have to serve time in purgatory.³³ Suffering in purgatory is a form of penance, so enough time in purgatory will eventually allow one to move on to heaven, much

²² White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093\(132.3097\)&index=0](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093(132.3097)&index=0), https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/_NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA765&printsec=frontcover

²³ Di Bruno, Joseph FAÀ, *Catholic Belief; or, A Short and Simple Exposition of Catholic Doctrine*, Fifth Edition, London & New York: Burns and Oats, 1884, p 185.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Catholic_Belief/ZbYCAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA185&printsec=frontcover

²⁴ Elliot, Charles, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, Vol I, New York: George Lane, 1841, p 365.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Delineation_of_Roman_Catholicism/SVAdAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA365&printsec=frontcover

²⁵ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093\(132.3099\)&index=0](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093(132.3099)&index=0),

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/_NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA766&printsec=frontcover

²⁶ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol VII, New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910, p 783.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Catholic_Encyclopedia/o1U_AQAAMAAMAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA783&printsec=frontcover

²⁷ Lea, Henry Charles, *A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences in the Latin Church*, Vol I, Philadelphia: Lea Brothers & Co., 1896,

https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_History_of_Auricular_Confession_and_In/LSbZAAAAMAAMAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover

²⁸ Winer, George Benedict, *A Comparative View of the Doctrines and Confessions of the Various Communities of Christendom*, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1873, p 297.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_comparative_view_of_the_doctrines_and/siUBAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA297&printsec=frontcover

²⁹ Di Bruno, p 55.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Catholic_Belief/ZbYCAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA55&printsec=frontcover

³⁰ Doyl, Francis X., *The Wonderful Sacraments*, London: Burns Oates and Washburn Limited, New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1924, p 153.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Wonderful_Sacraments_what_They_are_a/hQEPAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA153&printsec=frontcover

³¹ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol XI, New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911, p 633.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Catholic_Encyclopedia/0_Pap29EbywC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA633&printsec=frontcover

³² <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year-and-calendar/lent/penitential-practices-for-todays-catholics>

³³ Winer, p 384.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_comparative_view_of_the_doctrines_and/siUBAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA384&printsec=frontcover

like serving time in prison for a crime committed.³⁴ People whose good deeds outweighed their bad deeds would not have to go through purgatory.³⁵] But greed and corruption in the leadership of the church introduced the idea of indulgences. They went as far as to offer indulgences which they claimed would cover all of a person's past, present and future sins, guaranteeing them a ticket straight to heaven. These were offered to those who would enlist as soldiers in the church's wars. But greed saw the opportunity to bring wealth into the church by selling indulgences to people to cover not only their sins but those of people who had already died and were suffering in purgatory.^{36 37 38}

The Lord's Supper was replaced by mass which contained two unbiblical teachings. One, that what occurs at every mass is equivalent to the death of Christ that took place on the cross in terms of paying the price for our sins. Two, that the bread and wine are literally transformed into the blood and flesh of Christ.^{39 40 41 42 43}

³⁴ Di Bruno, p 185.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Catholic_Belief/ZbYCAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA185&printsec=frontcover

³⁵ Clarke, Richard F., *The Devout Year*, New York, Cincinnati, Chicago: Benzinger Brothers, 1893, "Short Mediations for November," p 26.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Devout_Year/uT03AAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=RA10-PA26&printsec=frontcover

³⁶ Jackson, Samuel McCauley, *Papers of the American Society of Church History*, Vol I, New York & London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1889, p 129.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Papers_of_the_American_Society_of_Church/Mr9v9hWKjmcC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA129&printsec=frontcover

³⁷ Lindsay, Thomas M., *A History of the Reformation*, Vol I, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906, p 216.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_History_of_the_Reformation/fVFAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA216&printsec=frontcover

³⁸ Newman, Albert Henry, *A Manual of Church History*, Vol II, Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1903, p 53.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_Manual_of_Church_History_Modern_church/NAwaAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA53&printsec=frontcover

³⁹ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093\(132.3103\)&index=0](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093(132.3103)&index=0),

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/_NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA766&printsec=frontcover

⁴⁰ Schaff, Philip, *The Creeds Of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, Vol II, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1877, p 126-139. <https://archive.org/details/TheCreedsOfChristendomV2/page/126/mode/2up>

⁴¹ Pohle, Joseph, *The Sacraments a Dogmatic Treatise*, Vol II, St. Louis, MO & London: B. Herder, 1916.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Sacraments/yfVEAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA1&printsec=frontcover

⁴² Gihhr, Nicholas, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; Dogmatically, Liturgically and Ascetically Explained*, St. Louis, MO & London: B. Herder, 1933.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Holy_Sacrifice_of_the_Mass/qYD3bKInGyMC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA1&printsec=frontcover

⁴³ Calvin, John, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol II, Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1911, p 525.

In the thirteenth century, the church created the inquisition⁴⁴, which was the most terrible of all the tools of the papacy. Inquisitors were appointed by the church, whose job it was to seek out heresy and squash it. It employed the cruelest forms of torture one could imagine in order force heretics to admit they were wrong and to give up the names of other heretics. Many were falsely accused, and they were not even allowed to confront their accusers. In secret councils, Satan and his angels controlled the minds of evil men. Babylon the great was drunk with the blood of God's people [[Revelation 17:5-6](#)].

A Protestant historian wrote, "The noon of the papacy was the midnight of the world."⁴⁵ The Holy Scriptures were not just unknown to the people, but even to the priests. Like the Pharisees of old, the papal leaders hated the light that would reveal their sins. But hiding behind their fake holiness and unlimited power, the papacy and those to whom they gave power, were guilty of the most terrible crimes. The result of this is that for centuries Europe made no progress in learning, arts, or civilization. The condition of the world under this papal power was an exact fulfillment of the words of Hosea. "My people are being destroyed for lack of knowledge." [[Hosea 4:6](#)]. [Hosea 4:1](#) Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel! The LORD has brought charges against you, saying: "There is no faithfulness, no kindness, no knowledge of God in your land. ² You make vows and break them; you kill and steal and commit adultery. There is violence everywhere--one murder after another. ³ That is why your land is in mourning, and everyone is wasting away. Even the wild animals, the birds of the sky, and the fish of the sea are disappearing. ⁴ "Don't point your finger at someone else and try to pass the blame! My complaint, you priests, is with you. [Hosea 4:1-4 NLT](#). These are the results of banning the word of God.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Institutes_of_the_Christian_Religion/uXq8vKTUCcYC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA525&printsec=frontcover

⁴⁴ Llorente, D. Jean Antoine, *The History of the Inquisition of Spain*, London: Geo. B. Whittaker, 1826, p 12.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_History_of_the_Inquisition_of_Spain/-kw3AAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA12&printsec=frontcover

⁴⁵ Wylie, J. A., *The History of Protestantism*, Vol I, London, Paris & New York: Cassell & Company, 1899, p 16.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA16&printsec=frontcover

Chapter 4—The Waldenses

During the dark ages of papal rule, the light of truth could not be completely put out. In every age there have been faithful witnesses for God, and in the Christian era, there were those who continued to believe that Christ is the only mediator between God and man and who hold the Bible as the only guide for life. The church called them heretics and tried to get rid of them, but they stood firm and passed down their pure faith from one generation to the next.

The history of God's people during the dark ages is written in heaven, but little can be found of it on earth. The church of Rome attempted to get rid of all evidence of any who disagreed with her, both people and their writings, but some traces can be found in her accusations against them. She even tried to get rid of the evidence of the cruelty with which she persecuted those she called heretics. Before the invention of the printing press, books were hand copied and much fewer in number, so it was easier for the church to succeed in getting rid of writings and teachings it didn't want preserved.

No church within the reach of the church of Rome was left undisturbed to practice their beliefs according to their conscience. As the power of the church grew, she stretched out her arm to crush all who refused to accept her authority, and one after another submitted to her power.

The early spread of the Gospel had reached Great Britain, and they had suffered the same persecution from non-religious emperors as the rest of the church had. When the Saxons invaded Britain, the Christians were forced to flee to the mountains and undesirable lands. Under these circumstances, the Britons remained uncorrupted by the Roman church. Some of them, fleeing from persecution, carried the truth to Scotland and Ireland. Years later, from Scotland, the pure light of Christianity was carried to far and distant lands. In Ireland, Columba and a group of coworkers gathered scattered believers on the lonely island of Iona, making this the center of their missionary efforts. From there missionaries were sent to Scotland, England, Germany, Switzerland, and even Italy.

But Rome set her eyes on Briton and resolved to bring it under her control. Missionaries were able to convert the Saxons and the Roman church spread. As the conversion of the Saxons went forward, a primitive brand of Christians was found, who were simple, humble, and had the Scriptures as their guide. When the representative from Rome demanded that they accept the leadership of the Pope, they humbly replied that they knew no other master than Christ. The response from Rome was: "If you will not receive brethren who bring you peace, you shall

receive enemies who will bring you war. If you will not unite with us in showing the Saxons the way of life, you shall receive from them the stroke of death.”⁴⁶

In some of the distant lands that early Christianity had reached, it had existed for centuries free of corruption from Rome. Some beliefs had been corrupted over the ages, but they continued to hold the Bible as the only rule of faith. They believed the entire Law of God still applied, including the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Those who stood at the front of the resistance against papal power were the Waldenses. The churches of the Piedmont had maintained their independence for hundreds of years, but the time came at last when Rome insisted that they comply. Some groups bowed to the pressure, but others refused, some found places to hide in caves and mountains, and others left their native Alps and carried their faith to other lands.

The Christianity practiced by the Waldenses was very different from that which was taught from Rome. Their doctrines were based on the Word of God, and their lifestyle was that of humble peasants, working daily among their flocks and in their fields. This was not a new faith that rose up in opposition to the corruption of the church of Rome. The church in the wilderness, not the proud papacy enthroned in the capital of the world, was the true church of God.

For the Waldenses, one of the causes of separation was the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.^{47 48} Papal power believed it had the power to change God’s law and commanded all to honor Sunday as holy. Some would try to comply by not working on Sunday but still honoring the Sabbath, but this was not accepted, and the Roman church would not allow the seventh day to be treated as holy.

⁴⁶ D’Aubigne, J. H. Merle, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* Vol I-V, New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1856, p 685.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/KvICAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA685&printsec=frontcover

⁴⁷ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093\(132.3105\)&index=0](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093(132.3105)&index=0)

⁴⁸ Free public evidence of the Waldenses keeping the Sabbath of the Jews was a little challenging to come by. The statement “But some, with the Jews, kept the Sabbath” translated from Latin was written by Johann Joseph Ignaz von Dollinger in his book *Beitrage zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters* (*Contributions to the history of sects in the Middle Ages*). Translations by translate.google.com.

Ignaz von Dollinger, Johann Joseph, *Beitrage zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters*, München: CH Beck sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1890, p 662.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Beitr%C3%A4ge_zur_Sektengeschichte_des_Mitte/R7-uvH-NbqsC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA662&printsec=frontcover

In addition, the book *The Israel of the Alps*, about the Waldenses by Alexis Muston, frequently mentions the sabbath.

Muston, Alexis, *The Israel of the Alps. A Complete History of the Waldenses of Piedmont, and their colonies*, Vol II, London, Glasgow and Edinburgh: Blackie & Son, 1866.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Israel_of_the_Alps/MQ45AQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1

Hundreds of years before the Reformation, the Waldenses were among the first in Europe to have a translation of the Holy Scriptures in their own language.^{49 50} This allowed them to directly see where the church of Rome was in error, and for this they were hated and persecuted even more. They even called out the mother church as the apostate Babylon of Revelation, and through the dark ages, despite her fiercest torture and persecution, some stood firm. For a thousand years, these faithful witnesses kept burning the light of truth, by hiding in the mountains. It was fitting that the mighty unchanging mountains in which they found hiding places, were symbolic of the mighty unchanging truths that they preserved.^{51 52}

Pure, simple, and yet intense was the faith of these followers of Christ, who valued truth more than houses, land, friends, family and even life itself. In order to preserve this truth, each new generation must learn to accept it and to value it, starting from early childhood. Copies of the Bible were rare, so its precious words were memorized, and many were able to repeat large portions of it from memory. Little children were taught to be grateful to God as the giver of all good things. Parents tenderly loved their little ones but were careful to teach them that their life would not be easy and could even end with a martyr's death. [a martyr is someone who is killed for their religious beliefs] They had to learn to be careful of what they said and where they said it, because one word heard by the wrong person, could put all their family and friends in danger.

The Waldenses gave up any hope of gaining worldly wealth for the truth's sake. They had to work hard just to survive, planting crops in small pieces of land in the mountains and hidden valleys. Their lifestyle was one of self-denial and not letting anything go to waste. They taught that their wants could be supplied by hard work, careful planning, and faith. Their young people were taught the value of hard physical work, but they did not neglect developing the mind. Memorizing and copying the Scriptures were both part of their education. For higher education, some of the young people were sent to universities in the cities of France and Italy.

⁴⁹ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093\(132.3109\)&index=0](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093(132.3109)&index=0), https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA766&printsec=frontcover

⁵⁰ Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, p 12.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Waldenses_A_repr_of_the_1/b-8CAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA12&printsec=frontcover

⁵¹ Comba, Teofilo Emilio, *History of the Waldenses of Italy From Their Origin to the Reformation*, London: Truslove & Shirley, 1889.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Waldenses_of_Italy/1KieC1YgGd4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PP9&printsec=frontcover

⁵² Leger, Jean, *Histoire generale des eglises evangeliques des vallees de Piemont; ou Vaudoises*, A Leyde: J. Le Carpentier, 1669.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Histoire_generale_des_eglises_evangeliqu/1NlhAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PP9&printsec=frontcover

They would be exposed to temptations, and would see much evil, but their early childhood education prepared them for this. In these worldly schools of higher learning, they were to carefully look for those seeking truth, and share their treasures, fragments of the Scriptures which had been carefully copied, and kept hidden in secret places in their clothing. They would not directly share their secret with anyone but would place portions of their hand copied scriptures in places where they would be found by people who seemed to be open to the truth. In this way, the papal leaders could not trace the heresy to its source.

The Waldensian churches were like the church at the time of the apostles. Following the example of their master, pastors served rather than ruled. In addition to preaching, the pastors visited the sick, baptized the young, counseled the erring, settled disputes, and tried to promote harmony and love. Pastors were supported by donations from the people, but like Paul, they were also trained to provide their own support if necessary. Pastors were also teachers, and while some attention was given to other topics of learning, the Bible was the primary object of study.

Satan had succeeded in getting the Roman church, papal priests, and teachers to bury the word of truth under a heap of false doctrines, corruption, and scare tactics. But by patient labor in dark caves, working by the light of torches, the Waldensians and others like them copied the Sacred Scriptures, verse by verse and chapter by chapter. So it was, during the dark ages, that people could still gain access to the Scriptures through the efforts of those like the Waldenses.

The spirit of Christ is a missionary spirit, and the natural reaction of a new believer should be to bring others to the Savior. The Waldenses followed the example given by Christ when he sent the disciples out by twos. A young person would be usually paired with an older and more experienced person. They were not always together, but they met often for prayer and counsel, and to strengthen each other's faith. These missionaries had to hide their true purpose by going out into the world under the cover of some ordinary job, such as buying and selling goods. They carried silks, jewelry, and other articles, at the time not easily found, and they were welcomed as merchants where they would have been rejected as missionaries.⁵³ As they went about their daily labor, they looked for those who might be interested, and carefully shared portions of their hand copied Scriptures. These missionaries traveled far and wide and wherever they left their precious seed, churches sprang up in their path.

⁵³ Wylie, J. A., *The History of Protestantism*, p 30.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA30&printsec=frontcover

To the Waldenses, the Bible was not just a book of history and of God's law, it was also a revelation of future events, including the soon return of Christ. They also saw in it the plan of salvation and took great comfort in it. On the other hand, the multitudes under the influence of the Roman church, were trying to gain pardon for their sins by good deeds and painful acts. Thousands abandoned friends and family to live in isolated cells in convents and monasteries, some deprived themselves of food, others whipped themselves, trying to gain peace for their conscience. For those who had a sense of their sinfulness, and wished to be cleansed of their sins, all they got was a haunting fear of God's anger. The Waldenses longed to free people from this hopelessness by sharing with them the love of Christ, and how His death on the cross paid the price for their sins. They wished for people to see Jesus as a loving savior, inviting all to come to Him so that He could take the burden of their sins from them. As these missionaries shared the precious light of truth, many were freed from the dark cloud of gloom as the Sun of Righteousness shone into their hearts. People eagerly received the words, [1 John 1:7](#) ... the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. [1 John 1:7 NLT](#). [John 3:14](#) And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. [John 3:14-15 NLT](#). And they gladly repeated the words, Christ is my priest, His blood is my sacrifice. They learned to depend on His merits for salvation, rather than their own works. [Hebrews 11:6](#) And it is impossible to please God without faith. ... [Hebrews 11:6 NLT](#). [Acts 4:12](#) There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved." [Acts 4:12 NLT](#). With this new assurance of salvation, many would boldly accept persecution and death to honor their Redeemer.

The word of God was gladly received by individuals or small groups in secret hiding places. Sometimes the truth was so thrilling to its listeners that the entire night was spent drinking in the words. Poor souls who were so burdened with the painful acts of penance, long journeys to holy shrines, and meaningless rituals, were thrilled by the simple words of Christ: [Matthew 11:28](#) Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. [Matthew 11:28 NLT](#). Those who were moved by these things they learned would eagerly return home and share them with others. The one who risked so much to bring the precious words of truth, was humble and sincere, in contrast to the papal priests, and in many cases, would never be seen again. But even if these messengers of truth were silenced by prison or death, the words they left behind could never be destroyed.

These Waldensian missionaries were invading the kingdom of Satan, and the papal leaders saw the danger they posed, and with bitter hatred, vowed to eliminate them

from the earth. As they captured and cruelly tortured and killed some, it was as if the taste of blood stirred them to greater intensity in their hunt for more.

Even though these Waldensians could not be accused of any civil, or even moral crimes except for not worshipping God according to the will of the pope, every humiliation, insult, and torture that men or devils could invent was heaped on them. The church of Rome condemned them all as heretics and called on all members of the church to join in the crusade against them. The Pope issued an order stating: if they refuse to submit, they should be crushed like venomous snakes.⁵⁴ As incentive for all members to participate, the church gave free pardon, for all sins or illegal activities, to all who should join in the crusade against these heretics. It gave permission for anyone to take any possessions or property from any Waldensian.^{55 56 57} The same spirit that crucified Christ and the apostles, and that moved the blood thirsty Nero in his day, was at work through the church to rid the earth of God's faithful.

For hundreds of years, these faithful servants of God endured persecution, and crusades against them, yet all the while they were still sending out missionaries to scatter the precious seed of truth. Their blood watered the seed that was sown, which yielded the fruit of the reformation that began in the time of Wycliffe and grew strong and deep in the days of Luther.

⁵⁴ Wylie, J. A., *History of the Waldenses*, London, Paris & New York: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co., 1880, p 28.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Waldenses_A_repr_of_the_1/b-8CAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA28&printsec=frontcover

⁵⁵ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093\(132.3113\)&index=0](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093(132.3113)&index=0),

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA766&printsec=frontcover

⁵⁶ Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, p 28.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Waldenses_A_repr_of_the_1/b-8CAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA28&printsec=frontcover

⁵⁷ Dowling, p 425.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_History_of_Romanism_from_the_Earlies/aQIQAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA425&printsec=frontcover

*Chapter 5—John Wycliffe*⁵⁸

Before the reformation, there were few copies of the Bible, but God had not allowed His word to be destroyed. In different countries of Europe, men began to be moved by the Holy Spirit to search for truth in the Holy Scriptures. Except among the Waldenses, the word of God for ages had been locked up in languages known only to the church's own teachers. But the time had come for the scriptures to be made available to people in different lands, in their own languages.

In the fourteenth century in England, the “Morning Star of the Reformation” arose. John Wycliffe would bring reform not just in England but for all Christianity. The great protest against Rome which he gave voice to would never be silenced and would eventually bring freedom to many people and churches and nations.

Wycliffe was an excellent student, but he was also known for his spiritual devotion. He had a thirst for knowledge in every field of study, including philosophy and civil law. This education later proved useful in exposing errors of the church, and also in the struggle for civil and religious freedom. The power of his genius backed by the depth of his knowledge was respected by both his friends and his enemies. His opponents could not find any weakness in his arguments even when they disagreed.

While still in college, Wycliffe began studying the scriptures, having learned the ancient languages in which it was written. He dove into it with the same intensity with which he had mastered his other fields of study. What he read in the word of God filled a great need that he had felt in his soul, one which neither the church nor his other learning had satisfied. He now saw the true plan of salvation which he determined to share. Like reformers who came after him, Wycliffe did not at first see himself separating from the church but thought to bring change from within. He saw that Rome had forsaken the word of God for human tradition, and he fearlessly accused them of keeping the Bible from the common people. He was a very good teacher and preacher, and the papal leaders soon became filled with rage when they realized that this reformer was becoming more influential with the people than they were.

In his role as chaplain for the King of England, Wycliffe took a bold stand against payment of tribute to the pope. He showed that the papal authority over secular rulers did not make sense, nor was it biblical. As a result, the king and the nobles

⁵⁸ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093\(132.3114\)&index=0](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093(132.3114)&index=0),
https://archive.org/details/prosecutionofjoh0000dahm_u4g8/page/n11/mode/2up

both stopped payment of the usual tribute and denied the pope's claim to authority over the kingdom of England.

Another great evil that Wycliffe fought against was that of the many monasteries filled with useless idle monks. There were so many of them that it was a drain on the resources of the country. Rome taught that it was a noble thing to devote oneself to this way of life, which was unproductive and required the donations of working people to survive. The monks would go about the country recruiting youth to join the monastery, without consent of parents, and at times even against their will. One of the Fathers of the church claimed that the choice of life in a monastery was so important that it took precedence over family duty. He said, "Though thy father should lie before thy door weeping and lamenting, and thy mother should show the body that bore thee and the breasts that nursed thee, see that thou trample them underfoot, and go onward straightway to Christ."⁵⁹ In this way these papal leaders encouraged the breaking of the commandment to honor your father and mother, by their tradition.

The young people in universities were a prime target for recruitment by the monks to join their order. Many later regretted their choice to join the order, but once in, it was like a trap that could not be escaped. Many parents fearing the influence of these monks and refused to send their children to the universities, and the result was less education in the country.

The Pope had even given the power to these monks to hear confession and grant pardon. This power became a great source of evil, as criminals realized they could easily be pardoned if they just made some financial contributions to the order. It got so bad that money that should have gone toward the care and relief of the sick and poor was demanded as offerings to the monasteries. As a result, these monks who had taken vows of poverty, were living in luxury and pleasure. They went about teaching that acknowledging the supremacy of the pope, adoring the saints, and making gifts to monks was sufficient to secure them a place in heaven.

Many had tried to reform the monastic order, but Wycliffe boldly declared the whole system false and called for it to be completely abolished. As monks travelled about the country selling the pope's pardons, many began to doubt that true forgiveness could be bought and sold and questioned why they shouldn't seek pardon from God instead. People who had become disgusted with the greed of these monks said they are eating away at us like a cancer. God must deliver us, or

⁵⁹ Sears, Barnas, *The Life of Luther*, Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1850, p 70.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Life_of_Luther/ejUDAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=RA1-PA70&printsec=frontcover

the people will perish.⁶⁰ They claimed to be following the example of Jesus, who was supported by the charity of people, but this was a mistake on their part because it directed people to the Bible.

Wycliffe spent two years in the Netherlands as an ambassador for England. He came into contact with church leaders from France, Italy and Spain, and had the opportunity to see what really happened behind the curtain. By observing these representatives of the pope, the true character and motives of the papacy became clear to him. When he returned to England, he spoke out even more boldly than before, against the pride and greed of the church.

He had now attracted the attention of the highest levels of the church, and Pope Gregory XI himself condemned him.^{61 62 63 64} Wycliffe was ordered to appear in court to be tried for his crimes, but he was protected by powerful princes of the kingdom who went with him. He had so much support from people both inside and outside the court that the judges didn't dare to rule against him, and he was allowed to go. But the decree from the pope still hung over all England like a cloud. It seemed certain that they would eventually get their way and Wycliffe would be burned at the stake as a heretic, but it was the pope, Gregory XI who died. He was replaced by two rival popes, who immediately began using all the resources at their disposal to fight and destroy each other. This included offering full pardons and the promise of heaven to any and all who would fight on their side against the rival pope. This greatly weakened the power of the papacy and gave opportunity for the growth of the Reformation.

This great divide at the top levels of the church was accompanied by a lot of corruption, and Wycliffe took the opportunity to ask people, what if both rival popes were right in calling each other the antichrist. He said, God would take

⁶⁰ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 703.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/KvICAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA703&printsec=frontcover

⁶¹ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093\(132.3115\)&index=0](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3093(132.3115)&index=0),

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA766&printsec=frontcover

⁶² Neander, Augustus, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, Vol fifth, Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1854, p 146.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/General_History_of_the_Christian_Religio/QGoPAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA146&printsec=frontcover

⁶³ Dahmus, Joseph, *The prosecution of John Wyclif*, New Haven : Yale University Press, 1952, p 35-49.

https://archive.org/details/prosecutionofjoh0000dahm_u4g8/page/34/mode/2up

⁶⁴ Foxe, p 4-13.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Acts_and_Monuments_A_New_and_Complet/jptjAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA4&printsec=frontcover

advantage of this division so that the cause of Christ could more easily overcome them both.⁶⁵

As Jesus did, Wycliffe preached the good news to the poor, but he was not content to only reach the people in his own church in Lutterworth. He determined that the good news should be carried throughout all England, so he began organizing men to go out as missionaries. They taught in the marketplaces of the great cities and the country, bringing the glad tidings of the grace of God to the aged, the sick and the poor.

As a professor of theology at Oxford University, Wycliffe preached the word of God so faithfully, that he was given the title “the gospel doctor.” But the greatest work of his life was still to come.

Suddenly Wycliffe became dangerously sick and was forced to stop his work. He was not even sixty years of age, but overwork and the attacks of his enemies made him seem older than he actually was. Now the church, which had been unable to destroy him, tried to take advantage of this situation by trying to get him to admit that he was wrong. They thought that maybe on his deathbed he would be moved to repent. Instead, he gathered his strength and sat up in bed and in a strong voice said, “I shall not die, but live; and again, declare the evil deeds of the friars.”⁶⁶

Wycliffe did live on and was able to place in the hands of his countrymen the most powerful weapon against Rome, the Bible. This was not an easy task at his age and with his health issues, but his mind was strong, and he was specially preserved by God for this most important job.

When the work was finally completed, Wycliffe no longer feared prison or even being burned at the stake. He had succeeded in placing in the hands of the English people a light which would never go out. In this one act, he had done more to break the chains of ignorance and corruption than was ever achieved by the greatest victory on the field of battle. The printing press had not been invented yet, so the Bible had to be copied by hand. The interest was so great that even though many people willingly took up the work of copying it, they could not keep up with the demand. Only the wealthy could afford to purchase a whole copy of the Bible, but others could still buy portions of it.

⁶⁵ Vaughan, Robert, *Life and Opinions of John de Wycliffe*, Vol II, London: B. J. Holdsworth & Hatchard & Sons, 1828, p. 6.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Life_and_Opinions_of_John_de_Wycliff/XVo4AQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA6&printsec=frontcover

⁶⁶ D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 706.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/KvICAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA706&printsec=frontcover

Wycliffe now clearly outlined two main doctrines which would be adopted by all Protestantism, salvation through faith in Christ, and that the Scriptures were absolutely trustworthy and could not be wrong. These teachings, together with the Bible were circulated around England and were accepted by nearly half of the entire population. The Scriptures had never before been available to the masses, so there had never been a law prohibiting it. So, the church created laws and tried to enforce them, but it was too late.

Again, the papal leaders plotted to silence the reformer. He was ordered to appear in court, his writings were declared heretical, and even the young king Richard II took their side, making a royal decree to imprison all who should accept the condemned doctrines. But Wycliffe appealed to Parliament, where he fearlessly stood alone, demanding reforms of the church. With powerful and convincing arguments, he described the corruption of the pope himself, and his enemies were unable to respond. After most of his friends and supporters had been forced to yield, it had been assumed that the reformer, old and friendless, would bow to the power of the crown and the church. But instead, Parliament was won over, the papists were defeated, and Wycliffe was set free.

On yet another occasion, Wycliffe was tried before the highest church court in the kingdom. This time they were sure they would get him to retract or suffer death at their hands. But as he spoke before the listeners in the court, the power of the Holy Spirit came over the room, and it was as if they were under a spell. They had charged him with heresy, but he threw the charge back on them accusing them of spreading errors and of making money from the grace of God. Finally, he said, who do you think you are dealing with? An old man on the brink of the grave? No! with Truth—Truth which is stronger than you and will overcome you.⁶⁷

One last time Wycliffe was called to stand trial, this time in Rome, from the very stronghold of the kingdom of error. He would have obeyed the summons and appeared in person if he could, but he suffered a stroke which made it impossible for him to make the journey. Instead, he represented himself in writing, with a letter addressed to the pope.⁶⁸ Wycliffe fully expected that he would finally suffer a

⁶⁷ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 123.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA123&printsec=frontcover

⁶⁸ Foxe, John, *Acts and Monuments*, Vol III, London: R. B. Seelye & W. Burnside, 1837, p 49.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Acts_and_Monuments_A_New_and_Complet/jptjAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover&pg=PA49

martyr's death, and said should I live and be silent? Never! Let the blow fall, I await its coming.⁶⁹

But this faithful servant of God, who stood boldly in defense of the truth his entire life, was not to fall victim to the hatred of his enemies. In his church at Lutterworth, as he was about to lead out in communion, he had another stroke and died a short time later.

God had called Wycliffe, and he answered the call. God had spoken the truth through him, and protected him, so that a solid foundation was laid for the great work of the Reformation. There was no one before him that he could learn from or pattern his work after. Like John the Baptist, he had a special message that brought in a new era for Christianity. The great movement that he started would not only bring freedom of conscience, but of secular and scientific thought. It would set nations free from slavery to the Roman Catholic church. The way this was all accomplished was by making the Bible available, and teaching that it is the perfect word of God, and that the Holy Spirit is its interpreter.

The character and work of Wycliffe show the power of the Holy Scriptures. The effort to understand the great truths revealed in the Bible brings energy to the mind and the body. It can expand the mind, help one to see things more clearly, and improve decision making. The study of the Bible can give us better thoughts, feelings and desires. The earnest study of the Scriptures brings the human mind in direct contact with the mind of God. [Psalm 119:130](#) The teaching of your word gives light, so even the simple can understand. [Psalm 119:130 NLT](#).

The teachings of Wycliffe continued to be spread by his followers known as Wycliffites and Lollards. They travelled throughout England and even beyond, carrying the good news. Some among the wealthy and the ruling class were converted, including the wife of the king. But the storm of persecution was about to burst upon those who dared to accept and teach the Bible as their guide. The king of England, eager to get the support of the church, allowed the Reformers to be killed. For the first time in England, disciples of the gospel were burned at the stake. Hunted by the church and the kingdom, they preached in secret, hiding even in caves. The Reformers at that time only understood part of the truth, but they loved and obeyed God's word and were willing to suffer for its sake. Like in the days of the apostles, many sacrificed their wealth for the cause of Christ. They sheltered and protected those who had less power and influence, and when their homes and possessions were taken from them, they gladly suffered for the cause

⁶⁹ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 710.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/KvICAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA710&printsec=frontcover

they believed in. Though some gave up their faith in the face of torture and death, many stood firm, rejoicing that they were worthy to suffer as Christ had.

Forty years after his death, the church of Rome was still filled with hatred for this Reformer whom they could not silence. So, they dug up his bones and burned them, then threw them into a brook. It was later written that the brook carried his ashes to streams, then rivers, and finally to the ocean. And so, it was symbolic of the way the message of reform that he started was carried to the whole world.⁷⁰ It was through the writings of Wycliffe that John Huss of Bohemia was led to renounce the errors of the church of Rome and to continue the work of reform.

⁷⁰ Fuller, Thomas, *The Church History of Britain*, Vol I, London: Thomas Teg & Son, 1837, p 439.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Church_History_of_Britain_from_the_B/yy8aAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA493&printsec=frontcover

Chapter 6—Huss and Jerome

Bohemia was known to have received the gospel, and even the scriptures translated to their own language as early as the ninth century. But as the power of the popes increased, the availability of the Bible decreased. Gregory VII, who had taken it upon himself to humble the pride of kings, was also intent on enslaving the people. A decree was issued forbidding worship services to be conducted in the local language. The pope declared that it was pleasing to God that He be worshipped in an unknown language, and that many evils and heresies had resulted from not following this rule.⁷¹ In this way no one could benefit from hearing anything at church and the word of God was hidden. But some Waldenses and Albigenses, who had been driven from their homes in France and Italy by persecution, had found their way to Bohemia. They labored and taught in secret, keeping the truth alive from century to century.

Before Huss there were men in Bohemia who spoke out against the corruption of the church. Persecution followed and these believers were driven into the forests and mountains where they continued to worship according to their conscience. But they were hunted by soldiers, and many were killed. The church of Rome made a decree that all who worshipped in ways different from what they allowed should be burned. One who died said, “The rage of the enemies of the truth now prevails against us, but it will not be forever; there shall arise one from among the common people, without sword or authority, and against him they shall not be able to prevail.”⁷²

John Huss lost his father at an early age and was raised by a God-fearing mother who valued education. After studying at a local school, he moved on to the university in Prague. As they approached the city, his mother, who came with him, knelt and prayed for a blessing on her son. Little did she know how her prayer would be answered.

At the university, Huss was soon recognized as an excellent student, as well as being humble, sincere, and a strong believer in the church. After completing his college studies, he became a priest and quickly advanced to the point where he was serving in the king’s court. In a short time, he also became a professor and later held the position of spiritual head of the university. In just a few years, this poor

⁷¹ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 131.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA131&printsec=frontcover

⁷² Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 133.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA133&printsec=frontcover

humble student had become the pride of his country and even known throughout Europe.

A few years after becoming a priest, Huss became the preacher for the chapel of Bethlehem. Even though it was outlawed by Rome, the founder of this chapel believed the scriptures should be preached in the language of the people. But in most of Bohemia, knowledge of the Bible was rare, and there was great wickedness among all classes of people. Preaching from the word of God, Huss began to denounce these evils.

At this time, the queen of England, who was a Bohemian princess, was also a convert to Wycliffe's teachings. Using her influence, these teachings were widely circulated in England. Jerome, a citizen of Prague, had brought back some of Wycliffe's writings from England. These were shared with Huss and read with great interest. About this time, two missionaries from England arrived in Prague. They publicly began to speak out against the idea of the pope's supremacy but were quickly silenced. Since they could no longer preach, they resorted to their skill as artists to convey their message. In a public place, they drew two pictures, as people watched. One was a picture of Jesus riding on the colt of a donkey, humble, barefooted, and wearing old travel-worn clothes. The other picture was of the pope, wearing rich robes and a triple crown, riding on a horse that was also richly adorned. He was led by trumpeters and followed by a procession of cardinals also richly dressed.

[Cardinals were second in power to the pope in the Roman church hierarchy.]

None could mistake the message of the two pictures showing the humility of Christ, and the pride and arrogance of the pope. This got a lot of people talking and asking questions which the church was not happy about, and for their safety, the two missionaries left town. John Huss couldn't get the two pictures out of his mind and began a deeper study of the Bible and Wycliffe's writings. He had not yet accepted all the reforms that Wycliffe wrote about, but he began to see the true character of the papacy, and started to denounce its pride, ambition, and corruption.

The light from Bohemia spread to Germany when hundreds of German students withdrew from the University of Prague and returned home. Before they left, many of them had received their first knowledge of the Bible, and when they got home, began to spread the gospel.

News of the things that were happening at Prague reached Rome, and Huss was summoned to appear before the pope. The king and queen of Bohemia, the university, and members of the rich and ruling class all requested that Huss be allowed to respond to Rome in writing. Instead, the pope just went ahead with the

trial and condemned Huss and declared the whole city of Prague to be under interdict. This sentence essentially meant that the gates of heaven were closed to that region. Religious services were stopped, churches were closed, and the dead could not be buried in church cemeteries. For people who looked on the pope as the representative of God, holding the keys of heaven and hell, this was terrifying.

A large number of people now turned against Huss and demanded that he be turned over to Rome. At this time Huss withdrew to his home village and wrote to those who still supported him in Prague. In leaving you, I am trying to follow the example of Christ, by not giving those who disagree reason to do something which will bring eternal condemnation on themselves. I also hope that in my absence, religious services may be resumed. I am not denying the truth, for which with God's help I am willing to die.⁷³ Instead of teaching those who came to him, now Huss traveled around the country preaching to eager crowds. The church's efforts to stop the spread of the gospel, only resulted in it being spread wider.

At this stage in his life, the mind of Huss was in terrible conflict. He still loved the church as the bride of Christ and even believed in the pope as the representative of God. What Huss was fighting against was the corruption and abuse of power. The only way he was able to be at peace with himself while fighting the leadership of the church was to realize that they were wicked like the priests at the time of Christ. He concluded that it was the Bible that could never be wrong, and not the papacy.⁷⁴

After the excitement in Prague calmed down, Huss returned to the chapel of Bethlehem and continued his preaching from the word of God. He still had enemies, but the queen and many other rich and powerful people considered it an honor to side with him. It was around this time that Jerome joined him in his work of reform, and the two would work closely together for the remainder of their lives. Jerome had a brilliant mind, was a great public speaker, and was very popular. Huss was calm, had great judgment, and held back the impulsive spirit of Jerome.

The full light of truth from the Bible had not been revealed to these men, but God was leading the people out of the darkness step by step. They were not prepared to receive all the new light from the Bible any more than someone can tolerate the full brightness of the sun just after coming out of darkness.

⁷³ De Bonnechose, p 34.

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⁷⁴ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 139.

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Three popes now fought for supremacy, and this filled the Christian world with crime and fighting. To raise money to buy weapons and fighters, the blessings of the church were offered for sale. Daily Huss would continue speaking out against the evil that was done in the name of religion. In an attempt to heal the division caused by the three warring popes and the reformers, Emperor Sigismund called a council through one of the three rivals, John XXIII.⁷⁵ The other two antipopes were summoned as was John Huss, as the representative of the reformers. For his safety, Huss said he would not appear in person but would be represented by messenger and in writing. But later with promises of safe conduct from the king of Bohemia and emperor Sigismund, Huss decided to attend in person.^{76 77 78 79}

In letters before he left for the council, he wrote that he was willing to suffer and die a cruel death if necessary. Jesus Christ Himself suffered, so we should be willing to follow His example. He asked for prayers that he would remain faithful under the pressure and threats that he would receive, and that he would return to them if it was God's will.⁸⁰ In a letter to a priest who had become a disciple of the gospel, he humbly spoke of his own errors, mentioning specifically, taking pleasure in wearing rich and fancy clothes, and wasting time on unimportant activities. He also encouraged him to be humble and kind to the poor, and finally, not to open the letter until knowing for sure that he was dead.⁸¹

On his journey, Huss had the opportunity to see how widespread and well accepted his teachings were. At first upon his arrival, he was given the freedom and

⁷⁵ Kitts, Eustace J., *Pope John the Twenty-Third and Master John Hus of Bohemia*, London: Constable and Company Limited, 1910.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Pope_John_the_Twenty_third_and_Master_Jo/7kkmAQAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover

⁷⁶ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3117\(132.3120\)&index=0](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3117(132.3120)&index=0),

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA767&printsec=frontcover

⁷⁷ Schaff, David S., *John Huss—His Life Teachings and Death—After Five Hundred Years*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/John_Huss/F3wEAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover

⁷⁸ Schwarze, William Nathaniel, *John Hus The Martyr of Bohemia*, New York, Chicago, Toronto, London, Edinburgh: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1915.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/John_Hus_the_Martyr_of_Bohemia/WHgEAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA3&printsec=frontcover

⁷⁹ Spinka, Matthew, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, Chicago: The University Press, 1941.

https://archive.org/details/johnhuszechrefo0000spin_y9r7/page/n5/mode/2up

⁸⁰ De Bonnechose, p 51.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Reformers_before_the_Reformation_The/CfNiAAAaAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA51&printsec=frontcover

⁸¹ De Bonnechose, p 51.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Reformers_before_the_Reformation_The/CfNiAAAaAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA51&printsec=frontcover

protection that was promised to him, but after only a short time, he was arrested by order of the pope and thrown into the dungeon. The pope didn't have long to enjoy his victory over the reformer, because soon after he was thrown into the same prison.⁸² He had been accused of the worst crimes including murder, selling favors of the church, adultery, and other sins too terrible to name. The two antipopes were also deposed, and a new pope was chosen.

The treatment of Huss excited great anger in Bohemia, and powerful noblemen addressed the council on his behalf. The emperor was not happy that the safe conduct promise he had given was broken when Huss was thrown into the dungeon. But the council appealed to the emperor's devotion to the church and argued that promises did not need to be kept with heretics.⁸³

In the dungeon, Huss got a fever which almost ended his life. Finally, in his weakened state, loaded with chains, he stood before the emperor. In his trial, he remained firm in the position he had taken and continued to speak out against the corruption in the church. When given the choice of giving up his beliefs or death, he chose the martyr's fate.

As Huss awaited his death, the grace of God sustained him, and a heavenly peace filled his soul. He wrote to a friend, when with the help of Jesus Christ, we shall meet again in the future life, you will learn how God has supported me during my temptations and trials.⁸⁴

Huss was called before the council one more time and asked if he would change his mind, but he refused. He turned to the people and said, how should I look on the multitudes of men to whom I have preached the pure gospel? No, their salvation is worth more than this poor body now destined for death. So, they put on his head a cone shaped cap with pictures of demons and the word 'Archheretic.' Huss then said, "Most joyfully will I wear this crown of shame for Thy sake, O Jesus, who for me didst wear a crown of thorns." His accusers then said, "Now we

⁸² De Bonnechose, p. 78.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Reformers_before_the_Reformation_The/CfNiAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA78&printsec=frontcover

⁸³ Lenfant, James, *History of the Council of Constance*, vol. 1, London, 1730, p. 516.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_History_of_the_Council_of_Constance/B0WPqThQowMC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA516&printsec=frontcover

⁸⁴ De Bonnechose, p. 98.

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devote thy soul to the devil,” and Huss replied, “And I do commit my spirit into Thy hands, O Lord Jesus, for Thou hast redeemed me.”⁸⁵

As Huss was being led out to his execution, a great procession of soldiers, richly dressed priests and bishops, and finally citizens of Constance followed. He was tied to a stake and asked once more if he would renounce his errors, to which he replied, “what errors shall I renounce? I know myself guilty of none. I call God to witness that all I have written and preached has been with the view of rescuing souls from sin.”⁸⁶ As the flames began to rise around him, he started singing, “Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me,” until his voice was silenced.

When his body had been completely consumed, his ashes and the dirt under them were gathered up and thrown into the Rhine which carried them to the ocean. The church thought they had gotten rid of the truths that he preached, but the ashes that day carried away to the sea were like seed scattered to all countries of the world that would one day yield a great harvest for truth.

Jerome, on hearing that Huss had been thrown into the dungeon, immediately set out for Constance, to the aid of his friend. But as soon as he arrived, he realized there was nothing that he could do, and had only put himself in danger. As he fled from the city, he was captured and brought back in chains to stand before the council, where he was met with chants, “To the flames with him! To the flames!”⁸⁷ After some months of great suffering and starvation in prison, he became very sick, and his enemies were afraid that he would die before they could kill him, so they treated him a little better to keep him alive.

The death of Huss had not brought the results that the church had hoped for. A lot of people were angry about how he had been treated even though he had a promise of safe-conduct. So, his accusers thought it would be better to force Jerome to admit his error than to burn him at the stake. Death at the start would have been mercy in comparison with the torture, fear and isolation he had endured for a full year in that horrible dungeon. Finally, in a moment of weakness, Jerome gave in

⁸⁵ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 163.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA163&printsec=frontcover

⁸⁶ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 164.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA164&printsec=frontcover

⁸⁷ De Bonnechese, p. 74.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Reformers_before_the_Reformation/The/CfNiAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA74&printsec=frontcover

and agreed to condemn the teachings of Wycliffe and Huss.⁸⁸ But shortly after, while still in prison, he thought about the courage of Huss compared to his weakness. He also thought of what Jesus had suffered for his sake, and he decided that he would not deny his Lord.

When he was brought back before his accusers, they expected him to admit more of his errors, but instead he took back his condemnation of the teachings of Wycliffe and Huss. Fearing the effect of his words, they insisted that he simply answer yes or no, but Jerome protested saying, you have held me for 340 days in a frightful, filthy, disgusting prison, and now refuse to let me speak.⁸⁹

When he was finally given permission to speak, he knelt down and asked for guidance from the divine Spirit, that he would not say anything untrue or unworthy of his Master. He claimed the promise, [Matthew 10:18](#) You will stand trial before governors and kings because you are my followers. But this will be your opportunity to tell the rulers and other unbelievers about me.¹⁹ When you are arrested, don't worry about how to respond or what to say. God will give you the right words at the right time.²⁰ For it is not you who will be speaking--it will be the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. [Matthew 10:18-20 NLT](#).

The words that followed from Jerome, amazed even his enemies. With no preparation, after nearly a year in the most horrible conditions imaginable, he spoke out with clarity and power. It was as if he had just come from studying and preparing what he would say. He spoke of the long line of holy men who had been condemned by unjust judges, including Christ Himself. He also took back his words when he had formerly admitted that Huss was justly condemned and instead defended the character and holiness of Huss. He then added that one day his accusers would have to answer for their actions before God.⁹⁰ He then said, of all the sins that I have committed since my youth, none weigh as heavily on my mind as when I approved the sentences against Wycliffe and Huss, my master and my friend. I ask God to forgive my sins, especially this one, the worst of them all. Then, speaking to his judges he said, you condemned Wycliffe and Huss, not because they spoke against doctrines of the church, but because they pointed out

⁸⁸ De Bonnechose, p117.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Reformers_before_the_Reformation/The/CfNiAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA117&printsec=frontcover

⁸⁹ De Bonnechose, p 119.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Reformers_before_the_Reformation/The/CfNiAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA119&printsec=frontcover

⁹⁰ De Bonnechose, p. 120.

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the corruption and scandals of the priests and the pope. I am also in complete agreement with them.

Trembling with rage, his accusers shouted out, what further proof do we need. He is the most stubborn of heretics. Jerome then replied, do you think that I fear death? The way you have treated me for the last year was worse than death. You have treated me more cruelly than you would your worst enemies, or even a pagan. I am shocked that you would treat a fellow Christian this way.⁹¹

[Recant means not only to admit your error but to do so publicly with the intent that those who originally believed and followed you would realize you were wrong.]

Still trying to get him to recant, Jerome said, prove to me from the Holy Writings that I am in error. They replied, The Holy Writings! Who can understand them unless the church interprets them? Jerome said, are the traditions of men more important than the gospel of our Savior?⁹²

Finally, they gave up trying to get him to recant and led him out to his execution. Jerome sang as he went, and his face looked like he was filled with joy and peace. When the executioner came behind him to light the fire, he said, come boldly and light it in front of me. If I was afraid, I would not be here. As the flames rose around him, he prayed, Lord, Almighty Father, have pity on me and pardon my sins.⁹³

Another of God's faithful witnesses had been killed, but the light of truth he proclaimed could not be put out. It was no more possible for men to stop the sun from rising, than it was for them to prevent the light that was beginning to shine on the world.

The execution of Huss filled the people of Bohemia with anger and horror, and they charged the council with murder. Now there was even more interest in the teachings of Jerome, and the writings of Wycliffe that had not been destroyed were now studied along with the Bible. The pope and the emperor were now united to crush this movement in Bohemia, using the armies of Sigismund.

⁹¹ De Bonnechose, p 121.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Reformers_before_the_Reformation/The/CfNiAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover&pg=PA121

⁹² Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 173.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA173&printsec=frontcover

⁹³ De Bonnechose, p. 125.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Reformers_before_the_Reformation/The/CfNiAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover&pg=PA125

But a deliverer was raised up. Ziska, who became totally blind soon after the war began, yet was still one of the smartest generals of his age, led the Bohemians. They trusted in God and the righteousness of their cause. Time and again the emperor raised new armies, and each time they were defeated by the Hussites. A few years into the war, Ziska died, but he was replaced by an equally brave and brilliant general named Procopius.

Knowing that the blind general was dead, the pope proclaimed a crusade against the Hussites but suffered a terrible defeat. Another crusade was proclaimed, this time in all the papal countries of Europe, raising money and gathering weapons. Multitudes flocked to the papal standard, confident of victory. The two armies approached each other with only a small river separating them. The crusaders were a vastly superior force, but instead of dashing across the stream and engaging the Hussites, they just stood there looking in silence.⁹⁴ Suddenly a mysterious terror fell upon the crusaders, and they scattered and fled. The Hussites pursued and slaughtered many, and much of the money and weapons that had been collected by the crusaders, were now taken by the Bohemians.

A few years later under a new pope, another crusade was proclaimed, again throughout all the papal countries of Europe. Great promises were made to encourage people to join this dangerous expedition. Full forgiveness, even of the most terrible crimes were promised to every crusader. Any who would not survive were promised a rich reward in heaven, and the victors were assured of great honor and riches from the field of battle. As the vast army crossed the border into Bohemia, the Hussites retreated, drawing the invaders deeper into the country. At last, the army of Procopius made their stand and advanced to fight. But before the fighting even began, a panic fell on the crusaders. Princes, generals and common soldiers alike dropped their weapons and armor and fled in all directions. Again, the victory was complete and more treasure, weapons, and armor enriched the Bohemians.

The outcome of these attacks could not be explained by anything other than divine power. The Bible contains multiple examples of God striking the enemies of His people with unnatural terror or confusion. The hosts of Pharaoh in the red sea [[Exodus 14:24-25](#)], the thousands of Midianites who fled from Gideon and his 300 men [[Judges 7:21-22](#)], the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomite killing each other [[2 Chronicles 20:21-22](#)].

⁹⁴ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 196.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA196&printsec=frontcover

Rome finally gave up on the idea of destroying the Hussites by force, so they tried to achieve their goal by negotiation. The Bohemians insisted on four points,

1. Free preaching of the Bible.
2. The right of the whole church to the bread and the wine in communion, and the use of their own language in worship.
3. Priests or other church leaders could not hold positions in the government.
4. In cases of crime, the civil court could pass judgement on priests and church leaders.

The papal authorities agreed on condition that the right of explaining these four points would belong to the pope and the emperor.⁹⁵ Of course, Rome could bend the meaning of these four articles in her interpretation, just as she did with the Bible. Many Bohemians realized this and refused to accept the agreement. This caused fighting among themselves, even leading to killing each other. This internal conflict resulted in the death of their noble Procopius, and the loss of their freedoms. Sigismund now assumed rule over Bohemia and ignoring the agreement, proceeded to establish full papal control throughout the country. However, after only a year, he died, leaving his kingdom on the brink of civil war. Internal conflict continued, and those who remained faithful to the original ideals of reformation were horribly persecuted. They had to flee from their homes to find refuge in the forest, and in caves, where they continued to worship according to their conscience.

Through secret messengers, they learned that there were others like them, who also protested against the corruption of Rome. They learned that hiding in the mountains of the Alps, was an ancient church, founded on the scriptures.⁹⁶ With great joy in this discovery, they began secret communication with the Waldensian Christians.

The Bohemians waited through the dark night of their persecution, remembering the words of Huss and Jerome, that a century must pass before the day would break. They were like the words of Joseph to the children of Israel, that one day God would bring them out of Egypt.⁹⁷ As the fifteenth century drew to a close,

⁹⁵ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 207.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA207&printsec=frontcover

⁹⁶ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 212.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA212&printsec=frontcover

⁹⁷ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 213.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA213&printsec=frontcover

there was a slow and steady increase in the number of reformed churches. By the start of the sixteenth century there were two hundred in Bohemia and Moravia.⁹⁸ It was beginning to be the dawning of the day that Huss predicted.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Gillett, E. H., *Life and Times of John Huss*, vol. 2, Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1871, p. 570.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Life_and_Times_of_John_Huss_Or_The_B/YaMDAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA570&printsec=frontcover

⁹⁹ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 213.

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Chapter 7—Luther’s Separation from Rome

Martin Luther probably stands at the head of the list of people called by God to lead the church out of darkness. He was a man of strong beliefs, who acted on them without fear. He loved God and had the Holy Scriptures as the only foundation for his religious beliefs. Through him God was able to accomplish great things for the reformation of the church which brought light to the world.

Luther grew up in a humble, hardworking German home. His father labored daily as a miner, and carefully saved money for his son’s education. He intended that his son would become a lawyer, but God had other plans. Luther’s parents were very careful to teach their children about God and Christian values, and the importance of useful work. Some of those lessons may have been learned with too much severity from their father, but later in life, Luther concluded that there was more positive than negative in the discipline.

Luther was sent to school at an early age, but his family was so poor that he had to feed himself, which he tried to do by going door to door and singing. The religious teachings he received, were ideas that filled him with fear, and as he lay on his bed at night, he trembled at the thought of a stern, cruel God. But Luther continued his education, trying to fill the thirst in his soul. When he was eighteen years old, he started at the University of Erfort. With his financial troubles behind him due to the hard work and savings of his parents, and the association of good friends, he soon found himself near the top of his class. Luther understood his need for God and began each day with prayer. He was known to have said, “To pray well, is the better half of study.”¹⁰⁰

One day in the library, he came across a Bible in Latin. He had heard parts of the New Testament read in church and he had assumed that was all there was. Now for the first time, he was looking at the entire Bible, and as he turned the pages, he was filled with reverence as he read some of the words. He exclaimed, “O that God would give me such a book for myself!”¹⁰¹ From the time he was a child, he had always been afraid of making God angry, and now he was filled with a deep sense of his sinfulness. With an earnest desire to be free from sin, and to be at peace with God, he entered a monastery and became a monk. While there, he was required to perform the most humiliating tasks, including going door to door begging. Every

¹⁰⁰ D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 54.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/KvICAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA54&printsec=frontcover

¹⁰¹ D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 54.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/KvICAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA54&printsec=frontcover

spare moment, including some stolen from sleep, was spent in study. More than anything else, he delighted in the study of God's word. He could often be found at the Bible he had found chained to the convent wall. As he began to feel convicted of his sins, and his natural evil tendencies, he tried everything to find pardon and peace from them. He denied himself every pleasure he could think of, he fasted and even whipped himself. He said, if any monk could earn heaven by works, it would have been me. If I had continued this much longer, it would have ended in death.¹⁰² In fact, because of his self-discipline, he became weak and had fainting spells, from which he never fully recovered. He had just about lost all hope in his attempts to find peace.

At this lowest point of despair for Luther, God raised up a friend and helper for him. Staupitz opened the word of God to him and told him to look away from himself and instead look to Jesus for forgiveness for his sins. Instead of torturing yourself, throw yourself into the arms of your redeemer. Trust in the goodness of His life, and the sacrifice of His death. The Son of God became a man to give you the peace you are looking for. Love Him who first loved you.¹⁰³ These words deeply impressed Luther, and when he was able to accept this truth, peace finally came to his soul.

Luther was ordained as a priest and called from the monastery to be a professor at the University of Wittenberg. There he began to study the Scriptures in the languages they were originally written in. He began giving lectures on the Bible, and many were delighted as they gained an understanding of the Psalms, the Gospels, and the letters of Paul. Staupitz, his friend but also his boss encouraged him to preach the word of God in church. Luther had great knowledge of the Scriptures and to that was added the Spirit of God, and the words he spoke touched and moved the hearts of his listeners.

At this time Luther was a true son of the papal church and had never entertained the thought that he would not be. As such, he decided to make a trip to Rome, which he did on foot, staying in monasteries along the way. When he reached Italy, he was amazed at the wealth and luxury that he saw. Monks were well paid, lived in beautiful apartments, wore expensive and beautiful clothes, and feasted like royalty. He compared this to his life of self-denial and hardship and was rightfully

¹⁰² D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 59.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/KvICAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA59&printsec=frontcover

¹⁰³ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 62.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/KvICAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA62&printsec=frontcover

confused. When he finally came within sight of the city, he bowed down to the ground and said, Holy Rome, I salute you!¹⁰⁴

On entering the city, he visited churches, spoke with priests and monks, and performed the required ceremonies. What he saw and heard among all classes of church leaders filled him with horror. He heard improper jokes from those leading out in mass. As he mingled with monks, he saw them indulge themselves in sinful pleasures. Everywhere he turned, in places that should be holy, he found the opposite. He wrote, no one can imagine the sins and improper acts performed in Rome. There is a saying, if there is a hell, Rome is built over it, and every kind of sin comes out of it.¹⁰⁵

[Penance are actions that can be performed, to pay the price or consequence for confessed sins. An indulgence is sort of like a receipt for penance performed.]

At the time of his visit to Rome, there was a decree from the pope, that anyone who would climb the steps of “Pilate’s staircase” on their knees, would get an indulgence. One day as Luther was climbing these steps, he heard a voice like thunder that said to him, “The just shall live by faith.” [[Romans 1:17](#)]. Immediately he sprang to his feet and left, feeling a sense of shame. That verse never lost its power on him after that. He began to see the uselessness of trusting human works for salvation, and the necessity of trusting the goodness of Christ. When he left Rome, a separation started that would continue to grow wider and wider until he would eventually cut all ties with the papal church.

When he returned from Rome, Luther received his Doctor of Divinity degree from the University of Wittenberg. This gave him more freedom to devote himself to the study of the Scriptures. He taught that Christians should only have doctrines that are founded on the Bible, which was an attack at the foundation of papal supremacy. He began to speak out against classes and teachers that promoted the theories of man above the word of God. Eager crowds hung on his words of a Savior’s love, and the teaching that pardon for sin was possible because of the blood of Christ, and not through penance. A light began to shine out of Wittenberg, that would eventually reach all parts of the world and would continue to increase in brightness until the close of time.

¹⁰⁴ D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 67.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/KvICAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbp v=1&pg=PA67&printsec=frontcover

¹⁰⁵ D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 69.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/KvICAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbp v=1&pg=PA69&printsec=frontcover

The Roman church was making money by selling the grace of God. The tables of money-changers [[Matthew 21:12](#)] were setup beside the altars and the shouts of buyers and sellers could be heard. The pope himself had authorized the sale of indulgences to raise money to build St. Peter's cathedral. The person in charge of selling indulgences in Germany was a man named Tetzal, who had already been convicted of crimes against society and the law of God. When he entered a town, a messenger went before him announcing: "The grace of God and the holy father is at your gates."¹⁰⁶ He would setup shop at a church, and from the pulpit, would say that the indulgences he was selling could even provide pardon for any future sins that the buyer would desire to commit, and repentance was not even necessary.¹⁰⁷ To allow him to sell more, he assured his listeners that his indulgences also had power to save the dead. He told them, the moment the coins would clink against the bottom of his chest, a soul would escape from purgatory and make its way to heaven.¹⁰⁸

Even though Luther was still a member and a believer in the church, he was filled with horror at the claims of those selling indulgences. Some members of his own congregation who had purchased these indulgences came to him with their certificates, expecting him to absolve them of their sins and he refused. He told them that unless they repent and changed their lives, they would die in their sins. They went back to Tetzal and complained that his certificates were not accepted by their pastor and demanded a refund. Tetzal became angry and said he had an order from the pope to burn all heretics who didn't accept his most holy indulgences.¹⁰⁹

Luther now began to speak out more boldly about the truth of salvation. He taught that it is impossible for man to escape the punishment for sin by his own works. Nothing but repentance and faith in Christ can save the sinner. He said, the grace of Christ cannot be purchased because it is a gift, so don't buy indulgences but instead have faith in a crucified Redeemer.

¹⁰⁶ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 85.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/KvICAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA85&printsec=frontcover

¹⁰⁷ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 86.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/KvICAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA86&printsec=frontcover

¹⁰⁸ Clare, Israel Smith, *Library of Universal History*, New York: R. S. Peale, J. A. Hill, 1897, p 1961.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Middle_ages_and_the_reformation/bEhEAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA1961&printsec=frontcover

¹⁰⁹ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 94.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/KvICAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA94&printsec=frontcover

[a relic is an item that is treated as holy usually because it belonged to a saint or a martyr.]

The castle church of Wittenberg contained many relics, which on certain holy days were displayed for people to see. On these occasions, all who visited the church and made confession got a free indulgence. Naturally many people visited the church on these occasions, one of which was approaching. Luther wrote down 95 points against the doctrine of indulgences and on the night before the big opening day, nailed it to the door of the church where all who came would see it. He also said that he was willing to defend his arguments if anyone disagreed with them. These 95 theses as they have famously become known, were seen by many and great excitement was stirred up in the university and even the whole city. People read that the power to pardon sin and to reduce or eliminate the penalty for it was never given to the pope or any man. It was a scheme to make money off people's fears. They also learned that the gospel of Christ is the most valuable treasure, and the grace of God is free for all who claim it with repentance and faith.

In a matter of days, the points he made and the questions they generated had spread throughout all Germany, and in a few weeks to many other Christian countries. Many devoted church members who were sad about the corruption in the church were filled with joy when they read what Luther had written. They felt that at last God was doing something about the evil that was coming out of Rome. Kings and kingdoms were secretly hoping that this would begin to weaken the power of Rome to make decisions over them which could never be challenged.

But the multitudes who enjoyed the ease with which they could quiet their conscience while continuing to sin, were terrified that the system would be removed. Those who profited from selling the gifts of God were enraged that their ability to keep making money this way might be challenged. Some accused Luther of acting out of pride. He responded that his actions were motivated by God and not man. If the work is from God, who can stop it? If it is not from God, who can succeed? Not my will but yours O holy Father in heaven.¹¹⁰

Luther was motivated by God to start this work, but that didn't mean that it would go forward without challenges. Criticism and false accusations came in on him like a flood and were not without effect. He had thought that there would be leaders in the church and the university that would join him in his efforts for reform. Initially they did encourage him, but soon many began to realize that they had much to lose

¹¹⁰ D'Aubigne, J. H. Merle, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* Vol I-V, New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1857, p103.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA103&printsec=frontcover

if this system were changed. If the pope lost his power and wealth, this would eventually destroy their own authority.

When Luther looked on himself, a single man, going up against the strongest powers on earth, he was tempted to doubt whether he really had been led by God. He wrote to a friend, who was I, to oppose the majesty of the pope, before whom ... the kings of the earth and the whole world trembled? ... No one can know what my heart suffered during these first two years, and into what despair I was sunk.¹¹¹ But when human support failed, he could lean on the all-powerful arm of God.

To another friend he wrote, we cannot gain a full understanding of the Scripture by study or by our own intelligence. Your first step should be prayer. Ask the Lord to give you the true understanding of His word. There is no better interpreter of the word of God, than the author Himself. ... Trust solely in God, and in the influence of His Spirit. Believe this on the word of a man who has had experience.¹¹²

When his enemies spoke of custom, tradition, and the authority of the pope, Luther responded with the Bible and the Bible alone. Since they couldn't argue against the Bible, they decided to kill him, just as the Jews had done to Christ. All they could say in response to his arguments from the Bible were, He is a heretic, it is high treason against the church to allow him to live one hour longer. He should immediately be burned at the stake.¹¹³ But God had a work for Luther to do and angels from heaven were sent to protect him. However, many who accepted the truth were the targets of Satan's anger and ended up suffering torture and death.

All over Germany, the sermons and writing of Luther were like beams of light shining into the darkness. The word of God was like a two-edged sword, cutting its way to the hearts of people. Everywhere, there was a hunger and thirst for righteousness that had not been known for ages. For so long, people who had only human rituals and priests as mediators, were now turning their attention in repentance and faith to Christ.

Everyone knew it would happen, but Luther's friends were filled with fear when he was summoned to appear in Rome, to answer the charges of heresy. They knew full well, the danger that awaited him in that corrupt city, already drunk with the

¹¹¹ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 104.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA104&printsec=frontcover

¹¹² D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 106.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA106&printsec=frontcover

¹¹³ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 114.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA114&printsec=frontcover

blood of the martyrs of Jesus. They requested that he be able to respond to the charges in a court in Germany. The church agreed, but the representative that was sent to question him had already been told that Luther had been declared a heretic. If he could not arrest him, he was to curse and excommunicate everyone associated with him.¹¹⁴ In fact, everyone who didn't turn Luther or his supporters in were also to be excommunicated. This demonstrated the true spirit of popery. There was no justice, no opportunity to explain or defend his position and no possibility that the church could be wrong.

At this time Luther needed a friend and supporter, which he found in Melancthon. He was young, humble, with good judgement, very knowledgeable, a good communicator, and had a pure and upright character. He soon became a disciple of the gospel and Luther's most trusted friend and supporter. His abilities complemented Luther's courage and energy, and together they were more powerful in carrying on the work of the Reformation.

The trial was to be at Augsburg, and Luther traveled there on foot. His friends feared for his safety on the way and tried to convince him not to go. But he insisted that he must continue to speak the truth that God had given him. He said, they have destroyed my honor, taken my reputation and all that remains is my body. Let them take that, and shorten my life for a few hours, but they cannot take my soul. He who desires to preach the word of God to the world must expect death at any moment.¹¹⁵

The pope's representative, a cardinal, was very pleased when Luther arrived at Augsburg. The heretic was at last within their grasp, and they were determined that he should not escape. They intended to force him to recant, or they would drag him off to Rome to suffer the fate of Huss and Jerome. At first the cardinal spoke gently but firmly demanded that Luther submit to the authority of the church. Luther replied that he loved the church, and desired that they would acknowledge the truth if he could prove it to them. He requested that his arguments should be submitted to leading universities for examination, and he protested that the cardinal wanted him to retract without proving his error.

Luther clearly showed his position was supported by the Scriptures. Unable to respond to Luther's arguments, the cardinal resorted to name calling and intimidation, throwing in a few quotations of church tradition. Seeing that no

¹¹⁴ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 128.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA128&printsec=frontcover

¹¹⁵ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 134.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA134&printsec=frontcover

progress was being made, it was reluctantly agreed that Luther would present his answer in writing. Luther said, this way his answers could be read by others, and there is a better chance of reaching the conscience of an arrogant, overpowering judge, who otherwise would resort to name calling and intimidation.¹¹⁶

The next time Luther appeared in court, he read his answer which clearly outlined his view, supported by many quotations from Scripture. The cardinal threw his copy aside, declaring it to be a bunch of nonsense and quotations that did not apply, and again resorted to threats of excommunication of Luther and all his supporters.¹¹⁷

Even though it looked like neither side was winning, Luther was making a good impression on the large crowd that was watching the trial. They noticed Luther's humility, strength, firmness, and logic, as compared to the cardinal's self-importance, pride, unreasonableness, and repeated yelling out "retract or be sent to Rome for punishment."

Luther was finally convinced by his friends that even though he had a safe-conduct from the emperor, he was in danger. So, in the cover of darkness, on horseback with only a single guide, he secretly left the city. When the cardinal learned of Luther's escape, he was both surprised and angry. He had hoped to receive great honor for his success in dealing with this heretic. He wrote a letter expressing his anger to Fredrick, the elector of Saxony, demanding that Luther be sent to Rome. Again, Luther responded that if the church could show him his error from the Scriptures, he would gladly recant. The elector didn't know that much about the points of dispute, but he was deeply impressed by Luther and resolved to stand by him. In reply to the letter from Rome, he wrote: Since Dr. Martin appeared before you in Augsburg, you should be satisfied. We did not expect that you would try to make him retract without having convinced him of his errors. None of the learned men in our territory say that Martin's doctrine is irreverent, un-Christian, or heretical.¹¹⁸

The writings of Luther had stirred up interest in the Holy Scriptures, not just in all parts of Germany but in other countries as well. Students flocked to the university

¹¹⁶ Martyn, W. Carlos, *The Life and Times of Martin Luther*, New York: American Tract Society, 1866, p 272.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Life_and_Times_of_Martin_Luther/SN4rAAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA272&printsec=frontcover

¹¹⁷ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 145.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA145&printsec=frontcover

¹¹⁸ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 151.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA151&printsec=frontcover

and praised God for having caused the light of truth to shine forth from this city, as from Zion in times of old, and from where it would spread even to the most distant countries.¹¹⁹

As Luther compared the Holy Scriptures with the writings and decrees of popes, he said, I do not know whether the pope is the antichrist himself, or his apostle, so greatly is Christ misrepresented and crucified in him.¹²⁰ Yet at this time, Luther had only realized a fraction of the errors of the church, and still had not entertained the thought of separating from her.

The Reformer's writings and doctrine were spreading to every Christian nation, Switzerland, Holland, France, Spain, England, Belgium, and Italy to name a few. Rome grew more and more desperate to silence him. Some Catholic university professors were even known to say that he who kills the rebellious monk would be without sin. One day a stranger with a gun hidden under his cloak approached the Reformer and asked why he didn't have protection. Luther answered, I am in God's hands, He is my strength and my shield. What can man do unto me?¹²¹ On hearing these words, the stranger turned pale and fled, as if from the presence of angels.

One day Luther was reading some writings of Huss, where he read about justification by faith, which re-enforced what he had been teaching. He declared, Paul, Augustine and I have all been Hussites without knowing it.¹²²

In his continuing efforts to reform Christianity, Luther wrote a letter to the emperor and the nobility of Germany. It is a horrible thing to behold the man who styles himself Christ's representative, displaying a magnificence that no emperor can equal. Is this being like the poor Jesus, or the humble Peter? They say he is the lord of the world, but Christ said, My kingdom is not of this world. Can the representative be greater than his superior?¹²³

¹¹⁹ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 152.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA152&printsec=frontcover

¹²⁰ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 159.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA159&printsec=frontcover

¹²¹ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 183.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA183&printsec=frontcover

¹²² Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 305.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA305&printsec=frontcover

¹²³ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 188.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA188&printsec=frontcover

He also wrote to the universities saying, I am afraid that the universities will prove to be the gates of hell, unless they earnestly work to explain the Holy Scriptures to their students. I advise no parent to send their child where the Scriptures are not a priority.¹²⁴

Luther's words were having a powerful influence on the people of Germany. Many joined the cause of Reformation, but Luther still had powerful enemies. The pope decreed that his doctrines were condemned and that if the Reformers did not recant in sixty days, all of them would be excommunicated. For centuries, Rome's sentence of excommunication had struck terror to powerful kings, and mighty empires. Those who were excommunicated were cut off from any interaction with others, treated as outlaws and hunted and killed. But Luther fearlessly said, what is about to happen, I know not, nor do I care. ... It is a light thing to die for the Word since the Word which was made flesh hath Himself died. If we die with Him, we shall live with Him; and passing through that which He has passed through before us, we shall be where He is and dwell with Him forever.¹²⁵

There were many who, even though they believed the cause of Reformation was good, thought it was too risky to support it. In response to the decree from the pope, Luther took it and publicly burned it along with some other decrees and writings of the church that supported the power of the pope. He was publicly cutting ties with the church, adding, my enemies have burned my books, so I am burning their books in return. A serious struggle had now begun. Before this I have only been playing with the pope. I began this work in God's name, and it will be ended without me, and by His might. ... I am sure of this, that the word of God is with me, and that it is not with them.¹²⁶

It was not without a struggle and some doubt that Luther separated from the church. How many times have I not asked myself with bitterness the question ... can everyone else be mistaken? What if it is me who is wrong, and involving so many souls, who will then be eternally lost? In this way I fought with myself and

¹²⁴ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 190.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA190&printsec=frontcover

¹²⁵ D'Aubigne, J. H. Merle, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century in Germany, Switzerland, Philadelphia: James M. Campbell, 1843, p168.*

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Great_Reformation_of_the/8Ys9AAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA168&printsec=frontcover

¹²⁶ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 173.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Great_Reformation_of_the/8Ys9AAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover&pg=PA173

with Satan, until Christ, through his word strengthened my heart against these doubts.¹²⁷

The threats of the pope were now carried out. A new decree was sent out which cursed Luther and all who accepted his doctrines. The great contest had now begun. God chooses to give special truths that are especially needed at the time. Those whom he chooses as His messengers should always expect opposition. Truth is no more desired today than it was in Luther's day, and those presenting it should not expect a different reception than the reformers got.

Jesus told His disciples, [John 15:19](#) The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.²⁰ Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you. [John 15:19-20 NLT](#). The spirit of the world is no more in harmony with the spirit of Christ today than in earlier times, and those who preach the word of God in its purity will be received with no greater favor now than then.

¹²⁷ Martyn, p 373.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Life_and_Times_of_Martin_Luther/SN4rAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA373&printsec=frontcover

Chapter 8—Luther Before the Diet

Charles V had just become the new emperor of Germany, and representatives from Rome had arrived to congratulate him, but also to try to get his support in their fight against the Reformation. However, the elector of Saxony who had helped him win the throne, begged him not to take any action against Luther until he had given him a hearing. The pope would be satisfied with nothing less than Luther's death, but the elector pointed out that nobody had been able to find anything wrong with the reformer's teachings. He suggested that Dr. Luther should be given a safe-conduct, so that he might appear before a panel of learned, holy, and fair judges.¹²⁸

This hearing was to occur at Worms and would be attended by many. Among them would be, princes from throughout Germany, important representatives of both church and state, lords and ladies, knights, and even representatives from other countries. [The gathering of these important people for a legal hearing was referred to as a Diet.] Many would be seeing their young emperor for the first time. Even though his health was not good at the time, Luther assured the elector that he would be present, even if he had to be carried there. He saw this hearing as an opportunity to share the gospel and the cause of the Reformation before many powerful people. He was content to place his safety in the hands of God and was not concerned with whether he lived or died. He even promised that he would not run away but most of all, that he would not retract.¹²⁹

As news of the Diet at Worms spread, Alexander, the pope's representative who had been assigned to Luther, was alarmed and angry. Not only did he see this as an opportunity for Luther to win many important and powerful people to his cause but giving him the chance to defend himself again would seem to show that his first condemnation by the pope was not taken seriously. In fact, it was right at this time that the decree declaring Luther an excommunicated heretic was published. He insisted that Luther should not be allowed to speak to this gathering in person, to which the emperor finally agreed.

Alexander then went around trying to gain the support of the princes and other members of the assembly for Luther's condemnation. He accused the Reformer of plotting a rebellion against the kingdom and the church, and of blasphemy. But what they all noticed in Alexander was the spirit of hatred and vengeance much

¹²⁸ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 213.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA213&printsec=frontcover

¹²⁹ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 220.

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more than righteous passion for God's honor.¹³⁰ This ended up working in Luther's favor. Then Alexander began putting pressure on the emperor, reminding him of his duty to the church. Finally, Alexander was allowed to present his case to the assembly. Rome had chosen one of their best public speakers, one who could speak with force and had the ability to persuade people to agree with him.¹³¹

He declared, in Luther's errors there is enough to burn a hundred thousand heretics. He accused these Lutherans of being uninteresting, corrupt, sinful, ignorant, and poor. He then contrasted them with the size, power, and ability of the Catholic church.¹³² Alexander spoke with great power and persuasion, and Luther was not there to respond with his clear convincing truths of God's word. Rome could not have hoped for a better chance to defend her cause. But the apparent victory was too one sided. Even though many of the members of the Diet cared nothing for Luther, they saw the corruption, and abuse of power of the church. Finally, the Spirit of God was able to move someone to speak, and with noble firmness, Duke George of Saxony spoke out. He gave specific examples of the lies, corruption and evil things done by and for the pope. He said their only object is money, money, money. Preachers who should be teaching the truth are speaking nothing but lies and are rewarded because they bring in more money for the church. They also take part in sinful pleasures, including sexual immorality. Many poor souls will be forever lost because of scandals of the church leaders.¹³³

Interestingly these words spoken by the duke may have carried even more weight because he considered himself an enemy of Luther. Clearly the influence of God was in that assembly, and the words spoken were motivated by His Spirit.

Many agreed with the duke, so a committee was appointed by the Diet to look into the abuses of the church against the people of Germany. A list of 101 items was presented to the emperor, along with a request that he take steps to correct these abuses.¹³⁴ Then the council demanded that Luther appear before them. Over the

¹³⁰ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 221.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA221&printsec=frontcover

¹³¹ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 326.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA326&printsec=frontcover

¹³² D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 226.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA226&printsec=frontcover

¹³³ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 228.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA228&printsec=frontcover

¹³⁴ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 228.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA228&printsec=frontcover

protests of Alexander, the emperor finally agreed, and issued a safe-conduct and summoned Luther to appear before the Diet. Over the protests of friends who feared for his safety, Luther said, pray for the word of God, not for me. Pray that His Spirit will help me to overcome error. All they want is to force me to retract, but this is what I will retract: before I had said the pope was the representative of Christ; now I will say he is the enemy of the Lord, and the devil's apostle.¹³⁵

Three of Luther's most loyal friends would go with him on this dangerous journey. But he refused to allow Melancthon to go with him. He said, if I do not return, and my enemies put me to death, continue to teach, and stand firm in the truth. Continue my work ... if you survive, my death will not matter.¹³⁶

Along the way from Wittenberg to Worms, when Luther reached Erfurt where he had once been a monk, he was welcomed with honor and asked to preach. When he stood up to speak, he told them the way to obtain eternal life is through the life and death of Jesus Christ, not by our own works. But true faith will lead to a holy life, and since God has already saved us, let us do works that are acceptable to Him. If you are rich, let your wealth serve the needs of the poor. If you are poor, offer your services to the rich.¹³⁷ Luther did not talk at all about the dangers he faced, but only spoke about Jesus the sinner's Redeemer.

As the Reformer continued his journey and was warned about the danger that he faced, he answered. If they would light a fire from Worms to Wittenberg, with flames reaching up to heaven, I would walk through it in the name of the Lord; I would appear before them; I would enter the jaws of the beast, and break his teeth, confessing the Lord Jesus Christ.¹³⁸

As Luther approached Worms, his friends who still worried about his safety, begged him not to enter. But he said, even if there were as many devils in Worms as the tiles on the housetops, I would still enter it.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 232.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA232&printsec=frontcover

¹³⁶ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 234.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA234&printsec=frontcover

¹³⁷ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 236.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA236&printsec=frontcover

¹³⁸ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 236.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA236&printsec=frontcover

¹³⁹ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 238.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA238&printsec=frontcover

The papists didn't really think that Luther would come, but now that he had arrived, they were worried. One of them said, let us get rid of this man at once, didn't the emperor Sigismund allow John Huss to be burned? We do not have to honor the safe-conduct of a heretic. But the emperor said no, we must keep our promise.¹⁴⁰

The day Luther was summoned to appear before the Diet, just as he was about to enter the room, an old general, said to him kindly: Poor monk, poor monk, you are now going to make a nobler stand than I or any other captains have ever made in the bloodiest of our battles. But if your cause is just, and you are sure of it, go forward in God's name, and fear nothing. God will not forsake you.¹⁴¹

Finally, Luther stood before the council. The emperor was on the throne, and he was surrounded by the most powerful people in the empire. The fact that a man already condemned by the pope was now standing before this assembly was a victory over the papacy. The pope had excommunicated him, condemned him to death, ordered him to keep silence, and yet here he stood about to speak before thousands of interested and important people. Rome was starting to lose its power, and it was the voice of a monk that caused this humiliation.¹⁴²

A deep silence fell over the crowd as an officer of the court approached Luther. Pointing to a collection of his writings, he asked if Luther acknowledged them as his and whether he would retract them. After looking at them, Luther acknowledged them as his writings, but as to the second question he said, since it concerns faith, the salvation of souls, and the word of God, I must take time to give a thoughtful and accurate response.¹⁴³ So, he was given until the next day to prepare his final answer.

As Luther thought about what he was up against, he was nearly overwhelmed at the thought of the danger he faced and the hatred his enemies had toward him. He longed for some assurance that God was with him, so he poured out his burden to God in prayer. O almighty and everlasting God, how terrible is this world! My last

¹⁴⁰ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 239.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA239&printsec=frontcover

¹⁴¹ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 239.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA240&printsec=frontcover

¹⁴² D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 240.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA240&printsec=frontcover

¹⁴³ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 241.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA241&printsec=frontcover

hour is come; I have already been condemned. O God, help me against all the wisdom of this world. This is not my work but yours. I place my trust in you. Stand at my side, for the sake of your well-beloved Jesus Christ who is my defense, my shield, and my strong tower.¹⁴⁴

It was a good thing that Luther had lost confidence in himself to be able to say or do the right thing, because through his weakness the cause of truth might suffer loss. He wrestled with God in prayer, not for his own safety, but for the triumph of the gospel. Like Jacob, in the struggle by the stream, he was filled with anguish. Like Israel, he prevailed with God. He was strengthened with the assurance that he would not appear alone before the council. He had peace and was glad that he was permitted to hold up the word of God before the rulers of nations.

When Luther stood before the Diet the next day, there was no trace of fear or embarrassment. He was calm and peaceful, as well as brave and noble as he stood as God's witness before the great ones of the earth. He addressed the court formally and begged for their indulgence if he failed to follow the right procedure.

Luther said that among his writings, there were some that spoke of faith and good works that even his enemies would agree should not be retracted. Another class of writings was about the crimes and abuses of the papacy. To retract these would be to admit that Rome was doing nothing wrong. The third category of his writings condemned those who defended the evils done by the church. He admitted that he may have been too harsh in these condemnations, but even these he would not take back. If he did so, it would only make them bolder to be cruel to God's people.

Luther then said, if I have written something evil, please tell me what it is. As soon as I am convinced of this, I will retract them and throw those books into the fire myself. These and other things he had spoken in German, and now he was asked by the court to repeat them in Latin. This was according to God's will because there were some who might benefit from hearing it again. But those who stubbornly refused to see the truth, angrily responded, you have not answered the question, will you retract or not? Luther answered, since you require a clear and simple response, my answer is this: I cannot submit my faith either to pope or to councils, because it is clear as the day that they have frequently been wrong. Unless I am convinced by Scripture or by the clearest logic, I cannot, and I will not

¹⁴⁴ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 242.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA242&printsec=frontcover

retract. It would not be safe for me to go against my conscience; may God help me. Amen.¹⁴⁵

The whole assembly was speechless with amazement. Luther's courage and firmness, combined with the power and clarity of his logic, surprised everyone. The emperor was even moved with admiration and said, this monk speaks with a fearless heart, and unshaken courage. Many of the Germans in the assembly looked with pride and joy on their countryman. The representatives from Rome had been defeated, they could not win by appealing to Scriptures, so they resorted to threats. Their spokesman at the Diet said, if you do not retract, we will discuss among ourselves what we will do against such a stubborn heretic.

Since they had much more to gain by Luther's retractions than by his death, they tried one more time to get him to retract. He answered, I have no other reply to make than that which I have already made. The papal leaders were used to kings and nobles trembling under their threats and couldn't understand how this lone humble monk could stand against them like this. But Luther understood that he was in the presence of One greater than popes, kings, and emperors. The Spirit of God had been present in the council, and there were many who were convinced of the truth, but when they realized what it would cost them to follow their convictions, many were unwilling. There were others who didn't speak out at the time, but after searching the Scriptures for themselves, later became fearless supporters of the Reformation. The papacy had suffered a defeat that would be felt among all nations and even in future generations.

The elector, Frederick had looked forward to Luther's appearance before the Diet. With joy and pride, he had watched the doctor's courage, firmness, and self-control, and he was determined to stand more firmly in support of him.

Despite the apparent defeat, the papal representative was not finished. With all the power of persuasion and negotiating skills that he possessed, he appealed to the emperor. He pointed out the power, support, and friendship of Rome that would be sacrificed if he should support this powerless insignificant monk.

The next day, the decision of Charles was announced to the Diet. He was determined to follow in the footsteps of prior emperors in support of the Catholic religion. Since Luther had refused to renounce his errors, every option available would be used against him and the heresies he taught. A single monk, misled by his own folly, has risen against the faith of all Christianity. To stop such

¹⁴⁵ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 245.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA245&printsec=frontcover

irreverence, Charles continued, I will sacrifice my kingdoms, my treasures, my friends, my body, my blood, my soul, and my life. I am about to dismiss Luther, forbidding him to cause the smallest disorder among the people; I shall then proceed against him and his followers as most rebellious heretics, with every means available to destroy them. I call on all members of the state to behave like faithful Christians.¹⁴⁶ However, the emperor insisted that Luther's safe-conduct must be respected, and that before any action would be taken against him, he must be allowed to return home in safety.

The representatives of the pope tried to get Charles to disregard Luther's safe-conduct, burn him, and throw his ashes in the Rhine as had been done to John Huss a century ago.¹⁴⁷ But the princes of Germany, even though they supported the papacy, protested violating the safe-conduct as a stain on the honor of the nation. They also pointed out the history of the war that followed the death of Huss and said they did not wish to repeat that. Charles was pressured again by the representatives from Rome, to deal with Luther as Sigismund had dealt with Huss, but Charles declared, I should not like to blush like Sigismund.¹⁴⁸

There are many today that cling to the customs and traditions of their fathers, and when the Lord sends new light, they refuse to accept it. We will not receive God's approval by simply following the example of our fathers instead of searching the word of God for ourselves. We are responsible for the light that was handed down to us, but also for new light that we receive. Our responsibility is greater than that of our ancestors if new light is available to us. We are accountable for the light which they received, and which was handed down as an inheritance for us, and we are accountable also for the additional light which is now shining upon us from the word of God.

This is what Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews: [John 15:22](#) They would not be guilty if I had not come and spoken to them. But now they have no excuse for their sin. [John 15:22 NLT](#). The same power spoke through Luther to the emperor and princes of Germany. And as the light shone forth from God's word, His Spirit pleaded for the last time with many in that assembly. In the same way that many

¹⁴⁶ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 247.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA247&printsec=frontcover

¹⁴⁷ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 247.

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¹⁴⁸ Lenfant, p. 422.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_History_of_the_Council_of_Constance/B0WQPqThQowMC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA422&printsec=frontcover

have turned away from Christ, so Charles chose pride and power over the light of truth.

The Reformer now had many friends, and rumors of plans against him spread quickly through the city. Hundreds of nobles pledged to protect him, and many openly disagreed with the weak submission of Charles to the controlling power of Rome. Signs were going up on homes and in public places, both for and against Luther. But there was enough support for him that the emperor and the Diet realized that taking action against him could endanger the peace of the empire and the stability of the throne.

Frederick of Saxony was careful not to openly show support for Luther but secretly watched for plans against him and did all in his power to protect him. There were many who did not hide their support, and he was visited by princes, counts, barons, and other important people. Spalatin wrote, the doctor's little room could not contain all the visitors who presented themselves.¹⁴⁹

There were some who strongly believed that reform was needed and thought that some change was better than none. By these, Luther was encouraged to make some compromises, rather than to be defeated and get none of the reforms implemented. To this Luther replied, the gospel of Christ cannot be preached without offending some. Why then should fear of danger separate me from the Lord, and from that divine word which alone is truth? No; I would rather give up my body, my blood, and my life.¹⁵⁰

Had Luther compromised in any way, Satan would have gained a victory. But his refusal to yield even a single point was instrumental in bringing the church into a new and better era. This one man, who dared to think and act for himself in religious matters, was to affect the church and the world, not only in his own time but in future generations as well.

Luther was now commanded by the emperor to return home. He knew this would end his safe-conduct and would quickly bring on his condemnation. On his return journey, he was received with more interest and excitement than on his journey to Worms. He was welcomed and honored by civil rulers, and even some church leaders, as the man who was denounced by the emperor. He was asked to preach

¹⁴⁹ Martyn, p 404.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Life_and_Times_of_Martin_Luther/SN4rAAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA404&printsec=frontcover

¹⁵⁰ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 249.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA249&printsec=frontcover

even though he had been commanded to keep silent, and when he stepped up to the pulpit, said, I never pledged myself to chain up the word of God, nor will I.¹⁵¹

He had not been gone long when the papists convinced the emperor to issue an edict against him. In this decree Luther was denounced as Satan himself in the form of a man, dressed in a monk's cloak.¹⁵² It commanded that as soon as his safe-conduct expired, no one could give him shelter, food, or drink, or help him in any way either in private or public. He was to be seized and delivered to the authorities, along with his supporters. His writings were to be destroyed and any who did not follow the orders of the decree were considered supporters and fell under the same condemnation. The elector of Saxony and other's friendly to Luther had left Worms already, so the edict passed easily, and the Romanists were very pleased.

However, God was providing a way of escape for His servant in this hour of danger. Frederick of Saxony with a few loyal friends came up with a plan. Somewhere on his journey home, Luther was seized and separated from his traveling companions and hurried through the forest to the castle of Wartburg, an isolated mountain fortress. There was so much secrecy in this operation that even Frederick himself didn't know where Luther was. This was by design because then he could honestly say that he didn't know where Luther was.

Alexander and the Romanists didn't know what had happened to Luther, but when he couldn't be found anywhere, they assumed they had won. They rejoiced that this troublesome light of the gospel was about to be put out.

In his secret hiding place, Luther at first enjoyed the peace and quiet, and his release from the heat and struggle of the battle. But he was not one to be satisfied with quiet and inactivity for long. First, he was afraid he would be called a coward for hiding from the fight, then he felt bad about the safe, easy life he was now living. But all the while, he was constantly writing. His enemies thought they had silenced him but were confused when they saw evidence that he was still active. For nearly a year, his writings were being sent out and circulated throughout Germany. It was also at this time that he performed the most important service for his countrymen by translating the New Testament into German.

¹⁵¹ Martyn, p 420.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Life_and_Times_of_Martin_Luther/SN4rAAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA420&printsec=frontcover

¹⁵² D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 254.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA254&printsec=frontcover

During this time of hiding and writing, God was not only preserving Luther from his enemies. He had been taken into seclusion, away from the public stage, and the praise of men. He was being saved from pride and self-confidence that so often follow success. Even as men were rejoicing in the truth, there was a danger that they would elevate the person whom God was using to bring that truth. Satan is always happy to divert man's thoughts and affections from God, and to place them on human beings. Too often religious leaders are praised and revered so much that they lose sight of their dependence on God. This can lead to them directing and controlling people who are looking to them instead of God for guidance. The eyes of men had all been focused on Luther as the teacher of truth, so he was removed so that all eyes could be directed to the eternal Author of truth.

Chapter 9—The Swiss Reformer

It seems that God's choice of reformers for the church was like His choice of apostles to start the church. Those who were considered great, held important jobs, were wealthy, and those who were praised and admired as leaders, were passed over. They were mostly too proud and self-confident to be taught by the humble Man of Nazareth. The uneducated, hard-working fishermen of Galilee were called. The very fact that they were less educated by the false teachings of the time, made it easier for Christ to train them for His service. The leading Reformers were also men from humble origins, men with less pride in their positions in life, and without the self-importance of the priesthood. God chose humble people to accomplish great things, so the glory would not be taken by them.

Only a few weeks after the birth of Luther, Ulric Zwingli was born in a herdsman's cottage in the Alps. Growing up with the grand scenes of nature that surrounded him, filled him with a sense of the greatness, power, and majesty of God. As a child he listened to the few precious Bible stories that his grandmother had been able to glean from the legends and traditions of the church.

Zwingli's father wanted his son to be educated, so he was sent away from home to attend school. He was a quick learner, and at the age of thirteen was sent to Bern, the best school in Switzerland at the time. The Dominican and Franciscan monks were competing with each other for recognition, and tried to use their grand ceremonies, famous relics and miracle-working images to attract Zwingli to their order. This talented young student was a natural speaker, and writer, and was a genius at music and poetry. When Zwingli's father learned what was happening, he had no intention of allowing his son to follow the idle worthless life of a monk and immediately sent for him to return home.

Zwingli was not content for long at home and soon returned to school, this time at Basel. It was here that he first learned the gospel of God's free grace from a teacher of ancient languages. Wittembach had been studying Greek and Hebrew and had been led to the Holy Scriptures. He discovered there the ancient truth, that the death of Christ is the sinner's only hope for salvation. He shared this with his students, and for Zwingli, these words were like the first rays of light before dawn.

When he completed his studies, Zwingli was assigned to a church not far from his native valley. As a priest, he devoted himself to searching for divine truth. The more he searched the Scriptures, the more he realized the difference between the truths they taught and the heresies of Rome. He devoted himself to the Bible and accepted it as the only absolute truth. He learned to let the Bible interpret itself and did not try to make it support what he had been taught. He had a deep desire to

gain a full and correct understanding of its meaning, and he asked the Holy Spirit to be his teacher.

Zwingli said, the Scriptures come from God, not man, and God can help you to understand them. The word of God cannot fail, it teaches itself, it reveals itself, it brings light to the soul with salvation and grace. When I began to give myself completely up to the Holy Scriptures, philosophy and theology taught in schools would disagree with the word of God. At last, I realized that I must learn the meaning of God purely out of His own simple word. When I began to ask God for His light, the Scriptures began to be much easier to me.¹⁵³

Zwingli lived at the same time as Luther, but he wanted it to be known that it was not Luther's doctrine but Christ's that he preached. He admitted that Luther had more influence than he, but if Luther preaches Christ, we are doing the same thing. He never met or corresponded with Luther, and the fact that they taught the same thing, showed that they were influenced by the same Spirit of God.¹⁵⁴

In 1516, when he became a preacher at Einsiedeln, he began to see up close the corrupt teaching of Rome. There was an image of the virgin Mary which was said to have the power of working miracles. Above the gateway of the convent, there was a sign that said, here you can receive complete release from the consequences of your sin.¹⁵⁵ For this reason, people traveled to this shrine of the virgin Mary, but once a year there was a festival, and many more from all parts of Switzerland, and even some from France and Germany would come. Zwingli took this opportunity to preach to them saying, do not think that God is in this temple more anywhere else. Do you think that God hears you more here than in your own country? Can making the long journey here, giving offerings, or praying to the virgin Mary or some other saint help you to receive the grace of God? Christ, who was offered upon the cross, is the sacrifice and victim that made possible the forgiveness of sins for all who believe throughout all time.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 430.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA430&printsec=frontcover

¹⁵⁴ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 285.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA285&printsec=frontcover

¹⁵⁵ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 269.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA269&printsec=frontcover

¹⁵⁶ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 270.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA270&printsec=frontcover

Some were not happy to hear this message. It was a bitter disappointment that their hard journey had been made in vain. It was hard for them to accept that forgiveness could be free. It was easier to trust their salvation to the priests and pope than to seek for purity of heart. But there were others who received this message with gladness. The requirements taught by Rome did not bring peace to their soul, and they were glad to accept the Savior's blood on their behalf. These returned home to share the good news that they had learned. As a result, the number of pilgrims to the virgin's shrine decreased greatly. This resulted in a decrease in Zwingli's salary, but it still brought him joy that the belief in the power of shrines and saints and relics was being broken.

The church authorities were not blind to what Zwingli was doing, but they didn't make a big deal about it because they still hoped to gain his support. After three years he was called to be the preacher at the cathedral at Zurich, the most important town in Switzerland. The church leaders, who instructed him about his duties, told him not to teach any of his new ideas. They told him to encourage everyone to show their devotion to the church by faithfully paying their tithes and offerings. He was also told that he need not burden himself with preaching, and they could appoint someone to do it for him. And finally, he should only offer the sacraments, the bread and the wine, to important people, and only when requested. In other cases, he could assign others to do it for him.¹⁵⁷

Zwingli patiently listened to their instructions, and thanked them for their confidence in him, and then proceeded to tell them what he planned to do. Teaching about the life of Christ has been hidden from the people for too long. I shall preach from the whole Gospel of St. Matthew. I will only teach from the Scriptures, comparing one passage with another, and seeking understanding by constant and earnest prayer.¹⁵⁸ Finally, he told them that what he was teaching was not new, but they were the original teachings of the church.

People flocked in great numbers to listen to the preaching of Zwingli, many of whom had previously stopped attending church. As he promised, he began his ministry by opening the Gospels and reading and explaining to his hearers the inspired story of the life and teachings, and death of Christ. He presented the word of God as the only absolute truth, and the death of Christ as the only complete sacrifice. It is to Christ I desire to lead you—to Christ, the true source of salvation.

¹⁵⁷ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 274.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA274&printsec=frontcover

¹⁵⁸ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 274.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA274&printsec=frontcover

All classes of people crowded around him, high government officials, scholars, business owners, and peasants. He not only proclaimed the offer of free salvation but fearlessly rebuked the evils and corruptions of the time. Many returned from the cathedral praising God saying, this man is a preacher of truth. He will be our Moses, to lead us out of this Egyptian darkness.¹⁵⁹

About this time a supporter of the Reformation named Lucian, sent a friend to Zurich with some of Luther's writings. He asked Zwingli to determine if this friend had sufficient skill and judgement to spread the message by selling Luther's books. And so, he was sent from city to city and home to home, selling the writings of Luther.¹⁶⁰

One of the biggest corruptions the Reformers worked against was the selling of pardons. Every sin had its price, and men were given freedom to commit crime if the treasury of the church was kept full. In Germany, the sale of indulgences had been assigned to Tetzel, who was opposed by Luther. In Switzerland this job was assigned to an Italian monk named Samson. He had already brought in a great amount of money from Germany and now he attracted crowds as he traveled throughout Switzerland. He collected rich gifts from the wealthy, even took from the poor what they could hardly afford to give. Samson went to Einsiedeln when Zwingli was still there, and the Reformer immediately set out to oppose him. Even though the two did not meet face to face, Zwingli was successful enough that Samson had to move on. When he went to Zurich, Zwingli had already done such a good job there that Samson was met by a member of the council, suggesting that he move on. He entered the city anyway but left soon after without a single sale.

In 1519, a plague swept through Switzerland, and as people were forced to look death in the face, they wondered if their purchased pardons were worth anything. Zwingli got so sick that there were rumors that he had died, but when he came back from the gates of death, it seemed his preaching had more urgency and power than before.

Zwingli began to have a clearer picture of the truths from the Scriptures, including the fall of man and God's plan to save him. Through Adam, we are all condemned to die. But Christ, through His death purchased unlimited power to redeem us. His death satisfied the divine justice for those who believe. But Zwingli taught that just

¹⁵⁹ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 275.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA275&printsec=frontcover

¹⁶⁰ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 276.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA276&printsec=frontcover

because there is grace, we should not feel free to continue sinning. If there is true faith in God, there should be a desire to good works.¹⁶¹

The preaching of Zwingli was so popular that the cathedral was filled to overflowing. He didn't tell them too much truth at once, for fear that they would not be able to bear it. He opened the truth to them little by little as he felt they could bear it. His goal was to win their hearts to the teachings of Christ and to soften their hearts by His love. As they learned the truth of the gospel, their superstitious beliefs and practices would naturally be abandoned.

Just one year after Luther had stood up against the pope and the emperor at Worms, things seemed to be heading the same direction in Zurich. The church stepped up their attacks on Zwingli, but it was not enough. It was determined that the teacher of heresy must be silenced. The Bishop of Constance accused Zwingli of teaching people to break the laws of the church which he claimed would result in endangering peace and order. Zwingli responded that he had been preaching this gospel for four years in Zurich and there was more peace and quiet there than in any other town in Switzerland.¹⁶² When one of the three sent by the bishop heard everything Zwingli had to say, and saw the results for himself, he believed and joined the Reformers.

Zwingli was fearless in the face of the attacks from Rome. Let them come on, I fear them as little as the cliff fears the thundering waves.¹⁶³ In fact, the efforts of Rome to stop Zwingli only helped his cause. At this time, Luther was in hiding in Germany, but the reformers there took heart when they saw the progress of the gospel in Switzerland.

When Rome realized that they were not making progress in stopping the reform movement by their attacks, they decided to change their tactics. They called for negotiation to be held at Baden. Secretly, their plan was that regardless of how the talks went, Zwingli would be under their control, and they would simply never let him go. His supporters in Zurich were suspicious, and they would not allow their pastor to go to Baden, where the blood of martyrs had already been shed. They said that Rome could send anyone they want to hold talks at Zurich. But finally, it was

¹⁶¹ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 285.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA285&printsec=frontcover

¹⁶² Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 451.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA451&printsec=frontcover

¹⁶³ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 452.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/Qb4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA452&printsec=frontcover

decided that Oecolampadius and Haller would represent the Reformers, and the famous Dr. Eck, backed by many learned doctors, would represent Rome.

The secretaries were all chosen by the papists, and no one else was allowed to take notes. But a student in attendance wrote down what was discussed at the end of each day. This, along with daily letters from Oecolampadius, were carried to Zwingli at Zurich. During the night, Zwingli responded with suggestions and counsel, and his letter was carried back to Baden by morning. To sneak these letters past the guards at the city gates, they were hidden among baskets of poultry.

The representatives of Rome were dressed in rich robes and treated themselves to the most expensive food and wine. While the Reformers appeared like beggars, and barely even had enough to eat. At the talks, Eck stood proudly at a pulpit, while his opponent was made to sit on a wooden stool in front of him.

Oecolampadius was humble and not self-confident, but on this one thing he stood firm, "I acknowledge no other standard of judgment than the word of God."¹⁶⁴ The Romanists on the other hand, appealed to the customs of the church as their authority. When Eck could not respond with logical arguments, he resorted to insults and swearing.

At the conclusion of the talks, the papists claimed victory, and the Reformers and their leader, Zwingli, were cut off from the church. But the fruit of the conference really showed which side had won, when not long afterward, the important cities of Bern and Basel declared their support for the Reformation.

¹⁶⁴ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 428.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA428&printsec=frontcover

Chapter 10—Progress of Reform in Germany

Getting back to the story of Luther, his disappearance was a great mystery throughout all Germany. There were rumors that he had been killed, which caused great sadness among his friends, and even many who had not openly supported him.

Rome saw the unrest caused by the uncertainty of where Luther was and feared the anger of those who held them responsible for his disappearance. One of them said, the only remaining way of saving ourselves is to light torches, and hunt for Luther throughout the whole world if necessary and restore him to the nation that is calling for him.¹⁶⁵ The papal authorities were filled with rage when they saw that the edict of the emperor against Luther and the Reformers was far less important to the nation than his whereabouts.

Finally, news began to circulate that he was being held as a prisoner, but he was alive. This news seemed to stir up even more enthusiasm in his favor than before. Many were eager to read the writings of this hero, who stood against such fearful odds to defend the word of God. The seed which Luther had sown was springing up everywhere. His absence accomplished a work which his presence would have failed to do, including motivating others to action.

With all progress the reformation was making, Satan was not just standing by doing nothing. He was doing what had always worked for him before, which was to destroy from within. Just as there were false Christs and false prophets in the first century, so there arose some in the sixteenth century. A few men who claimed to have received special revelations from Heaven, declared that they could do a better job of leading the Reformation than Luther. But they rejected the great principle of the movement, that the word of God is the only guide for faith and action, and in its place, they substituted their own feelings and ideas. In doing so, they set aside the great detector of error and falsehood and opened the way to any error which Satan wished to implant in their minds.

One of these people claimed to have received instruction from the angel Gabriel. A student who believed him, quit school, and claimed that he had received a special gift from God to explain the Scriptures. Others who were inclined to being motivated by feelings and emotions joined them. Now some good honest people were being misled by these new so-called prophets.

¹⁶⁵ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 311.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA311&printsec=frontcover

The leaders of this movement went to Wittenberg to try to convince Melanchthon to join them. They said, we are sent by God to teach the people. We have spoken to God, we are apostles and prophets, we know what will happen, and we want Dr. Luther to recognize us. The Reformers were puzzled and caught off guard. This was something they had not encountered before. Melanchthon said, there are clearly extraordinary spirits in these men, but what kind? Let us not reject the Spirit of God but let us not be led astray by Satan.¹⁶⁶

The fruit of the new teaching soon became apparent when people were led to neglect the Bible, or even to completely set it aside. Schools were thrown into confusion, students lost self-control and dropped out of school. The Reformation was nearly brought to ruin, and Romanists who recognized this exclaimed, one last struggle and all will be ours.¹⁶⁷

When Luther was still hiding at Wartburg and heard what was happening, he understood the true character of those false prophets and saw the danger they posed. The pope and the emperor had not even caused him this much distress, leaving him wondering what to do. These were people claiming to be friends of the Reformation, but they were actually its worst enemies.

Wittenberg, which had been the center of the Reformation, was quickly falling under the power of these false teachers and prophets. The results were that people were acting on emotions, ignoring rules and breaking laws. The enemies of Luther were quick to blame him for this, and he wondered if this could be the end of the great Reformation that had been started.¹⁶⁸ When he took this burden to God in prayer, peace flowed into his heart, when he accepted the fact that the Reformation was God's movement and not his. God would not allow the Reformation to be destroyed.

Even though he was still under the emperor's ban, which gave anyone permission to harm him, and prohibited anyone from helping him, he decided to go to Wittenberg. In a letter to the elector, he wrote, I am going to Wittenberg under a protection far higher than that of princes and electors. I am not asking for your help or protection; in fact, I would rather protect you. This cause cannot be advanced

¹⁶⁶ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 327.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA327&printsec=frontcover

¹⁶⁷ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 328.

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¹⁶⁸ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 329.

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with swords, but God must do everything and is able to protect those who have the most faith.¹⁶⁹

After Luther arrived in Wittenberg, it didn't take long for word to get out that he had returned and would be preaching. People flocked from all directions and the church was filled to overflowing. From the pulpit, he used great wisdom, gentleness, and encouragement as he reproved those who had used violence to end the mass. He said, mass is a bad thing and should be ended and replaced by the Lord's supper, but we should not be using force to remove people from mass. We must leave the matter in God's hands. We can preach and teach what we believe, and the rest belongs to God. I will preach, discuss, and write but I will force no one, because faith is a voluntary act. When I stood up against the pope, and spoke out against indulgences, I did so without violence. If I had resorted to force, all of Germany would have been flowing with blood.¹⁷⁰

Luther had no desire to meet with the fanatics whose actions and use of force had caused so much harm. He knew they would not accept reproof or counsel, but when they demanded a meeting with him, he finally agreed. When they met, he was so successful at exposing their questionable motives, that they left Wittenberg at once. The fanaticism was stopped for the moment, but several years later it broke out again with greater violence and terrible results.

[Fanatics in this case were the people who were driven by their feelings and extreme emotions, and their supposed revelations from God, rather than standing on the word of God as the absolute authority. Though acting against the heresy of the church, they used force, which resulted in harm to the true reform movement.]

Thomas Munzer, the most active of the fanatics, was a man of great ability, who could have done much good, if his actions had been rightly directed. He wanted to be recognized as the leader of the Reformation, even above Luther. He said that by replacing the pope's authority with that of the Scriptures, they were simply setting up a different form of popery. He claimed to have been chosen by God to introduce true reform. He said, if someone has this spirit (I believe he meant receiving

¹⁶⁹ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 332.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA332&printsec=frontcover

¹⁷⁰ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 335.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA335&printsec=frontcover

revelations from God), he has the true faith, even if he doesn't use the Scriptures.¹⁷¹

The fanatical teachers gave themselves up to be completely controlled by their feelings and impressions. Any thought or impulse they had, would be considered the voice of God. Some even burned their Bibles. Munzer's teaching appealed to men's pride, placing human ideas above the word of God. His doctrines were accepted by thousands. As a result of the Reformation, people were beginning to disregard the authority of the papacy. Munzer's followers also grew impatient under civil authority, and his teaching that their thoughts were divine led them to reject all authority. This led to crime and rebellion and bloodshed all over Germany.

With great sadness Luther saw the results of fanaticism that were being credited to the Reformation. Princes that supported the papacy took this opportunity to blame Luther's doctrines for the rebellion. In truth, the fanatics hated Luther because he opposed them and called them rebels. Now Luther had the church, civil authorities, and the common people who supported fanaticism all angry with him. Now anyone who was condemned by the Reformation and held responsible for their crimes were considered victims of oppression. This spirit of rebellion that resulted from Satan's lies, making right seem wrong, and evil seems good, is how he started in heaven. It is also how he succeeds in getting God's faithful servants to be blamed for evil, and his agents to be praised, and if persecuted, looked on as martyrs.

Luther fearlessly defended the gospel from attacks that came from all sides, using the word of God as his weapon. All who opposed him were placing human wisdom above the Holy Scriptures. After his return from Wartburg, Luther completed his German translation of the New Testament. This translation was received with joy by those who loved truth, but it was rejected by those who prefer human traditions. Priests were now worried that common people would start asking them questions about the Bible, and their ignorance would be revealed. Rome tried everything in her power to stop the circulation of the Bible, but the more she condemned and prohibited it, the more people wanted to know what it taught. People read and reread it, carried it with them, and memorized large portions of it. When Luther saw how eagerly it was received, he immediately began translating the Old Testament.

In addition to the translated Scriptures, Luther's writings were also welcome everywhere. Even some monks had become convinced of the wrong and the

¹⁷¹ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 379.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA379&printsec=frontcover

uselessness of life in the monastery. Not having personal knowledge of the word of God to share themselves, they traveled all over Germany selling the books that Luther and his friends wrote.¹⁷² These writings were received and studied with great interest by rich, poor, educated, and uneducated. Teachers would read them to small groups of people gathered around a fire at night.

[Psalm 119:130](#) The teaching of your word gives light, so even the simple can understand. [Psalm 119:130 NLT](#). These words proved true as the study of the Scriptures brought a mighty change to the minds and hearts of people. The rules of the papacy were a difficult burden to bear, and as long as the people were kept ignorant, the church could keep them under their power. But the preaching of Luther brought forth the plain truths from the word of God. This brought about not only an improvement of the spiritual nature of people but also seemed to improve their intelligence.

Priests and monks were supposed to be knowledgeable of the Scriptures, but now their ignorance became apparent, when even uneducated people could defeat them in debate over its teachings. Among the educated and in schools, the same scenes occurred when those who studied the Scriptures debated the champions of the church. Young students who devoted themselves to studying the Scriptures and other ancient writings, easily defended Reformation truths against Romish doctors, who became embarrassed because of their ignorance.¹⁷³

As Rome saw that they were losing the battle for the hearts and minds of people, they resorted to persecuting the teachers of the truth. But obeying the words of Christ: [Matthew 10:23](#) When you are persecuted in one town, flee to the next. I tell you the truth, the Son of Man will return before you have reached all the towns of Israel. [Matthew 10:23 NLT](#). The light spread everywhere.

Church and state united together to crush the heresy using imprisonment, torture, fire, and sword. Thousands of believers sealed their faith with their blood, but the truth continued to spread.

¹⁷² D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 348.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA348&printsec=frontcover

¹⁷³ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 347.

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Chapter 11—Protest of the Princes

One of the most important events for the recognition of the Reformation was the protest offered by the Christian princes of Germany at the Diet of Spire in 1529. The courage, faith, and firmness of those men of God gained for following generations, liberty of thought and of conscience. Their protest gave the reformed church the name Protestant.¹⁷⁴ Those princes, who supported the Reformation became known as evangelicals because of their support of the gospel.

A dark and dangerous day had come for the Reformation. The Edict of Worms had pronounced Luther to be an outlaw, forbidding the teaching of his doctrines. The providence of God had held back the forces that opposed the truth. Though Charles V was intent on crushing the Reformation, every time he was ready to strike, his attention was diverted. At one critical moment, the Turks showed up on his eastern frontier. On another occasion, the king of France threatened. And on one occasion, even the pope, who had become jealous of the greatness of the emperor had declared war on him. During this time, the Reformation had been left to spread and grow stronger.

But the papal powers finally set aside their differences so that they could concentrate on their common enemy, which was the Reformation. The Diet of Spire in 1526 had given each state full liberty in matters of religion, but that was not to stand for long. The emperor summoned another Diet to meet at Spire in 1529 for the purpose of crushing the heresy. The plan was to encourage the princes to unite in opposing the Reformation, but if they would not, Charles was ready to resort to the sword.

The papists celebrated and arrived at Spire in great numbers. They didn't try at all to hide their hostility toward the Reformers. But there was a great thirst for the word of God. Even though the preaching of the gospel had been specifically prohibited, thousands attended services in the chapel of the elector of Saxony.

A message from the emperor was announced to all in attendance that the liberty of conscience granted in 1526 had resulted in great disorder, and that he was revoking it. Religious freedom had been legally established, and the states that favored it resolved to keep those rights. Luther could not be present at Spire because he was still under the ban from Worms. But there were other reformers and princes who were willing to stand up and defend the Reformation. Frederick of Saxony had

¹⁷⁴ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 520.

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died, but his brother, Duke John who succeeded him, welcomed the Reformation, and fully supported it.

The priests now demanded that the states which had accepted the Reformation, should now immediately yield to the power, and wishes of Rome. The Reformers, however, responded that their liberties had been legally granted. A compromise was finally proposed, where the Edict of Worms would be strictly enforced in states where the Reformation had not been established, and in places where it had, there should be no new reforms, mass should not be interfered with, and there should be no new converts to Lutheranism. The Diet accepted this proposal much to the satisfaction of the papists.

If this edict was enforced, there could be no growth for the Reformation, and it wasn't really on a solid foundation yet. There would be no liberty of speech, no new conversions, and no hope for a better world. This would really be handing back power to Rome to control and enforce its will.¹⁷⁵ The evangelical party met to discuss how they would answer. It might have seemed an easy choice, since they would retain the freedoms, they had already won, along with all those who had already joined the reform movement. It appeared to be the peaceful solution, but in reality, it was a recognition of the power and authority of Rome.

The evangelical princes recognized this and declared, let us reject this decree. In matters of conscience, the majority has no power. The decree of 1526 is the reason for the peace the empire currently enjoys. Ending it would fill Germany with trouble.¹⁷⁶ To protect liberty of conscience is the duty of the state, and this is the limit of its authority on religious matters. But the papists were working behind the scenes, trying to divide, and scare them into yielding. When it finally came to a vote, nearly half of the evangelical princes sided with the Reformers. One in the minority said, we must either deny the word of God or be burnt.¹⁷⁷

King Ferdinand recognized that everyone needed to accept the decree to avoid serious division in the country. So, he tried to convince the holdouts, he begged and assured them that the emperor would be very pleased with them if they gave their support to the decree. But these faithful men acknowledged an authority

¹⁷⁵ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 519.

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¹⁷⁶ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 519.

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¹⁷⁷ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 519.

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above that of earthly rulers, and they answered calmly, we will obey the emperor in everything that may contribute to maintain peace and the honor of God.¹⁷⁸

In the end, when he had failed to change their decision, the king told them the edict would be passed with or without their support, and their only option was to submit to the decision of the majority.

Still unwilling to submit to the majority without a fight, those princes wrote a formal declaration to present to the Diet.

We protest before God, our only Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Savior, and who will one day be our Judge, as well as before all men and all creatures. We and our people, neither consent nor accept in any manner whatsoever to the proposed decree, or anything that is contrary to God, to His holy word, to our right conscience, or to the salvation of our souls.

We are resolved, with the grace of God, to maintain the pure and exclusive preaching of His only word, which is contained in the biblical books of the Old and New Testaments, without adding anything that disagrees with it. This word is the only truth; it is the sure rule of all doctrine and of all life and can never fail or deceive us. He who builds on this foundation shall stand against all the powers of hell, while all the human ideas and wisdom that are opposed to it shall fall before the face of God.

For this reason, we reject the edict that is imposed on us. We expect that his imperial majesty will behave toward us like a Christian prince who loves God more than anything. We declare that we are ready to pay unto him, as well as unto you, gracious lords, all the affection and obedience that are our just and legitimate duty.¹⁷⁹

The majority were filled with amazement and alarm at the boldness of the protesters. What would come next was uncertain, but conflict and bloodshed seemed unavoidable. But the Reformers were sure their cause was right and relied on the all-powerful arm of God with courage and firmness.

The main points in this protest of the princes are the very foundation of Protestantism. It opposes two abuses of man in matters of faith: the first is from government, and the second, the authority of the church. Protestantism places the

¹⁷⁸ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 519.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_sixtee/yGC82DfmYN4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA519&printsec=frontcover

¹⁷⁹ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 521.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_sixtee/yGC82DfmYN4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA521&printsec=frontcover

power of conscience above the government, and the authority of the word of God above the church organization. It rejects civil power in divine matters, based on the words from the Bible. [Acts 5:29](#) But Peter and the apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than any human authority. [Acts 5:29 NLT](#). It holds up the crown of Jesus Christ above that of Charles V.¹⁸⁰ The protesters also wanted the right to talk about their convictions and teach what they believe, which the edict would prevent. The Protest of Spire was an important statement against restrictions on religion, and a declaration of the right of all men to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. The Reformers in Germany adopted the Protest of Spire as a declaration of their faith. One of the princes at Spire said to the Protestants, may the Almighty, who has given you grace to confess energetically, freely, and fearlessly, preserve you in that Christian firmness until the day of eternity.¹⁸¹

The Protestants were in danger, but there were signs that God was stretching out His hand of protection. Melancthon was hurrying his friend Simon Grynaeus through the streets of the city to the Rhine and urging him to cross the river. Grynaeus was surprised by the urgency, so Melancthon said, an old man I didn't know came to me and said, in a minute officers will be sent by Ferdinand to arrest you. Melancthon was sure that God had sent an angel to warn him to save his friend from being arrested.

The evangelical princes had not been allowed to present their protest in person to King Ferdinand at Spire, but now they were granted an opportunity to present their case to the emperor, Charles V. A Diet was scheduled to occur at Augsburg the following year where the Protestant leaders were summoned to appear.

The elector of Saxony was urged by his counselors not to appear at the Diet. They said the emperor is just setting a trap to get the princes within his power. Is it not risking everything to go and shut oneself up within the walls of a city with a powerful enemy? But there were others who said, let the princes have courage and God's cause will be saved. Luther said, God is faithful, He will not abandon us.¹⁸²

In spite of the counsel, and being fully aware of the danger, the elector began his journey to Augsburg. Luther traveled with them as far as Coburg, encouraging

¹⁸⁰ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 521.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_sixtee/yGC82DfmYN4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA521&printsec=frontcover

¹⁸¹ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 522.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_sixtee/yGC82DfmYN4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA522&printsec=frontcover

¹⁸² D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 542.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_sixtee/yGC82DfmYN4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA542&printsec=frontcover

them by singing a hymn, “A strong tower is our God,” that he had just written on that journey.

Luther, Melanchthon, and their coworkers were given the task of organizing and writing down the views of the Reformation, along with all the Scripture references. This document was a statement of the beliefs of the Protestants, and they all signed their names on it. It was very important to the Reformers that the statement of their beliefs was not political in any way and only based on the Bible. As he signed the document, John of Saxony said, I am resolved to do what is right without troubling myself about my crown. My electoral hat and my position are not as important to me as the cross of Jesus Christ. Another prince, as he was signing said, if the honor of my Lord Jesus Christ requires it, I am ready to leave my goods and my life behind. I would rather give up everything than deny the doctrine that I am signing my name to.¹⁸³

The time finally arrived, and Charles V, was seated on his throne, surrounded by the electors and princes of Germany. The Protestant Reformers read the statement of their beliefs in front of that majestic assembly. The truth of the gospel was clearly laid out, and the errors of the papal church were pointed out. Well has that day been called the greatest day of the Reformation, and one of the most glorious in the history of Christianity. A few years had passed since the monk of Wittenberg had stood alone at Worms before the national council. This time the noblest and most powerful princes of the empire stood before the council. Luther said, I am overjoyed that I have lived until this hour, in which Christ has been publicly exalted by such important and powerful people, in front of this great assembly.¹⁸⁴

The truths that the emperor had banned were now being proclaimed in the palace. The message that had been considered dangerous for anyone to hear was now being spoken to the leaders of the entire empire. One writer wrote, there has never been a greater work or a more magnificent confession since the apostolic age.¹⁸⁵

One papist bishop was forced to reply, all that the Lutherans have said is true; we cannot deny it. Dr. Eck was asked, can you offer any reasonable arguments against the confession made by the elector and his allies? He responded, with the writings

¹⁸³ D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 559.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_sixtee/yGC82DfmYN4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA559&printsec=frontcover

¹⁸⁴ D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 567.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_sixtee/yGC82DfmYN4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA567&printsec=frontcover

¹⁸⁵ D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 567.

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of the apostles and prophets—no! but with those of the Fathers and councils—yes! So, the questioner answered back, then according to you, the beliefs of the Lutherans are found in the Scriptures, and ours are not.¹⁸⁶ Additional princes were won over to the reformed faith. The emperor himself even declared that the Protestant articles were the truth. The confession was translated into many languages and circulated through all Europe and has since been accepted by billions as a statement of what they believe.

God's faithful servants were not working alone. While Satanic and worldly powers were against them, the Lord did not forsake His people. If their eyes could have been opened, they would have seen angels guarding the workers in the cause of the Reformation.

Powerful enemies were joining forces to overthrow the Reformation, but one of Luther's main principles was that there should be no armed conflict in its defense. He rejoiced that the gospel was confessed by princes of the empire; but when they proposed to join forces to defend it, he said, the doctrine of the gospel should be defended by God alone. The less man got involved in defending it, the more obvious it would be that God Himself was protecting it. Luther wrote, Satan is angry, ungodly pontiffs are plotting, and we are threatened with war. We should put all our effort into going before God in prayer, requesting with faith that our enemies will be defeated by His Spirit, and there will be peace. Our first need, our most important job, is prayer.¹⁸⁷

The power that shook the world in the great Reformation came from prayer. During this time of danger, not a day went by that Luther did not devote at least three hours to prayer. In the privacy of his room, he could be heard pouring out his burdens to God, in words of adoration, fear, hope, but also as to a friend.¹⁸⁸

God did listen to the prayers of His servants. He gave the princes grace and courage to stand for truth against the rulers of the darkness of this world. The Protestant Reformers had built on Christ, and the gates of hell could not prevail against them.

¹⁸⁶ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 568.

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¹⁸⁷ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 392.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_sixtee/yGC82DfmYN4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA392&printsec=frontcover

¹⁸⁸ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 562.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_sixtee/yGC82DfmYN4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover&pg=PA562

Chapter 12—The French Reformation

The Protest of Spires and the Confession at Augsburg were high points for the Reformation in Germany, but there were still years of conflict and darkness that followed. The cause was weakened by disagreements among its supporters. Thousands sealed their testimony with their blood. In spite of Luther's pleas to not use force, civil war broke out. The cause was betrayed by one of its leaders, and another was captured by the emperor. But when it appeared complete victory was within his grasp, Charles V was defeated. He lost the prisoner he had been parading around, and he was forced to permit the doctrines he had spent his entire life trying to destroy. He had committed his entire kingdom, his treasure, and his life to crush this heresy. Now his armies were wasted, his treasuries drained, and his kingdom threatened by revolt, and the faith he had tried to crush was still spreading. Charles V had been battling against the omnipotent power of God. He had failed, seeming older than he actually was and worn out with the long struggle, he gave up his throne.

In Switzerland, as in Germany the Reformation was also suffering some defeats. Civil war broke out and Zwingli and many other who had united with him fell on the bloody battlefield of Cappel. Oecolampadius also died shortly after those terrible losses. It appeared that Rome was on the verge of recovering all that she had lost to the Reform movement. But God had not forsaken His cause or His people. He would deliver them, and He would raise up workers to continue the reform in other countries.

In France, before the name of Luther had been heard of as a Reformer, the light was beginning to shine. An old professor at the University of Paris, was a sincere and enthusiastic papist. In his study of ancient writings, he had come across the Bible, and he began using it in class. Lefevre enthusiastically adored the saints and martyrs and was writing a history of some of the legends of the church. This was a big effort, and he had made quite a bit of progress when he thought he might find some useful information from the Bible. As he began to study it, he found saints, but not the ones displayed on his Roman calendar. In amazement, he dove deeper in study of the word of God and soon began teaching the truths he learned.

In 1512, before either Luther or Zwingli had begun their work, Lefevre wrote, it is God who gives us, by faith, the righteousness which by grace alone justifies us for eternal life.¹⁸⁹ Dwelling on the mysteries of redemption, he wrote: Oh the

¹⁸⁹ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 126.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/ib4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA126&printsec=frontcover

unspeakable greatness of that exchange,--the Sinless One is condemned, and he who is guilty goes free; the Blessing bears the curse, and the cursed is brought into blessing; the Life dies, and the dead live; the Glory is covered in darkness, and he who knew nothing but confusion is clothed in glory.¹⁹⁰

William Farel was one of Lefevre's students who listened eagerly to his words. He had been educated to accept the teaching of the church without question. In a way he was like the apostle Paul, who described himself, [Acts 26:5](#) ... I have been a member of the Pharisees, the strictest sect of our religion. [Acts 26:5 NLT](#). He was a devoted Roman Catholic, and it was his great desire to destroy all who opposed the church. He said, I would gnash my teeth like a furious wolf when I heard anyone speak against the pope.¹⁹¹ He adored the saints, worshipped at the altars, brought gifts to the holy shrines, but none of it brought peace to his soul. One day the Reformer's words came to him like a voice from heaven, Salvation is a gift, the Innocent One is condemned, and the criminal is pardoned. It is the cross of Christ alone that opens the gates of heaven and shuts the gates of hell.¹⁹²

Farel accepted the truth and his conversion, like Paul's, changed him. Instead of the murderous heart of a ravening wolf, he became quite and meek like a harmless lamb, totally taking his heart from the pope and giving it to Jesus Christ.¹⁹³ Farel was now as enthusiastic for the cause of Christ as he had been for the pope. Others joined in proclaiming the gospel, including high ranking teachers, and the bishop of Meaux. As the good news continued to spread, people from all classes joined, from the poorest to the palace of the king. The sister of the king was converted, and the king and queen mother appeared to be converted for a time. Hopes were high for the conversion of the entire country.

This hope was not to be realized, but before the time of trial and persecution came, there was a period of peace which allowed the Reformation to gain a more solid footing. The bishop of Meaux worked hard in his territory, teaching both the priests and people. Ignorant and immoral priests were removed. The bishop greatly desired that his people should have access to the word of God, and this was soon

¹⁹⁰ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 379.

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¹⁹¹ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 129.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/ib4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA129&printsec=frontcover

¹⁹² Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 129.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/ib4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA129&printsec=frontcover

¹⁹³ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 440.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/LrJaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA440&printsec=frontcover

accomplished after Lefevre translated the New Testament. This just happened to be at the same time that Luther's German Bible was being printed. The bishop worked hard and spent freely to make sure that even the poor could have their own copy of the Holy Scriptures, which was like a refreshing drink to a weary and thirsty traveler. After a full day of work, the day laborers and the shop owners would gather in each other's homes to read God's word and worship, instead of going to the bar to drink. The uplifting power of divine grace was seen in the lives of these humble working people and soon there was a change in the entire community.

For a time, the king had held back the rage of the papacy, but eventually the persecution began. The bishop of Meaux was forced to recant or burn, and unfortunately, he gave in. But even though he fell, his flock remained faithful at the cost of many of their lives. But by their courage, as they were burned at the stake, they witnessed to thousands who had never heard their message in times of peace.

But the truth of the gospel was not only spreading among the poor and working class. In castles and in the palace, there were souls who were finding the truth, and who were willing to give up their wealth, their position, or even their lives. Louis de Berquin was born into nobility and was a brave knight who hated Lutheranism and was a strong supporter of the papacy. But like many others, when he came across a Bible, what he found were the doctrines of Luther, not of Rome.¹⁹⁴ After that he devoted himself entirely to the cause of the gospel.

Berquin was one of the smartest and most educated among the nobility of France. He had endless courage, was extremely heroic, and a favorite of the king. Berquin would have been a second Luther, had he found in Francis the 1st a second elector. The papists said, he is worse than Luther.¹⁹⁵ He was thrown in prison as a heretic, but the king released him. For years this struggle continued, with Francis wavering between Rome and the Reformation. Three times Berquin was imprisoned, only to be released by the king, who admired his genius and noble character, and refused to sacrifice him to the hatred of Rome.

As danger increased, it seemed that Berquin's enthusiasm for the cause increased. He was not content with simply defending the truth, he went on the offense, attacking the heresies of Rome. He took the writings of the most learned doctors and monks from the great University of Paris and selected twelve statements that

¹⁹⁴ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 159.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/ib4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA159&printsec=frontcover

¹⁹⁵ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 159.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/ib4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA159&printsec=frontcover

he said were heretical according to the Bible. He then asked the king to be the judge in a public debate. Francis was happy to have an opportunity to humble the pride of these monks and commanded them to defend their cause from the Bible. This they knew they could not do. The weapons of their choice were prison, torture, and burning at the stake.

As they were trying to decide how to respond to the king, an opportunity presented itself to redirect the attention of the people. An image of the Virgin Mary had been damaged, and crowds flocked to site, expressing both sadness and anger. The monks blamed Berquin, saying these are the results of the things taught by him. They claimed that the Lutheran conspiracy would result in overthrowing not only religion, but law and order, and even the throne itself.¹⁹⁶

Berquin was arrested and the king left Paris, allowing the monks freedom to do as they wished. The Reformer was quickly tried and condemned to die, and to prevent Francis from saving him, they immediately carried out the sentence the same day. A huge crowd gathered to see who would be punished for damaging the image and were surprised to see that the victim was one of the best and bravest of the nobles of France. Berquin's face radiated the light and peace of heaven, and he even dressed nicely for the occasion.¹⁹⁷

Berquin was strangled and his body was consumed in the flames. News of his death caused great sorrow among the friends of the Reformation throughout France. But seeing his example, others said, we too are ready to meet death cheerfully, setting our eyes on the life that is to come.¹⁹⁸

During the persecution at Meaux, the Reformers were not allowed to preach. Lefevre went to Germany, and Farel went to his childhood home in eastern France. Soon Farel was kicked out of the city, so he traveled from village to village teaching in private homes and living in the forest and caves. Because the persecution drove the Reformers out of Paris and Meaux, the light found its way into many remote towns in France.

¹⁹⁶ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 160.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/ib4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA160&printsec=frontcover

¹⁹⁷ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in Europe in the time of Calvin*, Vol II Geneva & France, New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1864, p 42.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_in_Europe_in/j3o3AAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA42&printsec=frontcover

¹⁹⁸ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in Europe in the time of Calvin*, p 45.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_in_Europe_in/j3o3AAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA45&printsec=frontcover

God was still preparing other workers to further the cause of Reformation. In a school in Paris, a thoughtful quiet young man was beginning to show great promise with his intellect and his devotion to the church. John Calvin soon became the pride of his college and was expected to become one of the strongest defenders of the church. Calvin had heard about the Reformers and their new doctrines and did not doubt that they deserved the fires by which they were killed. But in order to fight the heresy, he had to understand it.

Calvin's cousin had joined the Reformers and when he was in Paris got together with him to discuss the matters that were disturbing Christianity. Olivetan said, there are only two religions in the world. Those which are invented by man, all of which require him to save himself through ceremonies and good works. The other is the one religion which is taught in the Bible, which teaches that man receives salvation only through the free grace of God. Calvin responded, I will have none of your new doctrines. Do you think I have been wrong all my life?¹⁹⁹

But thoughts were awakened in his mind that he could not dismiss. He began to see that meditating on the saints, good works, and ceremonies were powerless to save him from sin. He began to despair when confession, and penance, did not bring peace to his soul. One day Calvin was passing through the public square when a heretic was being burned. He was filled with wonder by the peace which seemed to radiate from the martyr's face. He contrasted that with the despair and darkness he felt, and he was determined to study the Bible to understand the secret of their peace and joy.

Calvin had been educated to become a priest from a young age. When he was only twelve, he had become a chaplain of a small church. Now, feeling like he could never become a priest, he decided to be a lawyer, but eventually abandoned that to devote his life to the gospel. He was hesitant to become a public teacher and wished to just devote himself to study, but his friends finally convinced him otherwise.

Calvin began his work quietly, in a small town away from Paris. He was being protected by Princess Margaret, who loved the gospel, and did her best to protect its disciples. His work began in people's homes, where he read the Bible to them and explained the truths of salvation. He went into the castles of the rich and powerful, and into the cabins of the common working class. He was laying a foundation that would grow into a church that would fearlessly stand for the truth.

¹⁹⁹ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 152.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/ib4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA152&printsec=frontcover

When Calvin returned to Paris, he found the teachers and scholars arguing with each other. There were some men who had been studying the Bible, only because it was good subject matter for the study of ancient languages. They were not converted by the truths of the Bible but began debating with Romanists over the contents of what they were reading. While the halls of universities were filled with noisy debate, Calvin was going from house to house, opening the Bible and teaching about Christ and His death for them.

Paris had rejected Lefevre and Farel, but now they were getting another chance. The king was still wavering in his support of Rome against the Reformation, while Margaret was still hoping that the entire country of France would be won to Protestantism. Once when the king was away, she opened a hall in the palace, and announced that at a certain time each day, a sermon would be preached, and all were welcome. Thousands attended every day, including nobles, government workers, lawyers, merchants, and craftsmen. When the king returned, instead of stopping the gatherings, he ordered two churches in Paris to be opened for these services to be continued. Never before had the city been so moved by the word of God. The results were less drunkenness, sexual immorality, fighting and idleness.

For two years Rome was unable to convince the king to stop the preaching, so they turned to the people. They tried to stir up the uneducated by exciting their fears and prejudices. Many had accepted the gospel, but the majority had rejected it. Finally, the papists succeeded in getting the churches closed, and the burnings of heretics began. Calvin was still in Paris at this time, and the authorities were determined to bring him to the flames. One day, friends hurried into his room with news that officers were on their way to arrest him. A moment later loud knocking was heard at the door. Some of the friends slowed down the officers at the door while others lowered him down from a window.²⁰⁰ He then disguised himself as a laborer, left the city and found safety in the dominion of Margaret.

Calvin eventually found eager listeners in Poitiers among all classes of people. Public preaching was not allowed, but the chief magistrate opened his own home for Calvin to share words of eternal life with those who were interested. When the size of the gatherings became too large, it was thought to be safer to meet outside the city. A secluded place in a cave on the side of a deep and narrow gorge was found, and people would quietly leave the city by different routes to meet there. Here the Lord's Supper was celebrated for the first time by the Protestants of France.

²⁰⁰ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in Europe in the Time of Calvin*, p 210.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_in_Europe_in/j3o3AAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA210&printsec=frontcover

But Calvin returned to Paris because he was not yet ready to give up hope that the entire nation of France would accept the Reformation. But when he could find no interest, he decided to go to Germany. He had just barely left when a storm of persecution swept over France that would surely have included him. French Reformers were still eager to see their country keep up with Germany and Switzerland and determined to take bold action. One-night notices were posted all over France denouncing the mass. Instead of helping the Reformation, this did incredible damage. It gave Rome a reason to demand complete destruction of the heretics as dangerous to the throne and the peace of the nation.

One of the signs had even been placed on the door of the king's private room. This filled him with anger and horror, and he declared, let all be seized who are suspected of Lutheresy and I will exterminate them all.²⁰¹ The king had finally made his decision, and it was fully on the side of Rome.

Somehow a poor craftsman, who had the responsibility of notifying the believers when secret gatherings were to take place, was captured. When he was threatened with death at the stake, he agreed to betray his fellow believers, to save his own life. Morin, the royal detective quietly took the traitor through the city, and at each house that he identified, authorities went in and dragged the family out in chains. They spared no house, small or great. Morin made all the city shake with a reign of terror.²⁰²

The victims were killed with cruel torture, where the fire was made smaller to lengthen the agony. But they died as conquerors with joy on their faces. The persecutors felt defeated by the way the martyrs met their deaths. The executions were staged all over Paris, and over multiple days in an attempt to spread terror, but in the end it only showed the character of the Reformers. There was joy on their faces as they went to their execution. They stood heroically in the flames. They even forgave those who were persecuting them. Not a few of their persecutors were touched with pity.²⁰³

Priests who were intent on keeping the anger of the people on their side, told the most terrible lies about the Protestants. They were charged with plotting to kill

²⁰¹ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in Europe in the Time of Calvin*, Vol III France, Switzerland & Geneva, New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1865, p 107.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_in_Europe_in/GHs3AAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA107&printsec=frontcover

²⁰² D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in Europe in the Time of Calvin*, p 110.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_in_Europe_in/GHs3AAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA110&printsec=frontcover

²⁰³ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 210.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/ib4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA210&printsec=frontcover

Catholics, overthrow the government, and murder the king. Not a single shred of evidence was offered to support these accusations, which in the end were prophecies of things to come. The cruelties inflicted on the Protestants by the Catholics would accumulate and come back to haunt them in a later century, when the king, his government, and his subjects would be killed. But it was not Protestantism, but the suppression of it that three centuries later brought on the fulfillment of the prophecy.

Terror was now felt by all classes of society, and people abandoned their positions, their jobs, and their homes as they left Paris. The important and necessary jobs that were vacated showed how deep a hold the Lutheran teaching had gained on the minds of men who held positions of trust in the city. Craftsmen, printers, scholars, professors, authors, and even some in the king's court disappeared. The papists looked around in anger at all the people they had trusted who were secretly Protestants. So, their anger was directed at the multitudes of poor and powerless who remained.

Francis had prided himself as bringing to France a revival of learning at the beginning of the 16th century. He had gathered men of learning from every country in his court. This desire for learning was at least part of the reason he had tolerated the Reformation in the first place. But now his great desire to get rid of the heresy led him to ban printing all over France.

A ceremony was scheduled for January 21, 1535, to demonstrate France's intention to fully destroy Protestantism. People crowded into the city, lining the streets to witness the event. At each door a torch was lit in honor of the holy sacrament. Before daybreak the procession formed at the palace of the king. In the procession were people carrying banners, crosses, and famous relics. There were monks wearing special clothes, church officials in purple and scarlet and adorned with jewels, and the bishop of Paris carried under a magnificent canopy. Francis I followed, without his crown or fancy robes, doing his best to appear repentant and sad.²⁰⁴ He was followed by the queen and other officials walking in pairs, each carrying a lit torch.

When they reached the bishop's palace, they entered the great hall, and the king spoke to the officials of his kingdom. He looked sad and acted as if it was difficult but necessary to put an end to the heresy that threatened the nation. He went on to describe the lengths to which he would go to cleanse the nation of this crime, this blasphemy, and disgrace. He then called on every loyal citizen to help exterminate

²⁰⁴ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 214.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/ib4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA214&printsec=frontcover

this heresy that threatened France with ruin. He likened the action to cutting off an infected limb to save a life and went as far as to claim that if one of his own children were infected with heresy, he would not spare them. The whole assembly was tearful and finally all shouted out, we will live and die for the Catholic religion.²⁰⁵

The nation had rejected the light of truth and would be left in darkness. In choosing darkness rather than light, they called evil good, and good evil. Now even though they truly believed they were doing God a service by persecuting the Protestants, their sincerity did not take away their guilt. As the procession continued, the way was lined with Protestant Christians who would be burned as part of the ceremony. In fact, the flames were lit just as the king approached, and they would stop and watch the execution.²⁰⁶

On January 21, 1793, exactly 258 years later, another procession would take place through the streets of Paris. The king, Louis XVI, would be in the procession but he would be a victim of the violence that day. He would be dragged, struggling to the block where he would be held down, and his head would be cut off.²⁰⁷ But the king would not be the only victim, as 2800 people were beheaded. When France rejected the gift of heaven, she sowed seeds of anarchy and ruin which would eventually bear fruit in the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror.

Although the king and the nation had apparently rejected the gospel, France would not be left in total darkness. Farel, who had fled to Switzerland during earlier persecution was still working to spread Reformation in France. He spent time preaching to his countrymen in border towns. And the writings of German Reformers were translated into French and together with the Bible were printed and sent into France by door-to-door book salesmen. In Switzerland, Farel worked as a schoolteacher, and in addition to the usual classes, he carefully introduced truths from the Bible. But priests came to stop him and stirred up the people to oppose him. Like the first disciples, when he was persecuted in one city, he fled to another. He went from village to village, and city to city, travelling on foot, enduring hunger, cold, weariness, and danger. More than once, he was almost beaten to death, yet he pressed forward. The little parish where he had first labored

²⁰⁵ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in Europe in the Time of Calvin*, p 135.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_in_Europe_in/GHs3AAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA135&printsec=frontcover

²⁰⁶ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 216.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/ib4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA216&printsec=frontcover

²⁰⁷ Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, p 218.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/ib4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA218&printsec=frontcover

in Switzerland soon accepted the reformed faith, as did the cities of Morat and Neuchatel, even removing the images from their churches.

Froment was a schoolteacher, who began teaching truths to the children who then repeated them at home. He was a man so humble in his appearance that even the Reformers and Farel didn't think much of him. How could one with so little courage and experience withstand the attacks that had forced the bravest and strongest to flee? [Zechariah 4:6](#) ... It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. [Zechariah 4:6 NLT](#). [1 Corinthians 1:27](#) Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. ...²⁹ As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God. [1 Corinthians 1:27, 29 NLT](#). Soon the parents came to school with their children to hear the Bible explained. New Testament writings were handed out and reached many who dared not come to hear in person. He was soon forced to flee but the seeds he had planted grew and spread. Finally, Protestant worship was established in Geneva.

On one occasion, Farel met Calvin in Geneva. Farel was confident that he had found in Calvin someone he could unite with in his work. But Calvin drew back in alarm at the thought. He was shy and peace-loving and wanted to just find a quiet place where he could contribute by studying and writing. But in the end, he felt it was a call from God.²⁰⁸

At this time the order of the Jesuits was created.²⁰⁹ They became the most cruel, ruthless, and powerful champions of popery. In their training they were cut off from any human attachments, their reasoning and conscience were silenced, and were loyal only to their order and their duty.^{210 211 212 213} To Jesuits, there was no

²⁰⁸ D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in Europe in the Time of Calvin*, Vol V England, Geneva, Ferrara, New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1880, p462. https://www.google.com/books/edition/England_Geneva_Ferrara/-5tKAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA462&printsec=frontcover

²⁰⁹ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3122\(132.3123\)&index=0](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3122(132.3123)&index=0), https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA767&printsec=frontcover

²¹⁰ Gerard, John, *Concerning Jesuits*, London: Catholic Truth Society, 1902. https://www.google.com/books/edition/Concerning_Jesuits/mKdFAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA6&printsec=frontcover

²¹¹ De Coursen, Comtesse R., *Concerning Jesuits*, London: Catholic Truth Society, 1902, p 6. https://www.google.com/books/edition/Concerning_Jesuits/mKdFAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA6&printsec=frontcover

²¹² Mosheim, p 759. https://www.google.com/books/edition/Mosheim_s_Institutes_of_Ecclesiastical_H/EIEPAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA759&printsec=frontcover

²¹³ Campbell, Thomas J., *The Jesuits 1534-1921*, New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1921. https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Jesuits_1534_1921/VgwZAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover

crime too great, and no lie too low, and no disguise too difficult, to achieve their goal of the end of Protestantism and the re-establishment of papal supremacy. It was a fundamental principle of the order, that the end justifies the means. By this code, lying, stealing, and killing were not only forgivable, but they were admirable, when they benefited the church. The Jesuits spread all over Europe, and wherever they went, a revival of popery followed.

To give the Jesuits more power, the inquisition was re-established.^{214 215 216 217 218}

^{219 220} The result was that in many countries, the purest, noblest, most educated, hardest working, and talented people were killed or forced to flee to other lands. Rome wished to keep men from the Bible and restore the ignorance and superstition of the Dark Ages. But with God's blessing and the work of men like Luther, Protestantism was not overthrown. From Geneva, publications and teachers went out, and the people persecuted from all Western Europe could find refuge there. John Knox (the Scotch Reformer), English Puritans, Protestants of Holland and Spain, the Huguenots of France all carried the gospel from Geneva to their native lands.

²¹⁴ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3122\(132.3128\)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/_NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA767&printsec=frontcover](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3122(132.3128)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/_NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA767&printsec=frontcover)

²¹⁵ Vacandard, E., *The Inquisition a Critical and Historical Study of the Coercive Power of the Church*, New York, Bombay, Calcutta: Longmans, Green & Co., 1908.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Inquisition/vwMNAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover

²¹⁶ Nickerson, Hoffman, *The Inquisition a Political and Military Study of its Establishment*, London: John Bale, Sons & Danielsson, 1923.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Inquisition/13BpAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PP7&printsec=frontcover

²¹⁷ Limborch, Phillip, *History of the Inquisition*, London: Simpkin & R. Marshall, 1816.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_History_of_the_Inquisition/NohCAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover

²¹⁸ Lea, Henry Charles, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, Vol I, London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1888.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_History_of_the_Inquisition_of_the_Midd/jDkJAQAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR1&printsec=frontcover

²¹⁹ Lea, Henry Charles, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, Vol II, London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1888.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_History_of_the_Inquisition_of_the_Midd/CxE9PPKlqzAC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover

²²⁰ Lea, Henry Charles, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, Vol III, London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1888.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_History_of_the_Inquisition_of_the_Midd/S6Av7bh84IkC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover

Chapter 13—The Netherlands and Scandinavia

Seven hundred years before Luther, two bishops from the Netherlands who had been sent to Rome, impeached the pope when they discovered his true character. They said to him, God has made the church his queen and spouse, providing for her family with a dowry that never fades, and given her an eternal crown and scepter, which benefits you like a thief. Instead of a pastor, you have become a wolf to the sheep. You would make us believe you are a supreme bishop, but in reality, you behave as a tyrant. You ought to be a servant as you call yourself, but instead you wish to become lord of lords.²²¹

From century to century, there were others who rose up to protest the corruption of the pope. There were missionaries like the Vaudois who spread the gospel that reached the Netherlands. The Waldensian Bible was translated to the Dutch language. It was said, there is much value in it, no jokes, or untrue and unimportant stories, but the words of truth. There were some things that were hard to read or understand, but what was good and holy could easily be discovered.²²²

The teachings of Luther took root in the Netherlands, and sincere and faithful men rose up to preach the gospel. Menno Simmons was educated as a Roman Catholic, and ordained to be a priest, but he was completely ignorant of the Bible. He refused to read it because he feared he might be deceived into believing heresy. At one point he had a doubt about the doctrine that the bread and wine were miraculously changed into the actual body and blood of Christ during mass. Finally, he allowed himself to study the New Testament, along with some of Luther's writings and he accepted the reformed faith. Menno withdrew from the Roman Catholic church and began teaching the truths he had learned. For 25 years he traveled with his wife and children, enduring great hardship and danger.

The reformed doctrines were generally well received in the Netherlands, but the believers experienced more persecution than in many countries. In Germany, Charles had banned the Reformation, but some of the princes protected their people, but the Netherlands had no such champions to shield them from his wrath. Getting caught reading, hearing or speaking about the Bible, would result in death by burning at the stake. Praying to God in secret, refusing to bow to an image, or singing a Psalm, were also punishable with death. Even those who turned back

²²¹ Brandt, Gerard, *History of the Reformation in and About the Low Countries*, Vol I, London: T. Wood, 1720, p 6. https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_History_of_the_Reformation_and_Other/dv1cAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA6&printsec=frontcover

²²² Brandt, p 14.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_History_of_the_Reformation_and_Other/dv1cAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA14&printsec=frontcover

from their error would still be condemned to death, by sword if a man, and being buried alive if a woman.

One time a whole family was charged with not attending mass and worshipping at home. When he was questioned, the youngest child answered: We fall on our knees, and pray that God may enlighten our minds and pardon our sins; we pray for our king, that his reign may be prosperous and his life happy; we pray for our local officials, that God may preserve them.²²³ Some of the judges were moved but they still killed the father and one of the older sons.

The rage of the persecutors was equaled by the faith and courage of the martyrs. Wives would stand by their husband's stake and would try to comfort and encourage them as they burned. Young maidens would lie down in their living grave as if they were going to bed, or they would go to the scaffold to be burned wearing the best clothing as if they were going to a wedding.²²⁴

As in the early days of Christianity, the blood of their martyrs was seed for the growth of the church, so it was with the Reformation. Year after year the king was mad with determination to rid himself of the heretics. Finally, under a revolution led by William of Orange, the people of Holland won their freedom.

But in the countries further north, the gospel entered peacefully. Students who attended Wittenberg returned home to Scandinavia carrying the reformed faith. Tausen, the Reformer of Denmark, was a peasant's son. From a young age, it became apparent that he was intelligent and thirsty for knowledge. But since his parents couldn't afford to send him away to school, they sent him to a monastery to learn what he could. He showed such promise there, that the church decided to send him to university, and allowed him to choose where he wanted to go, with the exception of Wittenberg.

Tausen chose Cologne, which was a stronghold of Romanism, but while there he became disgusted with the teachers. While there he got his hands on some of Luther's writings and read them with delight. He very much wanted to meet and be taught by the Reformer but knew it would go against the wishes of the monastery that was supporting him. Ultimately, he made his decision to go ahead and enroll as a student at Wittenberg.

²²³ Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, Vol III, London, Paris & New York: Cassell Petter & Galpin, p 27.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/qesCAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA27&printsec=frontcover

²²⁴ Wylie, Vol III, p 27.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/qesCAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA27&printsec=frontcover

When he returned home to his monastery in Denmark, no one suspected that he had been converted to the Protestantism. He didn't tell anyone and simply began by trying to encourage his companions to live a purer and holier life. He opened the Bible to them and eventually preached about Jesus as the sinner's only hope of salvation. The leaders at the monastery who had such high hopes for him were furious and threw him in a cell and even stationed a guard. When some of his fellow monks declared themselves converts to Protestantism, he was thrown out of the monastery. A royal edict in Denmark had just passed that protected teachers of the reformed faith. Tausen and others began preaching in churches, and the New Testament was translated to Danish and distributed widely. Before long, the country of Denmark had declared its acceptance of the Reformed faith.

From Sweden, Olaf and Laurentius Petri, sons of a blacksmith, had gone to Wittenberg and studied under Luther and Melanchthon. When they returned home, they began to teach what they had learned. The local priest stirred up a mob of ignorant people, from whom Olaf barely escaped with his life. But the king soon learned of the two young men and liked them and decided to protect them.

Under the rule of the Roman church, the poor were oppressed. Without the Scriptures, their religion was about signs and ceremonies, bringing no light to the mind. In many ways it was just like the superstitious beliefs and pagan practices of heathenism. The king wished to reform the state and the church and supported these Reformers against Rome.

Olaf Petri taught that the teachings of the Fathers are to be accepted only if they agree with the Scriptures. [Galatians 1:8](#) Let God's curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of Good News than the one we preached to you. [Galatians 1:8 NLT](#). How then can anyone make up doctrines and make them necessary for salvation?²²⁵ One of the most important principles of the Protestant Reformation is that the Bible and the Bible only is the rule of faith.

These Scandinavian Reformers worked on a much smaller stage than men like Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingli, and Oecolampadius. But they had arrived at the same gospel truth, which gave them victory over the enforcers of Rome.²²⁶ The king of Sweden accepted the Protestant faith, and the national assembly followed shortly after. The New Testament had been translated into the Swedish language

²²⁵ Wylie, p 17.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/ib4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA17&printsec=frontcover

²²⁶ Wylie, p 23.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_history_of_Protestantism/ib4GAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA23&printsec=frontcover

by Olaf, and the king asked the two brothers to translate the Old Testament as well. It was then ordered that the Scriptures be explained by ministers, and that children should learn to read the Bible.

Darkness and ignorance were replaced by the light of the gospel. Free from Romish oppression, the nation grew to a strength and greatness it had never before reached. A century later, this small nation was the only one that dared to lend a hand to Germany in the struggle of the Thirty Years' war. It was the armies of Sweden that helped Germany to turn the tide of popish victories, eventually winning toleration for Protestantism.

Chapter 14—Later English Reformers

While Luther was providing a Bible to the people of Germany, Tyndale was moved by the Spirit to do the same for England. Wycliffe's Bible had been translated from a Latin text that had many errors. It had also never been printed, so there were relatively few copies. In 1516, the year before Luther's theses, Erasmus had published Greek and Latin versions of the New Testament, and at the same time had corrected many errors of former versions. For the first time, the word of God was printed in the original language. Now Tyndale would complete the work of Wycliffe by giving the Bible to the English.

The gospel that Tyndale preached, he learned from reading the Greek version published by Erasmus. He fearlessly preached what he believed and said that all doctrines should be tested by the Scriptures. In response to the papal claim that the church had given the Bible, and the church alone could explain it, Tyndale responded: Do you know who taught the eagles to find prey? Well, that same God teaches his hungry children to find their Father in His word. Far from having given us the Scriptures, it is you who have hidden them from us, it is you who burn those who teach them, and if you could, you would burn the Scriptures themselves.²²⁷

Many people accepted the truth when they heard Tyndale's preaching, but as soon as he moved on, the papists followed and undid much of the good he had accomplished. He exclaimed, while I am sowing in one place, the enemy ravages the field I just left. If only Christians possessed the Holy Scriptures in their own language, they could withstand these false teachings. Without the Bible it is impossible for the truth to take root among the common people.²²⁸

One time, a learned Catholic doctor, exclaimed to him, we were better to be without God's laws than the popes. Tyndale replied, I defy the pope and all his laws, and if God spares my life long enough, I will cause the boy that plows the field to know more of the Scriptures than you do.²²⁹

When he started his work, he was driven from his home, and went to London, where he was able to work until violence from papists forced him to flee. When he

²²⁷ D' Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 739.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/KvICAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA739&printsec=frontcover

²²⁸ D' Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p 740.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_of_the_Sixtee/KvICAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA740&printsec=frontcover

²²⁹ Tyndale, William, *Doctrinal Treatises*, Cambridge: The University Press, 1848, p 19.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Doctrinal_Treatises_and_Introductions_to/JVoJAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR19&printsec=frontcover

could not find any place to continue his work in peace, he went to Germany. He had to relocate a few times until he arrived at Worms, where a few years before Luther had defended the Gospel before the Diet. In that ancient city there were many friends of the Reformation and Tyndale was able to complete his work. 3,000 copies of the New Testament were printed, and a second edition immediately followed. The borders to England were guarded, but the word of God was hidden and smuggled in. The bishop of Durham at one time bought the entire stock of Bibles from a bookseller, for the purpose of destroying them, but the money he paid for them made possible the printing of a newer and better edition. When Tyndale was later imprisoned, his library was offered to him on the condition that he would reveal the names of those who helped finance the printing of his Bibles. He replied that the bishop of Durham had done more than any other person by paying a large price to buy all the books in stock at the time.

Tyndale was eventually betrayed into the hands of his enemies and suffered for months in prison. He finally witnessed for his faith with a martyr's death, but the weapons he prepared enabled others to do battle in his place both then and in succeeding generations.

Latimer believed that the Bible should be read from the pulpit in the language of the people. He said, the Author of the Holy Scriptures is God Himself, and the words share His might and eternity. All kings, emperors, or rulers are bound to obey His holy word. Let us be directed by God's word, and not just by what our ancestors did.²³⁰

Barnes and Frith were friends of Tyndale who rose up to defend the truth, and the Riddleys and Cranmer followed. These leaders in the English Reformation were well educated, and most had been zealous for Rome before their conversion. In fact, their knowledge of the errors and corruption of the "holy see," gave greater power to their opposition of the papacy. The grand principle maintained by these Reformers was the same held by the Waldenses, Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Zwingli and others. The Holy Scriptures were the rule of faith and could never be wrong, and no pope, council, Father, or king had the right to control conscience in matters of religion. The Bible is the ultimate authority, and all doctrines and teachings must be tested by it. Faith in God and His word gave these men the strength they needed as they gave their lives as martyrs for their faith. Latimer said to his fellow

²³⁰ Latimer, Hugh, *Sermons by Hugh Latimer*, Cambridge: The University Press, 1844, p 96.

<https://www.google.com/books/edition/Sermons/6YNsTHCd-hMC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA96&printsec=frontcover>

martyrs as flames rose up around them, by God's grace, in England, we are lighting a candle that shall never be put out.²³¹

In Scotland the seeds of truth that were planted by Columba and his coworkers were never completely destroyed. In the 12th century popery was firmly established in Scotland, and the darkness was deep. In the time of Wycliffe, the Lollards brought some rays of light from England with the Bible and his teachings. When the Reformation started, the writings of Luther and Tyndale's English New Testament were quietly brought in, slowly undoing the damage of 4 centuries of papal oppression.

When the papists realized what was happening, they brought some of the noblest and most honored sons of Scotland to the stake. But the words of the dying martyrs were heard throughout the land. Hamilton and Wishart, princely in character and in birth, and a long line of humbler disciples all gave their lives at the stake. But from the witness of Wishart arose John Knox through whom God would break the hold of popery in Scotland.

Knox had turned from the traditions of the church that were not founded on the Bible. Based on the teaching of Wishart, he had stopped attending mass and had joined with the persecuted Reformers. When he was finally convinced to begin preaching, he went forward with determination and courage for the rest of his life. When he was brought face to face with the queen of Scotland, the queen charged him with heresy. His response was, a religion is not made true because it comes from worldly princes. True religion is from God alone. Should the children of Israel have embraced the religion of Pharaoh in Egypt, or the apostles the religion of the Roman emperors? People are not required to accept the religion of their rulers, even if they are commanded to obey them.

Queen Mary said, you interpret the Scriptures one way and Rome another. Who is to be believed and who is the judge?

Knox replied, believe what God plainly says in His word. It is easy enough to understand, and if there is something difficult, the Holy Ghost will provide an explanation in another place in the Scriptures.²³² He risked his life by continuing to speak these truths to the royal house until Scotland was finally free from popery.

²³¹ Latimer, p 13. <https://www.google.com/books/edition/Sermons/6YNsTHCd-hMC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR13&printsec=frontcover>

²³² Knox, John, Edited by Dickinson, William Croft, *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, Vol 2, New York: Philosophical Library, 1950, p 18. https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Reformation_in_Scotland_T/IYcXAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA18&printsec=frontcover

In England, Protestantism became the religion of the state. Many of the doctrines of Rome were rejected by the new state religion, but some were kept. In place of the supremacy of the pope, the king of England became the head of the church. The state sponsored Protestant church was not above using persecution and cruelty, but it did so much less than the church of Rome had. The great principle of religious freedom still did not exist, and all were required to accept the doctrines of the established church.

In the 17th century, people were not allowed to attend any religious meeting, unless it was approved by the state church. Disobedience was punished by heavy fines, prison, or being kicked out of the country. The true faithful had to meet in secret, in dark alleys, and sometimes in the woods at midnight. Many were driven across the ocean to America where they laid the foundation of civil and religious liberty which have been the foundation of her success and glory.

As it was in the days of the apostles, persecution spread the gospel. In a filthy dungeon filled with criminals, John Bunyan wrote the story which symbolizes the pilgrim's journey from the land of destruction to the heavenly city. Bunyan's books, *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* has led many to Christ.

100 years later when Whitfield and the Wesleys came along, the church of England had degraded to a state that was hardly different from heathenism. The great doctrine of justification by faith that was so clearly taught by Luther, had almost completely been lost sight of. The Romish principle of trusting good works for salvation had come back. When Charles Wesley became very sick and thought that he might die, a friend asked, what gave him the hope of eternal life? He answered, I have used my best efforts to serve God. When the friend was not satisfied with the answer, he thought, are my works not good enough? I have nothing else to trust to.²³³

Wesley and his friends were led to see that true religion is not just words and actions, but thoughts as well. They worked and prayed hard that the evil tendencies of the heart could be overcome. They humbled themselves, did good works, denied themselves pleasures, but it did not bring peace. It was the same struggle that Luther experienced, the same question that had tortured him, how can man be justified before God? [[Job 9:2](#)].

²³³ Whitehead, John, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley with the Life of Charles Wesley*, Vol I, Dublin: John Jones, 1805, p 142.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_life_of_the_rev_John_Wesley_M_A_to_w/8kYBAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA142&printsec=frontcover

The torch of truth that had nearly gone out would be relit by the descendants of the original Bohemian Reformers. John and Charles Wesley were sent on a mission to America. On board the same ship were some Moravians. A very bad storm struck, and when John Wesley was brought face to face with death, he did not have confidence in his peace with God, as the Germans did. He had already noticed their humility as they went about performing lowly tasks, which none of the English would do, and they asked for nothing in return. They said it was good to humble themselves as their loving Savior had done for them. When passengers pushed or hit them, they never complained. They were in the middle of a worship service, when a great wave swept over the deck, shredded the main sail, and flooded the lower deck. The English began screaming in fear, but the Germans calmly continued their worship. When asked if they were afraid, they said no. Even our women and children are not afraid to die.²³⁴

Upon arriving in Savannah, Wesley stayed with the Moravians for a short time and was very impressed with their Christian behavior. Their religious services were not so lifeless and formal as the Church of England. In experiencing it, he almost felt as if he were back in the time of the apostles and Paul the tentmaker or Peter the fisherman was conducting the worship service.²³⁵

When he went back to England, he looked for a Moravian preacher, and under his instruction came to a much clearer understanding of the Bible. He was convinced that he must give up the idea of trusting on his own works for salvation, and trust only on the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world. At a meeting with the Moravians, he heard a statement by Luther describing the change that the Spirit of God works on the heart of the believer. Wesley said, I felt my heart strangely warmed; I felt I did trust in Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins and saved me from the law of sin and death.²³⁶ Once established in the faith of Christ, his whole soul burned with desire to spread the gospel of God's free grace. He said, I look on the whole world

²³⁴ Whitehead, John, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley with the Life of Charles Wesley*, Vol II, Dublin: John Jones, 1806, p 9. https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Life_of_the_Rev_John_Wesley_M_A_to_w/gzyauGT-yJEC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA9&printsec=frontcover

²³⁵ Whitehead, Vol II, p 10. https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Life_of_the_Rev_John_Wesley_M_A_to_w/gzyauGT-yJEC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA10&printsec=frontcover

²³⁶ Whitehead, Vol II, p 80. https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Life_of_the_Rev_John_Wesley_M_A_to_w/gzyauGT-yJEC?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover&pg=PA80

as my congregation and consider it my burden and duty to declare the glad tidings of salvation.²³⁷

Whitefield and the Wesley's prepared themselves to endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ. They were scorned, made fun of and persecuted, in the university. They and some who joined with them were jokingly called Methodists. At the urging of the Holy Spirit, they preached Christ and Him crucified, and thousands were converted. Wesley did not wish to form a new denomination, so he organized under the name Methodist Connection. God, in His wisdom wanted the reform to work from within, because if they had broken away and formed a new denomination, the revival would not have reached as many in the established church.

Influential and powerful men opposed them, and the religious leaders fought against them and discredited them. Time and again John Wesley escaped death by the power of God. Once, when it looked like he would be killed by an angry mob, an angel in human form came to his side and the mob fell back, and he walked away. Another time he was being pressed by a mob on a slippery slope, knowing that if he fell, he would be trampled. One big man took several swings at him with a large oak stick and every time the blow was diverted. Another rushed up to him and raised his fist to hit him and when it came down, he only stroked his head saying, what soft hair he has. At other times he was struck by stones and fists and even though he bled, he felt no pain.²³⁸

Methodists in the early days endured ridicule and persecution. Mobs invaded their homes, destroying whatever they could and even beating them brutally. This mistreatment went on in the open in full view of those who should be protecting the people, and no one was ever told to stop. John Wesley said, some accuse us falsely of Quakerism, fanaticism, and even popery, but all of this can easily be proved false. Everything is based on the same Bible used by the church.

The spiritual decline in England before the time of Wesley was largely because of antinomian teaching. That is a teaching that Christ did away with the law and Christians do not need to obey it. Another false teaching was that those whom God had already chosen to save would be saved regardless of what they did, and those who were not chosen for salvation would be lost no matter what they did.

²³⁷ Whitehead, Vol II, p 118.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Life_of_the_Rev_John_Wesley_M_A_to_w/gzyauGT-yJEC?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover&pg=PA118

²³⁸ Wesley, John, *Works*, Vol I, Philadelphia: D. & S. Neal, and W. S. Stockton, 1826, p. 438.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Works_of_the_Rev_John_Wesley/6tX6AcGvwkMC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA438&printsec=frontcover

Wesley opposed these errors with the Scriptures. [Matthew 5:17](#) "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. [Matthew 5:17 NLT](#). [Titus 2:11](#) For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. [Titus 2:11 NLT](#). [1 Timothy 2:3](#) This is good and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. ⁵ For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity--the man Christ Jesus. [1 Timothy 2:3-5 NLT](#). [John 1:9](#) The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. [John 1:9 NLT](#).

Wesley said there is perfect harmony between the law and the gospel. The law requires us to love God and to love our neighbor. On our own this may be impossible, but the gospel contains the promise that God can give us that love, and can help us to be humble, meek, and holy.

Wesley rejected the idea that the gospel alone without the law is all we need. He said, it is the law and not the gospel that convicts men of sin. Paul said, the law is given so they can see how sinful they are. [[Romans 5:20](#)] Jesus implied those who think they are healthy don't go to the doctor. [[Luke 5:31](#)].

While preaching the gospel of the grace of God, Wesley did his best to magnify the law. He faithfully did the work God called him to do for more than 50 years. The number of people who accepted his teachings was more than 500,000. But the true impact of his ministry will never be known until the redeemed are gathered in the kingdom of God.

Chapter 15—The Bible and the French Revolution

In the 16th century the Reformation brought the Bible to the people of Europe. Some nations accepted it gladly as a messenger from heaven, but in others the papacy succeeded in blocking and suppressing it. In one country in particular, light was offered, but the darkness rejected it. Evil won and the truth of heaven was rejected. [John 3:19](#) And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. [John 3:19 NLT](#). That nation was left to reap the results of the path that it chose. The Spirit of God was removed from a people who had repeatedly despised and rejected His grace. Evil grew to maturity, and the world would see the result of the rejection of the light.

France and the papacy waged war on the Bible for centuries, ending with the scenes of the French Revolution. It was a striking demonstration of the natural result of papal policy.^{239 240 241} The suppression of the Scriptures during the period of papal supremacy was prophesied in Revelation.

[Revelation 11:2](#) They will trample the holy city for 42 months. ³ And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will be clothed in burlap and will prophesy during those 1,260 days." ... ⁷ When they complete their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the bottomless pit will declare war against them, and he will conquer them and kill them. ⁸ And their bodies will lie in the main street of Jerusalem, the city that is figuratively called "Sodom" and "Egypt," the city where their Lord was crucified. ... ¹⁰ All the people who belong to this world will gloat over them and give presents to each other to celebrate the death of the two prophets who had tormented them. ¹¹ But after three and a half days, God breathed life into them, and they stood up! Terror struck all who were staring at them. [Revelation 11:2-3, 7-8, 10-11 NLT](#).

Using 360 days per year and 30 days per month, 42 months and 1260 days are the same. With the prophetic interpretation of a day for a year, the church of Christ was to suffer oppression from Rome for 1260 years. This time period ended when

²³⁹ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3122\(132.3130\)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/_NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA768&printsec=frontcover](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3122(132.3130)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/_NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA768&printsec=frontcover)

²⁴⁰ Von Sybel, Heinrich, *History of the French Revolution*, Vol II, London: John Murray, 1867, p 194.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_French_Revolution/pM7lOrwoGB0C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA194&printsec=frontcover

²⁴¹ Buckle, Henry Thomas, *History of Civilization in England*, Vol I, New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1895, p 364-366, 369-371, 437, 540, 541, 550.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_Civilization_in_England/VTSDbduv_JYC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA364&printsec=frontcover

in 1798, a French army marched into Rome and took the pope as a prisoner. Even though a new pope was elected, the papacy has never regained its former power.

In His mercy, God did not allow the persecution to last the entire 1260 years [Matthew 24:22]. The work of the Reformation brought much of the persecution to an end before 1798.

To understand the two witnesses mentioned in Revelation 11:3, look to the next verse, Revelation 11:4. These two prophets are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of all the earth. Revelation 11:4 NLT. From Psalms we can infer what the lampstands represent. Psalm 119:105 ... Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. Psalm 119:105 NLT. These two witnesses represent the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. Both are necessary to explain the permanence of the law of God, and the plan of salvation. The Old Testament predicts the coming of a Savior, the fulfillment of which is written about in the New Testament.

The prophesying, while dressed in burlap during the 1260-year period represents the faithful few who worshipped God according to the truths taught in the Bible. For that, they were hunted, betrayed, tortured, imprisoned, and killed. Those who escaped capture had to do so by hiding in the mountains and caves, and were able to continue their witness throughout the entire 1260 years. During this time papal power tried to keep the word of God from the people.^{242 243 244 245}

Revelation 11:5 If anyone tries to harm them, fire flashes from their mouths and consumes their enemies. This is how anyone who tries to harm them must die. Revelation 11:5 NLT. Man cannot trample on the word of God without consequences. This verse is explained further at the end of the same book. Revelation 22:18 And I solemnly declare to everyone who hears the words of prophecy written in this book: If anyone adds anything to what is written here, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book.¹⁹ And if anyone removes any of the words from this book of prophecy, God will remove that person's share in the tree

²⁴² White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3122\(132.3131\)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA768&printsec=frontcover](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3122(132.3131)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA768&printsec=frontcover)

²⁴³ Lortsch, Par D., *Histoire de La Bible en France*, Paris: AGENCE DE LA SOCIÉTÉ BIBLIQUE BRITANNIQUE ET ÉTRANGÈRE, 1910, p 14.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Histoire_de_la_Bible_en_France/-zNVAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA14&printsec=frontcover

²⁴⁴ <https://www.bible-researcher.com/wyclif1.html#nota65>

²⁴⁵ <https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-ix/la/documents/encyclica-quanta-cura-8-decembris-1864.html> [Have the browser translate the text to English, then search for “biblical societies” and you will see they were considered “pests.”]

of life and in the holy city that are described in this book. [Revelation 22:18-19 NLT](#).

These warnings are given so that man will not treat the law of God lightly. All who think their opinions are more important than the word of God, will bring upon themselves the consequences described in the book.

It was Rome's policy to keep the Bible from the people. It claimed this was out of reverence for the Bible, that only specially educated people could read and interpret the Bible for others.

Now a different power, the beast from the bottomless pit, was predicted in [Revelation 11:7](#), to make war on the word of God. In [Revelation 11:8](#), "street of the great city," is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, because they rejected and killed the Messiah. Of all the nations in Bible history, Egypt was the boldest in openly denying the existence of the living God and refusing to obey His commands. When the message from God was brought by Moses, Pharaoh said, [Exodus 5:2](#) ... "And who is the LORD? Why should I listen to him and let Israel go? I don't know the LORD, and I will not let Israel go." [Exodus 5:2 NLT](#). This is atheism, the denial of the existence of God. This sin would be repeated in the nation that would fulfill the prophecy in [Revelation 11:8](#).

Just before the end of papal power in 1798, a fulfillment of the prophecy in [Revelation 11](#), took place in France. During the revolution in 1793, an assembly of men were united in renouncing the belief in and worship of God. France is the only nation in the world, for which there is reliable historical record, that openly rebelled against the Author of the universe. There are many outspoken individuals in England, Germany, Spain and elsewhere, but France stood alone as a country, which decreed in law that there is no God.²⁴⁶ The people of the capital city and much of the rest of the country, danced and sang with joy at the declaration.

In addition to atheism, France also demonstrated characteristics of Sodom, which was also mentioned in the prophecy. Marriage is one of the original institutions given to man at the time of creation. It is a sacred union of two human beings for life, the success of which leads to a strong society. France reduced it to a mere civil contract, that can be entered into between any two persons and easily terminated.

The second half of the verse mentions "the city where our Lord was crucified." [[Revelation 11:8b](#)]. Christ was crucified again and again in the person of His

²⁴⁶ Scott, Sir Walter, *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte*, Vol I, Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, London, Houlston and Stoneman, 1843, p 324.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Life_of_Napoleon_Buonaparte_with_a_preli/17K7mjudNGUC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA324&printsec=frontcover

faithful followers. In France, century after century, the blood of saints was shed. Waldenses laid down their lives in the mountains of Piedmont. Albigenses were slaughtered for their faith. During the Reformation, kings and nobles enjoyed watching the martyrs for Jesus die. Protestants were counted as outlaws and hunted like wild animals. The purest, the most refined, and most intelligent of France were chained and tortured alongside robbers and killers.²⁴⁷ One of the worst of the worst among the many horrible crimes against humanity was the St. Bartholomew Massacre. Urged on by priests, the king of France, set a time, when thousands of protestants would be dragged from their homes in the dead of night, and murdered in cold blood. This was repeated in Paris and surrounding regions for seven nights. And carried on for two months throughout France. 70,000 of the best and brightest of the nation were killed. When news of the massacre reached Rome, it was received by the pope with the greatest happiness and joy.²⁴⁸

The same spirit that motivated the St. Bartholomew Massacre also urged the French Revolution, only this time, Jesus Christ was declared an imposter. Blasphemy and wickedness went hand in hand. [Revelation 11:7](#) When they complete their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the bottomless pit will declare war against them, and he will conquer them and kill them. [Revelation 11:7 NLT](#). The atheistical power that rejected the concept of God in France during the Revolution and the Reign of Terror, waged war against Him and His word. Worship of God was outlawed, and Bibles were collected and publicly burned. Institutions of the Bible were done away with. The seventh day of rest was set aside, and in its place, every tenth day was devoted to pleasure and blasphemy. Baptism and communion were outlawed. Signs were posted at cemeteries declaring death to be an eternal sleep.

The bishop of Paris was brought out to publicly declare that the religion he had taught for so many years was made up and had no foundation in history or truth. He further said, there is no God, and the only things worthy of worship are liberty, equality, virtue and morality. He then took off his bishop's headpiece and robe and was hugged by the president of the convention.²⁴⁹ With boldness almost beyond

²⁴⁷ *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, Vol XLI, June to November 1870, New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1870, p 822.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Harper_s_New_Monthly_Magazine/mgswAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA822&printsec=frontcover

²⁴⁸ *Watson's Magazine*, Vol XVIII, November, Georgia: Jeffersonian Publishing Company, 1879, p 18.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Watson_s_Jeffersonian_Magazine/a5dFAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA18&printsec=frontcover

²⁴⁹ Scott, p 324.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Life_of_Napoleon_Buonaparte_with_a_preliminary/17K7mjudNGUC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA324&printsec=frontcover

belief, one of the priests of the new order said: God, if You exist, avenge your injured name. I dare you. You remain silent and dare not launch Your thunders. Who will believe in Your existence after this?²⁵⁰ The Psalmist wrote, [Psalm 14:1](#) ... Only fools say in their hearts, "There is no God." ... [Psalm 14:1 NLT](#). And Paul wrote to Timothy, those who oppose the truth will be recognized as fools. [[2 Timothy 3:8-9](#)].

After France had renounced the worship of the living God, it was not long before she lifted up the Goddess of Reason to worship. In a ceremony, with music and hymns praising liberty, the object of their worship, a veiled female whom they called the Goddess of Reason was brought in before the assembly. When she was unveiled, she was recognized by most as a dancing girl from the opera. As the symbol of the reason they worshipped, the national assembly of France bowed down before her. It was announced before her, mortals, stop trembling before the powerless God your fears have created. From now on, there is no god but Reason. If you must have an idol, sacrifice only to this.

Popery began the work which atheism was completing. Popery had poisoned the minds of kings against the Reformation. It was Rome that inspired the cruelty and

²⁵⁰ Alison, Sir Archibald, *History of Europe during the French Revolution*, Vol II, Edinburgh: William Blackwood, London, T. Cadell, 1833, p 81.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_Europe_from_1789_to_1815/2QYUAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA81&printsec=frontcover

oppression that was carried out by the throne. Rome was responsible for the conditions which was hurrying France to ruin.^{251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260}

The spirit of liberty has been seen to follow true reading of the Bible. Wherever the gospel was received, people were awakened. They began to break free of the chains that had held them in ignorance and superstition. They began to think and act as men, and dictators feared that.

For 250 years after the Reformation had first been introduced to France, men of integrity, intelligence, moral strength, and courage, suffered as slaves, rotted in dungeons, were burned at the stake, or fled the country. The persecuted were the best and the brightest, taking with them learning, art, and industry. If those who had been driven away, had remained and been allowed to contribute to the growth and prosperity of France, they would have added to her literature, her science, and her culture. They would have added their bravery in battles, and their sense of fairness and justice to her laws. What a prosperous and happy country she could have been.

When the Huguenots fled, cities which once flourished with industry fell into decay. Fertile farmland returned to its natural wild state. The city of Paris had

²⁵¹ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3135\(132.3138\)&index=0](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3135(132.3138)&index=0)

²⁵² Gershoy, Leo, *The French Revolution and Napoleon*, New York: F. S. Crofts & Co., 1933.

https://archive.org/details/frenchrevolution0000leog_u4q0/page/n7/mode/2up

²⁵³ Von Sybel, Heinrich, *History of the French Revolution*, Vol II, London: John Murray, 1867.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_French_Revolution/pM71OrwoGB0C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover

²⁵⁴ Von Sybel, Heinrich, *History of the French Revolution*, Vol IV, London: John Murray, 1869.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_French_Revolution/T7U8AAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover

²⁵⁵ Aulard, A., *Christianity and the French Revolution*, Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1927.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Christianity_and_the_French_Revolution/UKM-AAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA9&printsec=frontcover

²⁵⁶ Jervis, William Henry, *The Gallican Church and the Revolution*, London: K. Paul, Trench, & Co., 1882.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Gallican_Church_and_the_Revolution/cMPfu3iukgcC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover

²⁵⁷ Sloan, William Milligan, *The French Revolution and Religious Reformation*, New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1901.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_French_Revolution_and_Religious_Refo/XGYq11g3NEcC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover

²⁵⁸ La Gorce, Pierre de, *Histoire religieuse de la Révolution Française*, Paris: Plon, 1909.

<https://archive.org/details/histoiereligieu01lagouoft/page/n5/mode/2up>

²⁵⁹ Bourgin, Georges, *La France et Rome de 1788-1797. Regeste des dépêches du cardinal secrétaire d'état*, Paris: A Fontemoing, 1909.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/La_France_et_Rome_de_1788_1797/4K9CAAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR5&printsec=frontcover

²⁶⁰ Pressensé, Edmond de, *Religion and the reign of terror; or, The church during the French revolution*, New York: Carlton & Lanahan; Cincinnati: Hitchcock & Walden, 1869.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Religion_and_the_Reign_of_Terror_or_the/ZZhdAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA1&printsec=frontcover

become one big beggar's house. It is estimated that at the time of the Revolution, 200,000 people were living off handouts from the king.

The teachings of the Bible which would have encouraged self-sacrifice and love were absent, so the rich and the privileged oppressed the poor. There was no justice in court, as bribes allowed the wealthy to always be favored. The poor common people were taxed, and the wealthy were exempt. The rich got richer, and the poor hated them.^{261 262 263 264} Those in religious power were generally classed with the rich and powerful. Rome misrepresented the character of God and His requirements. They had ground down the people under an iron heel, and now the masses were ready to reject the truth together with the error that had been fed to them.

At the opening of the Revolution, the king had agreed to give the common people representation which by numbers gave them more power than the nobles and clergy combined. They now had power but were not prepared to use it wisely. They were eager to address the wrongs they had suffered, which were many. Those who had formerly been oppressed now used their power to turn the tables on their oppressors.

On the same spot where Protestant martyrs were burned in the 16th century, the first victims of the Revolution were beheaded in the 18th. France's war against the Bible is known in history as the Reign of Terror. No one was safe, a person who was rounding up victims one day, might be suspected and condemned the next. The king and the church were powerless to stop the maddened mob. The king was executed, then even those who had condemned him were soon to follow to their own deaths. Anyone who was suspected of opposition to the Revolution was slaughtered. At one time, the prisons contained more the 200,000 captives. The cities of France were filled with scenes of horror, one party of revolutionists against another. In Paris, the citizens were divided up into several groups that all seemed intent on destroying the others. The country was nearly bankrupt, armies were not being paid, and citizens were starving.

²⁶¹ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3135\(132.3147\)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA769&printsec=frontcover](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3135(132.3147)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA769&printsec=frontcover)

²⁶² Holst, Herman Eduard von, *The French Revolution, tested by Mirabeau's Career*, Chicago: Callaghan, 1894. <https://archive.org/details/frenchrevolution01hols/page/n15/mode/2up>

²⁶³ Taine, Hippolyte Adolphe, *The French Revolution*, Vol III, New York: Holt and Company, 1885. https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_French_Revolution/QtEaAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR1&printsec=frontcover

²⁶⁴ Taine, Hippolyte. *The Origins of Contemporary France: The Ancient Regime*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1876. <https://oll.libertyfund.org/title/taine-the-origins-of-contemporary-france-the-ancient-regime>

The lessons of cruelty and torture that Rome had taught were now used on them. The blood of priests flowed freely, the prisons once crowded with Huguenots, were now filled with their persecutors. Church leaders were chained to benches and rowing as slaves in ships. Everything they inflicted on the gentle heretics came back on them.^{265 266 267}

The day came when no one could greet their neighbor or say prayers without committing a crime worthy of death. The guillotine was too slow to kill all the condemned. Ships full of prisoners were sunk. Victims were lined up and shot. Great flocks of birds feasted on the dead bodies laying out in the open. Young girls and even babies were killed.^{268 269 270 271}

Satan's purpose is to drag God's creation to the lowest depths that he can because he knows that it will cause sadness in heaven. He then deceives men into thinking it is God's fault, so they will blame and reject their Creator. Satan worked through the Roman church to lead men away from obedience to God's law, and the misery that resulted was blamed on God. But the Revolution, and the Reign of Terror, clearly showed the results of setting aside the law of God.

²⁶⁵ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3135\(132.3148\)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/_NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA769&printsec=frontcover](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3135(132.3148)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/_NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA769&printsec=frontcover)

²⁶⁶ Gill, Thomas H., *The Papal Drama*, London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1866, p 342. https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Papal_Drama/cC4LAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA342&printsec=frontcover

²⁶⁷ De Pressense, Edmund, *The Church and the French Revolution*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1869, p 329. https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Church_and_the_French_Revolution/B6hdAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA329&printsec=frontcover

²⁶⁸ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3135\(132.3149\)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/_NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA769&printsec=frontcover](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3135(132.3149)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/_NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA769&printsec=frontcover)

²⁶⁹ Thiers, Adolphe, *The History of the French Revolution*, Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1843, p 42-44. https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_History_of_the_French_Revolution/SaVCAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=RA1-PA42&printsec=frontcover,

p 62-74. https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_History_of_the_French_Revolution/SaVCAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=RA1-PA62&printsec=frontcover,

p 106. https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_History_of_the_French_Revolution/SaVCAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=RA1-PA106&printsec=frontcover

²⁷⁰ Mignet, François-Auguste-Marie-Alexis, *History of the French Revolution, from 1789-1814*, London: Henry G. Bohn, 1856, p 247. <https://archive.org/details/historyoffrenchr00migniala/page/246/mode/2up>

²⁷¹ Alison, Archibald, *History of Europe from the commencement of the French Revolution in 1789 to the restoration of the Bourbons in 1815*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1843, p 293-312 [see footnote]. https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_Europe/dVPxAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA375&printsec=frontcover

The two witnesses that were killed by the “beast that comes up out of the bottomless pit,” [[Revelation 11:7](#)] would not remain dead. [Revelation 11:11](#) But after three and a half days, God breathed life into them, and they stood up! Terror struck all who were staring at them. [Revelation 11:11 NLT](#). Three and a half years later, the French assembly did away with the law that banned the Bible and prohibited worship of God.

[Revelation 11:12](#) Then a loud voice from heaven called to the two prophets, "Come up here!" And they rose to heaven in a cloud as their enemies watched. [Revelation 11:12 NLT](#). After the two witnesses were killed and then came back to life, they were honored more than before. In 1804, the British and Foreign Bible Society was organized. In 1816, the American Bible Society was founded. At the time that the British Society was formed, the Bible had been translated into 50 languages, but it has since been translated into hundreds.^{272 273 274} Towards the close of the 18th century, foreign missionary work had great growth.^{275 276} Improvements in printing have made it cheaper and easier to spread the word of God.

Voltaire once boasted, I am weary of hearing people say that twelve men established the Christian religion. I will prove that one man alone can overthrow it.²⁷⁷ Millions have joined in the war against the Bible, but the number of copies of it continues to increase. [Isaiah 54:17](#) But in that coming day no weapon turned against you will succeed. You will silence every voice raised up to accuse you. ... [Isaiah 54:17 NLT](#). [Isaiah 40:8](#) The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever." [Isaiah 40:8 NLT](#). [Psalm 111:7](#) ... all his commandments are trustworthy.⁸ They are forever true, to be obeyed faithfully and with integrity. [Psalm 111:7-8 NLT](#). Whatever is built by man will not last, but that which is built on the foundation of the word of God will stand forever.

²⁷² White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3144\(132.3150\)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA769&printsec=frontcover](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3144(132.3150)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA769&printsec=frontcover)

²⁷³ Canton, William, *The Story of the Bible Society*, London: John Murray, 1904, p354. <https://archive.org/details/cu31924029269887/page/n367/mode/2up>

²⁷⁴ https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Bible_translations

²⁷⁵ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3150\(132.3154\)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA770&printsec=frontcover](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3150(132.3154)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA770&printsec=frontcover)

²⁷⁶ Latourette, Kenneth Scott, *A History of Expansion of Christianity*, Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1971, p 4. https://archive.org/details/historyofexpansi0000lato_z6j2/page/4/mode/2up

²⁷⁷ *Free Masonry: Poem in Three Cantos*, Leicester, Samuel A. Whitmore, 1830, p 181.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Free_Masonry/AVUpAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA181&printsec=frontcover

Chapter 16—The Pilgrim Fathers

The Reformation in England had triumphed over the church of Rome, but the result was the Church of England. The authority of the pope had been rejected but was replaced by the king. Many of the customs and ceremonies were kept, with the reasoning that these were not matters of conscience and were not specifically forbidden by the Bible. It was thought that keeping them would make it easier for Roman Catholics to accept the Protestant faith. But there were some who did not agree. They believed that man is not free to add or take away from what the Bible commands. The apostasy of the Christian church began with replacing the authority of God with that of the church. Rome began teaching things not forbidden by the Bible and ended forbidding what God specifically commanded.

She may not have been quite as cruel as the mother church she came out of, but the Church of England had the civil authority to require attendance, and to prevent other forms of worship using prison, exile and even death. There were many who wished to return to the purity of the early Christian church, and they became known as puritans.

At the start of the 17th century, the king of England declared his intention to force the Puritans to conform, leave the country, or worse.²⁷⁸ Hunted, persecuted, and imprisoned, they decided that England was not a place that they could remain, and worship God according to their conscience.²⁷⁹ Some decided to try to find refuge in Holland, but they faced many difficulties, including betrayal, and prison. Finally, some made it, but they had left homes, possessions, and jobs, and were now strangers in a land whose language they couldn't speak. Many had to learn new ways to provide for their families, but they cheerfully did what they could, and thanked God for their blessings. They knew they were pilgrims, and didn't focus on their hardships, but looked forward to heaven.²⁸⁰

From Holland, a group of Pilgrims decided they would start a new life in the New World. Their pastor, John Robinson, who would not be going with them, gave them these parting words: We will now be parted from each other, and only the Lord knows if I will see your faces again. If God should reveal anything to you by other means, be ready to receive it, for I am confident that the Lord has more truth

²⁷⁸ Bancroft, *History of the United States of America*, Vol I, New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1884, p 196. https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_United_States_of_America/A3i2leD-irkC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA196&printsec=frontcover

²⁷⁹ Palfrey, John Gorham, *History of New England*, Vol I, Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1858, p 131. https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_New_England/YqvjBjBjSA8C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA131&printsec=frontcover

²⁸⁰ Bancroft, p 200. https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_United_States_of_America/A3i2leD-irkC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA200&printsec=frontcover

and light to bring out of His holy word.²⁸¹ But be careful with new truth, that you compare it with the scriptures to make sure that it is true before you accept it. New truth is sure to come because coming so recently out of such thick darkness, it is impossible that perfect knowledge would have been arrived at immediately.²⁸²

Different Protestant denominations had formed around the teachings of each of their founders, but they advanced no further in reformation. Lutherans would go no further than what Luther saw. Calvinists were stuck where they were left by that man of God, who didn't see all things. These great men were brightly shining lights, but in their time were not able to understand the whole truth of God. If they were living now, they would have been willing to receive new light, like the truths that moved them in the first place.²⁸³

The Pilgrims were willing to brave the journey across the sea, and when they arrived, to endure hardship in the wilderness, so that they could worship God in the way they believed. But the freedom they risked so much to obtain for themselves, they were not willing to grant to those who did not believe as they did. They still did not understand the great principle of religious freedom. The doctrine that God gave the church the right to control conscience, and to punish heresy, is one of the worst papal errors. The Reformers rejected this teaching of Rome, but when they were in the majority, they were willing to do the same to others who didn't believe as they did. One of the pastors at the Massachusetts Bay colony even said, it was toleration that made the world unchristian, and punishing heretics never hurt the church.²⁸⁴ The colonists set up a government that only church members were allowed to participate in. A state church was formed, and the government took it upon themselves to enforce compliance, and before long the natural result was the persecution of heretics.

Roger Williams arrived in the New World 11 years after the first colony. He also came to enjoy religious freedom, but he had ideas that were unusual at that time. He believed that freedom was a God given right to all, no matter what they

²⁸¹ Stoughton, John, *Spiritual Heroes*, New York: M. W. Dodd, 1848, p 81.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Spiritual_Heroes/CPpfsowcnDcC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA81&printsec=frontcover

²⁸² Martyn, W. Carlos, *The Pilgrim Fathers of New England*, New York: American Tract Society, 1867, p 71.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Pilgrim_Fathers_of_New_England/UEMOAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA71&printsec=frontcover

²⁸³ Neal, Daniel, *History of the Puritans*, Boston, Charles Ewer, Newport, MS: William B. Allen & Co., 1817, p 147.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_History_of_the_Puritans_Or_Protestan/dDQuAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA147&printsec=frontcover

²⁸⁴ Martyn, *The Pilgrim Fathers of New England*, p. 335.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Pilgrim_Fathers_of_New_England/UEMOAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA335&printsec=frontcover

believed. He was the first person in modern Christianity to setup a government that allowed freedom of conscience and equality of ideas.²⁸⁵ He claimed the government should punish crime but not conscience. He said, it can decide in matters between people, but not between man and God.²⁸⁶

Williams opposed the law that required attendance of the state church. To force people to worship when they didn't want to be there was only creating hypocrisy. He was beloved as a pastor, yet his continued demands for religious liberty could not be tolerated. His opponents claimed that this new doctrine would harm the government in the new country.²⁸⁷ He was banished from the colony and forced to flee for his life in the middle of winter.

He wrote, for 14 weeks I hardly knew what bread or bed meant. Ravens fed me in the wilderness, and a hollow tree gave me shelter.²⁸⁸ He finally found refuge with an Indian tribe that he shared the gospel truth with. He continued wandering for months until he reached the shores of Narragansett Bay, where he founded the first modern state that recognized true religious freedom. The principle of Roger William's colony was that every man should have the liberty to worship God according to the light of his own conscience.²⁸⁹ His state, Rhode Island, became the home of the oppressed, and it increased and prospered until its founding principles became the cornerstone of the American Republic.

In the Declaration of Independence, was written, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."²⁹⁰ Article IV in the Constitution of the United States of America, states, "no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States."²⁹¹ And the First Amendment, also the first of

²⁸⁵ Bancroft, p 255. https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_United_States_of_America/A3i2leD-irkC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA255&printsec=frontcover

²⁸⁶ Martyn, *The Pilgrim Fathers of New England*, p. 340.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Pilgrim_Fathers_of_New_England/UEMOAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA340&printsec=frontcover

²⁸⁷ Bancroft, p 252. https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_United_States_of_America/A3i2leD-irkC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA252&printsec=frontcover

²⁸⁸ Martyn, *The Pilgrim Fathers of New England*, p. 350.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Pilgrim_Fathers_of_New_England/UEMOAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA350&printsec=frontcover

²⁸⁹ Martyn, *The Pilgrim Fathers of New England*, p. 354.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Pilgrim_Fathers_of_New_England/UEMOAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA354&printsec=frontcover

²⁹⁰ <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

²⁹¹ <https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/article-6/clause-3/>

what is known as the Bill of Rights, states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”²⁹²

As news reached the countries of Europe, of a land where every man could enjoy the fruit of his own labor, and worship according to his own conscience, thousands flocked to the shores of the New World. Massachusetts passed a law that freely welcomed, and even provided aid, to Christians from any nation. Those escaping wars, famine, oppression, or persecution, were by law, made the guests of state.²⁹³

The new settlers were willing to work hard, and all they asked for in return was a reasonable return from the soil. They were content with the slow steady progress of their developing country. They patiently endured the dangers and hardships of the wilderness, watering the tree of liberty with their tears, and sweat, until it took deep root in the land.

In a Puritan settlement, the Bible was the foundation of faith, and its principles were taught in the home, in the school, and in the church. One might live for years in a Puritan settlement, and not see a drunk person, or a beggar, or hear any swear words.²⁹⁴ The colonies grew to a group of powerful states, and the world was amazed at the peace and prosperity of a church without a pope and a country without a king.

It wasn't long before the New World started attracting people who were more interested in the possibilities of gaining wealth and power. Because of the earlier laws requiring membership in the church to hold a position in the government, many ambitious but unconverted men joined the church. But the result was corruption of the church rather than the conversion of those people. The evil that resulted was a repetition of history whenever the church and state were united to benefit each other. [John 18:36](#) Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world." [John 18:36 NLT](#). The union of church and state may appear to bring the world closer to the church, but in reality, it brings the church closer to the world.

The Protestant churches of Europe and even America, were blessed by the Reformation, but failed to press forward with reform. A few faithful men came along from time to time and attempted to point out new truth and expose error. But

²⁹² <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-1/>

²⁹³ Martyn, *The Pilgrim Fathers of New England*, p. 417.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Pilgrim_Fathers_of_New_England/UEMOAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA417&printsec=frontcover

²⁹⁴ Bancroft, p 321. https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_United_States_of_America/A3i2leDirkC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA321&printsec=frontcover

the majority like the Jews in Christ's day and the papists in Luther's, were content to believe as their fathers had, and live as they had lived. Over time, the result was that the Protestant churches came to be in need of reform almost as much as the Roman Church in the time of Luther.

The Bible was widely distributed in the early part of the 19th century, but it did not result in any new truth being taught. Even though the Bible was placed within reach of all, if Satan could get them to ignore it, they would simply continue believing what their church taught even if it was wrong.

Chapter 17—Heralds of the Morning

One of the most beautiful teachings in the Bible is the second coming of Christ to complete the work of salvation. From the day when Adam and Eve were banished from Eden, they have waited for the coming of the Promised One who would break the power of Satan and restore them to Paradise. [Jude 1:14](#) Enoch, who lived in the seventh generation after Adam, prophesied about these people. He said, "Listen! The Lord is coming with countless thousands of his holy ones ¹⁵ to execute judgment on the people of the world. He will convict every person of all the ungodly things they have done and for all the insults that ungodly sinners have spoken against him." [Jude 1:14-15 NLT](#). Job wrote: [Job 19:25](#) "But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and he will stand upon the earth at last. ²⁶ And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God! ²⁷ I will see him for myself. Yes, I will see him with my own eyes. I am overwhelmed at the thought!" [Job 19:25-27 NLT](#).

[Psalm 96:11](#) Let the heavens be glad, and the earth rejoice! Let the sea and everything in it shout his praise! ¹² Let the fields and their crops burst out with joy! Let the trees of the forest rustle with praise ¹³ before the LORD, for he is coming! He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with justice, and the nations with his truth. [Psalm 96:11-13 NLT](#).

[Isaiah 26:19](#) But those who die in the LORD will live; their bodies will rise again! Those who sleep in the earth will rise up and sing for joy! For your life-giving light will fall like dew on your people in the place of the dead! [Isaiah 26:19 NLT](#). [Isaiah 25:8](#) He will swallow up death forever! The Sovereign LORD will wipe away all tears. He will remove forever all insults and mockery against his land and people. The LORD has spoken! ⁹ In that day the people will proclaim, "This is our God! We trusted in him, and he saved us! This is the LORD, in whom we trusted. Let us rejoice in the salvation he brings!" [Isaiah 25:8-9 NLT](#).

When Jesus was getting ready to leave, He gave His disciples these promises. [John 14:1](#) "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. ² There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. [John 14:1-3 NLT](#). [Matthew 25:31](#) "But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. [Matthew 25:31-32 NLT](#).

As Jesus literally rose up in the sky, leaving the disciples behind, angels comforted them with these words. [Acts 1:11](#) "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!" [Acts 1:11 NLT](#).¹ [Thessalonians 4:16](#) For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. [1 Thessalonians 4:16 NLT](#). [Revelation 1:7](#) Look! He comes with the clouds of heaven. And everyone will see him--even those who pierced him. And all the nations of the world will mourn for him. Yes! Amen! [Revelation 1:7 NLT](#).

Since He ascended from the Mount of Olives, leaving His disciples behind, His return has been the hope of all true followers. Those who were persecuted, tortured, and killed for the truth, believed they would live again because Christ was resurrected.²⁹⁵ They were willing to die so they could rise free.²⁹⁶ The Waldenses had the same faith.²⁹⁷ Wycliffe looked forward to the Redeemer's appearing.²⁹⁸ Luther said, I believe the day of judgment will come within 300 years. God cannot suffer this wicked world much longer.²⁹⁹ And many other Reformers were also quoted as looking forward to the return of Jesus.

Prophecies in the Bible not only tell us of Christ's return but also give signs to know when it is near. [Luke 21:25](#) "And there will be strange signs in the sun, moon, and stars. ... [Luke 21:25 NLT](#). [Mark 13:24](#) "At that time, after the anguish of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will give no light,²⁵ the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.²⁶ Then everyone will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with great power and glory. [Mark 13:24-26 NLT](#). [Revelation 6:12](#) I watched as the Lamb broke the sixth seal, and there was a

²⁹⁵ Taylor, Daniel T., *The Reign of Christ on Earth: or, The Voice of the Church in All Ages*, London: S. Bagster & Sons, Boston, H. L. Hastings, 1882, p 53.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_reign_of_Christ_on_earth_or_The_voice/UgcDAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA53&printsec=frontcover

²⁹⁶ Taylor, p 64.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_reign_of_Christ_on_earth_or_The_voice/UgcDAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA64&printsec=frontcover

²⁹⁷ Taylor, p 129-132.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_reign_of_Christ_on_earth_or_The_voice/UgcDAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA132&printsec=frontcover

²⁹⁸ Taylor, p 132-134.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_reign_of_Christ_on_earth_or_The_voice/UgcDAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA133&printsec=frontcover

²⁹⁹ Taylor, p 158.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_reign_of_Christ_on_earth_or_The_voice/UgcDAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA158&printsec=frontcover

great earthquake. The sun became as dark as black cloth, and the moon became as red as blood. [Revelation 6:12 NLT](#).

In 1755, a massive earthquake occurred, centered in Lisbon. But it also affected Europe, Africa, and America. It was felt in Greenland, the West Indies, the island of Madeira, Norway, Sweden, Great Britain, and Ireland. It was felt over at least 4 million square miles. The shock in Africa was almost as bad as in Europe. A great part of Algiers was destroyed; and a short distance from Morocco a village was completely swallowed up. A tsunami that was said to be as high as 60 feet swept over the coast of Spain and Africa causing widespread damage. Mountains in Portugal were said to have split open, even sending flames up in the sky.³⁰⁰ In Lisbon, the epicenter of the earthquake, there was a sound like thunder underground, immediately followed by a violent shock that threw down most of the city. The sea went out and then returned to a level 50 feet or more above normal.³⁰¹

25 years later, a sign involving the sun and moon occurred. Jesus had said, [Mark 13:24](#) "At that time, after the anguish of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will give no light, [Mark 13:24 NLT](#). It was 18 years before the end of the 1260 years, and the persecution, "anguish," had mostly ended. On May 19, 1780, in New England, a most unexplainable darkness occurred.³⁰² [There are possible explanations for it today, but that doesn't mean it wasn't a sign.]

An eyewitness in Massachusetts described it like this. In the morning the sun rose clear but was soon overcast. The clouds became black and ominous and there was lightning, thunder and a little rain. At 9 AM, the clouds thinned and had a brassy or coppery color. A few minutes later, a heavy black cloud spread over the entire sky except for a narrow rim at the horizon, leaving it as dark as it would normally be at 9 PM. People were filled with fear. Animals behaved as if it were evening. Workers came in from the fields, and people left their jobs, and schools were closed.

³⁰⁰ Lyell, Sir Charles, *Principles of Geology*, Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1853, p 495.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Principles_of_Geology_Or_The_Modern_Chan/x2BwuWm4HLQC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA495&printsec=frontcover

³⁰¹ Lyell, p 495.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Principles_of_Geology_Or_The_Modern_Chan/x2BwuWm4HLQC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA495&printsec=frontcover

³⁰² Devens, R. M., *Our First Century*, Springfield, Mass: C. A. Nichols & Co., Chicago, IL: Hugh Heron, 1881, p 89.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Our_First_Century/XJU_AAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA89&printsec=frontcover

Some thought the darkness was supernatural, and many believed it was a fulfillment of prophecy. The darkness was most dense shortly after 11 AM.³⁰³ The intense darkness partially cleared an hour or two before sunset, but then the clouds returned, and it got dark very fast. In fact, the darkness seemed so deep, some thought of the Egyptian plague of darkness which must have seemed to swallow up the light.³⁰⁴ After midnight, the dense darkness passed, and the moon had the appearance of blood. This seems like a precise fulfillment of the words of the Lord through the prophet Joel. [Joel 2:31](#) The sun will become dark, and the moon will turn blood red before that great and terrible day of the LORD arrives. [Joel 2:31 NLT](#).

The church in America was absorbed in worldliness and pleasure and was not looking for signs of His appearing. Freedom and comfort were enjoyed by all and the opportunities for accumulating wealth and power, led men to wish that the second coming would be far in the future. Jesus gave warnings for this time in history: [Matthew 24:37](#) "When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah's day."³⁸ In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat.³⁹ People didn't realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes. [Matthew 24:37-39 NLT](#). [Luke 21:34](#) "Watch out! Don't let your hearts be dulled by carousing and drunkenness, and by the worries of this life. Don't let that day catch you unaware, [Luke 21:34 NLT](#). [Revelation 3:3](#) ... hold to it firmly. Repent and turn to me again. If you don't wake up, I will come to you suddenly, as unexpected as a thief. [Revelation 3:3 NLT](#).

People needed to be awakened to the danger they faced, so that they could prepare for the Lord's coming. [Joel 2:11](#) ... The day of the LORD is an awesome, terrible thing. Who can possibly survive? [Joel 2:11 NLT](#). [Habakkuk 1:13](#) But you are pure and cannot stand the sight of evil. Will you wink at their treachery? Should you be silent while the wicked swallow up people more righteous than they? [Habakkuk 1:13 NLT](#). [Hosea 8:1](#) ... for they have broken my covenant and revolted against my law. [Hosea 8:1 NLT](#). [Zephaniah 1:12](#) "I will search with lanterns in Jerusalem's darkest corners to punish those who sit complacent in their sins. They think the LORD will do nothing to them, either good or bad. [Zephaniah 1:12 NLT](#). [Isaiah 13:11](#) "I, the LORD, will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their sin. I will crush the arrogance of the proud and humble the pride of the mighty. [Isaiah 13:11 NLT](#).

³⁰³ *The Essex Antiquarian*, Vol III, 1899, Salem, Mass: The Essex Antiquarian, p. 54.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Essex_Antiquarian/dfluTmx4iogC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA54&printsec=frontcover

³⁰⁴ Thomas, Isaiah, *Massachusetts Spy; or, American Oracle of Liberty*, Vol X, May 25, 1780, No. 472, p 3.

<https://archive.org/details/ThomassMassachusettsSpyOrAmericanOracleOfLiberty1780May25V10/page/n1/mode/2up>

[Zephaniah 1:18](#) Your silver and gold will not save you on that day of the LORD's anger. ... [Zephaniah 1:18 NLT](#).

To prepare people to stand in the day of the Lord, a work of reform was needed. Many people who claimed to be Christians were not preparing themselves for heaven, and God, in his mercy was about to send a message to wake them up. The message is found in [Revelation 14](#). It is a 3-part message, followed by the second coming of Christ.

The first message is, [Revelation 14:6](#) And I saw another angel flying through the sky, carrying the eternal Good News to proclaim to the people who belong to this world--to every nation, tribe, language, and people. ⁷ "Fear God," he shouted. "Give glory to him. For the time has come when he will sit as judge. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all the springs of water." [Revelation 14:6-7 NLT](#).

But the angels are symbols and will not be giving the message literally. Faithful men who were open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and were looking for new truth, would give this message. It was not the religious teachers and preachers who would give this message. They did not continue walking in the light, so darkness came upon them [[John 12:35](#)]. [John 8:12](#) Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." [John 8:12 NLT](#). Those who want to do God's will and search for truth, will receive greater light that will lead them into all truth.

Before the first coming, Jewish priests and teachers could have seen the signs and prepared the people for the coming of the Promised One. The prophecies in Micah and Daniel gave His birthplace and time. The Jewish leaders were without excuse, and their ignorance was a result of sinful neglect. All Jews should have been watching and waiting to welcome the world's Redeemer, but Jesus was born in a stable to poor and weary travelers to Bethlehem.

Angels had seen the glory Jesus shared with the Father before He was born, and they looked forward to the welcome He should have received. Angels were sent to announce the great news to those who were prepared to receive it. But there was no conversation of the great news in the temple, as priests continued offering the sacrifices which pointed to the very event they were ignorant of. In the palaces of kings, gatherings of philosophers, and the schools of the rabbis, none were talking about the expected arrival of the Redeemer. Finally, the angels found a small group of humble shepherds who were thinking about the prophecies of the Messiah, and longing for His arrival. Suddenly, the brightness and glory of the angels was revealed to the shepherds, and their voices broke out in song, [Luke 2:14](#) "Glory to God

in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased." [Luke 2:14 NLT](#).

There were also some in heathen lands that looked for the coming of the promised One. Magi in the East who were wise, wealthy, and students of nature, had read in the Hebrew scriptures, of a star that would rise out of Jacob. [Numbers 24:17](#) I see him, but not here and now. I perceive him, but far in the distant future. A star will rise from Jacob; a scepter will emerge from Israel. It will crush the foreheads of Moab's people, cracking the skulls of the people of Sheth. [Numbers 24:17 NLT](#). Unlike the Jews, these Magi read this as a promise to all nations, as did Simeon. [Luke 2:32](#) He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!" [Luke 2:32 NLT](#). While the Jewish priests and rabbis were still in darkness, these men followed a heaven-sent star to the birthplace of the newborn king.

Like the news of the Savior's birth, the message of the second coming was not received by religious leaders. Those who were considered watchmen, that should have seen the signs and announced the soon coming of the Savior, were comfortable, and dreaming of peace and prosperity, while the people that depended on them were asleep in their sins. At the time of the first coming, the Jews proudly followed their forms and rituals, while the spirit of humility, repentance and faith were missing. Since they refused to comply with the conditions, His promises were not fulfilled for them.

The churches of the Protestant movement had been privileged to receive light from God, but if they refused to continue following in the light, their spirit of godliness would disappear. This pattern of new light followed by reformation and then complacency or self-satisfaction has been repeated throughout the history of the church. Obedience to God often requires sacrifice, which is why so many who claim to be followers, refuse to accept the light, and like the Jews of old were not ready to receive the Savior. Because of their pride and unbelief, the Lord passed them by and revealed His truth to humble shepherds, and heathen Magi.

Chapter 18—An American Reformer

An honest, hard-working farmer, who wasn't even convinced of the divine authority of the Scriptures, was the man God chose to lead out in announcing the second coming. Like many other reformers, William Miller experienced poverty in his early years, which taught him lessons of hard work and self-denial. He came from a family that loved their freedom and were very patriotic. His father was a captain in the army of the Revolution that won independence for the colonies.

Miller was well suited to hard physical labor, but even as a child, he had shown signs of having a strong mind. As he grew, he was always thirsting for knowledge. He did not have the opportunity to go to college, but he studied what he had access to and became known as someone who understood many viewpoints and could make good decisions. He had good ethics and a good reputation, and he was also known as a kind person. He held various government positions and also served in the military.

In his early childhood, his mother had taught him from the Bible, but when he was a young man, he was influenced by deists. [Deists believe that a god created the world, and then just left it to operate under laws of nature designed by the creator.] They were kind, and good citizens, but rejected Christianity because there were things in the Bible that didn't make sense if God was good. When he was 34 years old, he was impressed by the Holy Spirit, that he was a sinner. His current beliefs at the time gave him no hope of anything beyond the grave. He began to wonder about eternity, and death, and he became confused and hopeless.

Suddenly, he said, he became impressed that there might be a Savior, that was a being so good and compassionate, that He would sacrifice Himself to pay the penalty for our sins. But how could he prove that such a being existed? Without the Bible, he saw no evidence of such a being, or of any existence beyond the grave. But the Bible did describe such a Savior, and he concluded that it must be a message from God. Now he delighted in studying the Bible and Jesus became like a friend. He said, I wondered how I had not seen its beauty and glory before, and marveled that I could have ever rejected it. I lost all taste for other reading and applied my heart to get wisdom from God.³⁰⁵

Miller began to tell people about his new faith in the Bible that he had formerly rejected. His associates immediately began reminding him of the difficult or contradictory passages of Scripture that he had formerly used to reject the Bible.

³⁰⁵ Bliss, Sylvester, *Memoirs of William Miller*, Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1853, p 67.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Memoirs_of_William_Miller/quw1rnlbYcwC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA67&printsec=frontcover

He didn't know how to answer his friends, but he decided if the Bible is a revelation from God, it must be consistent with itself. He decided to study the Bible for himself and see if every contradiction could be resolved.

He set aside all his former opinions, and Bible commentaries, and simply compared scripture with scripture, using the cross references and the concordance. He started with Genesis, reading verse by verse, going no faster than he could understand and explain the meaning. When he couldn't understand something, he read every verse that might possibly have any connection and did not proceed until he was satisfied. As he studied, he also prayed that God would help him to understand, and he experienced firsthand the words of this Psalm. [Psalm 119:130](#) The teaching of your word gives light, so even the simple can understand. [Psalm 119:130 NLT](#).

He became very interested in the books of Daniel and Revelation. He used the same technique that he had used for other books of the Bible and was overjoyed that he could understand the symbols. He saw that the figures and symbols in the prophetic books were all explained, either immediately, or in other parts of the Bible. Miller said, I was satisfied that the Bible is a system of revealed truths, so clearly and simply given that the wandering man, though uneducated, need not misunderstand.³⁰⁶ Step by step, he traced great lines of prophecy, as heaven guided his mind, and opened the Scriptures to his understanding.

Miller compared fulfilled prophecies with those that still appeared in the future. He began to realize that the popular doctrine of a spiritual reign of Christ, the millennium on earth before the end of the world, was not biblical. He found that the Bible predicted that things would get worse and worse toward the end. [2 Timothy 3:1](#) You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. ...¹³ But evil people and impostors will flourish. They will deceive others and will themselves be deceived. [2 Timothy 3:1,13 NLT](#). And that the darkness would continue until the Lord returns. [2 Thessalonians 2:8](#) Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will kill him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming. [2 Thessalonians 2:8 NLT](#).

The doctrine of the spiritual reign of Christ and the conversion of the world was accepted by the Protestant churches in the 18th century. It led people to believe the coming of the Lord was way off in the future, causing them to not look for the signs of His coming. Many felt no need to prepare themselves to meet their Lord.

³⁰⁶ Bliss, p 70.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Memoirs_of_William_Miller/quw1rnlbYcwC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA70&printsec=frontcover

What Miller found in his studies was that the second coming of the Lord was plainly and literally taught in the Bible. [1 Thessalonians 4:16](#) For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. [1 Thessalonians 4:16 NLT](#). [Matthew 24:27](#) For as the lightning flashes in the east and shines to the west, so it will be when the Son of Man comes. ... ³⁰ And then at last, the sign that the Son of Man is coming will appear in the heavens, and there will be deep mourning among all the peoples of the earth. And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. [Matthew 24:27, 30 NLT](#).

People will not receive the literal kingdom of God before Christ comes. [Matthew 25:31](#) "But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left. ³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. [Matthew 25:31-34 NLT](#). At the time of the second coming, the dead in Christ will be brought back to life. But they will be resurrected into immortal bodies, not like those resurrected at the time of His first coming, who eventually died again. ¹ [Corinthians 15:50](#) What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever. [1 Corinthians 15:50 NLT](#).

Miller concluded that the signs of the times matched the prophetic description of the last days, and that the earth in its present state was about to end. In his study, he had come across many time prophecies in the Bible. 120 years to the flood [[Genesis 6:3](#)], 40 days of rain [[Genesis 7:4](#)]. 400-year stay in Egypt [[Genesis 15:13](#)]. 3 days in the butler and baker's dreams [[Genesis 40:12-20](#)], and the 7 years in Pharaoh's [[Genesis 41:28-54](#)]. 70-week Messianic prophecy given to Daniel [[Daniel 9:24-27](#)]. These and other time prophecies had all been fulfilled as predicted.³⁰⁷

In his study, Miller found time periods that he understood to end with the second coming of Christ. He reasoned that this was a secret that God was revealing to His servants. [Deuteronomy 29:29](#) "The LORD our God has secrets known to no one. We are not accountable for them, but we and our children are accountable forever for all

³⁰⁷ Bliss, p 75.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Memoirs_of_William_Miller/quw1rnlbYcwC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA75&printsec=frontcover

that he has revealed to us, so that we may obey all the terms of these instructions. [Deuteronomy 29:29 NLT](#). [Amos 3:7](#) Indeed, the Sovereign LORD never does anything until he reveals his plans to his servants the prophets. [Amos 3:7 NLT](#). Based on this, he thought, the second coming, must surely be given a time prophecy.

Miller said, I was fully convinced that all Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true [[2 Timothy 3:16](#)]; no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, [[2 Peter 1:20-21](#)] and were written to teach us, as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled. [[Romans 15:4](#)]. I then felt that in trying to understand what God chose to reveal to us in the Bible, I had no right to pass over the prophetic periods.³⁰⁸

The prophecy that seemed to reveal the time of the second coming most clearly was, [Daniel 8:14](#) And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. [Daniel 8:14 KJV](#). Making Scripture its own interpreter, he learned that a day in prophecy symbolized a year in real time. [[Numbers 14:34](#); [Ezekiel 4:6](#)] He realized that 2,300 years would extend far past the existence of the Jewish sanctuary. Miller was also aware of the generally accepted Christian view, that the earth is the sanctuary, so he interpreted this verse to refer to the cleansing of the earth with fire at the second coming. If he could accurately determine the starting point of the 2,300 years, he could get a date for the return of Christ.

With renewed eagerness Miller studied from morning to evening, and sometimes entire nights as well. But he could find no clue as to the starting date in chapter 8. Focusing on the explanation by the angel given in chapter 9, which was in response to Daniel's request for help understanding the vision recorded in chapter 8. [Daniel 9:24](#) Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city ... [Daniel 9:24 KJV](#). The word "determined," is translated from [חָתַק](#), [hātak](#), which has the possible meanings, "cut off," or "divide." Miller concluded that the 70 weeks, or 490 years, were cut off or divided from the only time prophecy mentioned in chapter 8, the 2,300 years. So, if the start of the 490-year prophecy could be found, then the start of the 2,300-year prophecy could be found.

[Daniel 9:25](#) Now listen and understand! Seven sets of seven plus sixty-two sets of seven will pass from the time the command is given to rebuild Jerusalem until a ruler--the Anointed One--comes. ... [Daniel 9:25 NLT](#). Ezra, at the time of the

³⁰⁸ Bliss, p 75.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Memoirs_of_William_Miller/quw1rnlbYcwC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA75&printsec=frontcover

return from exile, wrote about the decree given by Artaxerxes [[Ezra 7:12-26](#)]. The temple had already been built by the decree of Cyrus and reaffirmed by Darius. [Ezra 1:2](#) "This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: "The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build him a Temple at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. [Ezra 1:2 NLT](#). [[2 Chronicles 36:23](#)]. [Ezra 6:14](#) So the Jewish elders continued their work, and they were greatly encouraged by the preaching of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo. The Temple was finally finished, as had been commanded by the God of Israel and decreed by Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, the kings of Persia. [Ezra 6:14 NLT](#).

Miller found the date of the Artaxerxes decree from historical records to be the autumn of 457 BC Adding 69 prophetic weeks (7 plus 62), or 483 years, brought him to the autumn of AD 27,^{309 310 311} which he determined was when Christ was baptized by John and anointed by the Holy Spirit. After His baptism, He went into Galilee, and preached: [Mark 1:15](#) "The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!" [Mark 1:15 NLT](#).

[Daniel 9:27](#) The ruler will make a treaty with the people for a period of one set of seven ... [Daniel 9:27 NLT](#). The 70th week would be from AD 27 to AD 34. The disciples were initially sent only to the Jews. [Matthew 10:5](#) Jesus sent out the twelve apostles with these instructions: "Don't go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans,⁶ but only to the people of Israel--God's lost sheep. [Matthew 10:5-6 NLT](#). [Daniel 9:27](#) ... but after half this time, he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. ... [Daniel 9:27 NLT](#). 3.5 years after His baptism, Jesus was crucified. That ended the system of sacrifices, that had been given to the Jews to point forward to the death of Christ.

After Jesus returned to heaven, the disciples still primarily preached to the Jews. But in AD 34, Stephen was stoned, and the persecution of the followers of Christ was taken to another level. That ended the 70th week, and the followers of Jesus, fled from Jerusalem, taking the gospel with them to the Gentiles. [[Acts 22:21](#)].

³⁰⁹ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3155\(132.3157\)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbv=1&pg=PA771&printsec=frontcover](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3155(132.3157)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbv=1&pg=PA771&printsec=frontcover)

³¹⁰ Horn, Sigfried H., Wood, Lynh H., *The Chronology of Ezra 7*, Washington D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association. <https://archive.org/details/prophecy-siegfried-horn-lynn-wood-the-chronology-of-ezra-7/page/n3/mode/2up>

³¹¹ Kraeling, Emil G., *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953. [I found what appears to be the book mentioned in the White Appendix but the pages (191-193) referenced do not seem to be relevant, so I just included the link to the book.] <https://archive.org/details/brooklynmuseumar0000broo/page/200/mode/2up>

Since both ends of the 490-year prophecy fit, then the starting point, 457 BC was correct. That meant he could compute the end date of the 2,300-year period, 1844, which according to [Daniel 8:14](#), was when the sanctuary would be cleansed, which was widely believed to be the second coming of Christ.

Miller had begun his methodical study of the Bible to prove that it was a revelation from God. He did not have the slightest expectation of arriving at the conclusion that now stared him in the face. He had spent two years studying to reach this conclusion, and in 1818, he was convinced that in 25 years, Christ would appear to take His people home. His heart was filled with joy at the delightful thought of what awaited the redeemed. It now seemed that glorious truth shone from the pages of the Bible, like bright, clear light. All contradictions and inconsistencies were gone, and he felt such a delight from studying the Scriptures that he never knew could be possible.³¹²

The responsibility of sharing this news with the world started to settle on him.³¹³ He was sure that the ungodly would oppose him but believed that all Christians would rejoice at hearing this message. His only fear was that with a date set so soon in the future, many would accept it without studying it for themselves. He hesitated to share it, because if he was wrong, he would be misleading others. So, he spent 5 more years, going over all his conclusions, any doubts he might have had were gone.

Now the heavy responsibility of telling others what he knew settled on him. He kept thinking of the Bible verse: [Ezekiel 33:8](#) If I announce that some wicked people are sure to die and you fail to tell them to change their ways, then they will die in their sins, and I will hold you responsible for their deaths. ⁹ But if you warn them to repent and they don't repent, they will die in their sins, but you will have saved yourself. [Ezekiel 33:8-9 NLT](#). He felt that if the wicked were not warned, he would then be responsible for their death.³¹⁴

Miller began sharing these things to small groups in private, hoping that some preacher would be convinced and start preaching it to congregations. He waited 9 years and no minister had stepped forward to help him, and he still felt the

³¹² Bliss, p 77.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Memoirs_of_William_Miller/quw1rnlbYcwC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA77&printsec=frontcover

³¹³ Bliss, p 81.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Memoirs_of_William_Miller/quw1rnlbYcwC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA81&printsec=frontcover

³¹⁴ Bliss, p 92.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Memoirs_of_William_Miller/quw1rnlbYcwC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA92&printsec=frontcover

responsibility to share with the world. Finally in 1831, he shared his views in a public meeting for the first time. Like Elisha, Miller was called to leave his oxen in the field and enter the ministry.

It was only at the urging of friends that he had shared with privately, that he finally agreed to speak in public. He was 50 years old, with no experience in public speaking, but his efforts were blessed, and from his first presentation, 13 families, minus 2 individuals were converted. Almost everywhere he preached, sinners were converted, Christians became more committed, and many unbelievers were led to agree to the truth of the Bible. It was said of those who heard him speak, a class of minds are reached by him that are not within the influence of other men.³¹⁵

In almost every town he went to, many were converted, sometimes even hundreds. Protestant church of nearly all denominations welcomed him to their pulpits. Some didn't accept the dates he had set but were convinced that the second coming was near. There was so much revival in some cities that bars stopped selling alcohol and became meeting places, and gambling dens were abandoned. Prayer meetings were held at all hours of the day, and businessmen met at noon for prayer. The usual response was belief and commitment, and not merely excitement and emotion.

In 1833, Miller was given a license to preach from the Baptist Church which he was a member of. Many of the preachers of that denomination approved of his work and asked that he continue it. Demand for his teaching was so high that he was traveling and preaching continuously, just in the New England and middle states. He was self-supporting, and even with his large family continuing to work the farm, the cost of his travel and preaching took a heavy toll on his property.

Also in 1833, two years after he had begun preaching in public, another of the signs of the second coming appeared. [Matthew 24:29](#) "Immediately after the anguish of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will give no light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. [Matthew 24:29 NLT](#). [Revelation 6:13](#) Then the stars of the sky fell to the earth like green figs falling from a tree shaken by a strong wind. [Revelation 6:13 NLT](#). This prophecy was fulfilled by the Leonid meteor shower of November 13, 1833.

No language can describe the brightness of that magnificent display. No one who did not see it for themselves can imagine its glory. It seemed as if the whole starry heavens had gathered at one point and were shooting forth with the speed of

³¹⁵ Bliss, p 138.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Memoirs_of_William_Miller/quw1rnlbYcwC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA138&printsec=frontcover

lightning to every part of the horizon. There were thousands and thousands, as if they were created for the occasion.³¹⁶ Many who saw the falling stars looked on it as an announcement of the coming judgment.³¹⁷ As a result of the fulfillment of this prophecy, many people began to seriously think about the second coming of Christ.

William Miller was a man of excellent character, and strong mind, sharpened by Bible study and prayer. He was respected, kind, humble, and patiently listened to the arguments and opinions of others. He tested all theories by the word of God, which enabled him to distinguish truth from error. As with earlier reformers, he faced bitter opposition from religious leaders. When they couldn't oppose him using the Bible, they resorted to the traditions of the Fathers, and to name calling and ridicule.

Despite the opposition, interest in the second coming continued to grow. Large groups within congregations that were believers began to be disciplined by their churches. Miller wrote, requesting that if his doctrines were false, that he be shown his error from the Bible. Throughout earth's history, messages sent to the world from God have always been received with unbelief and opposition. Noah preached of a coming flood for 120 years, and he was met with arguments from scientists, and people saying it had never rained before, and of course many made fun of him. [Matthew 24:38](#) In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat. ³⁹ People didn't realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes. [Matthew 24:38-39 NLT](#).

Why was the preaching of the second coming of Christ so unwelcome to the churches? It should be bad news to the wicked, but to the righteous and believers, it should bring joy and hope. It is those who do not love the Savior that want Him to stay away. The silent example of the believers was a constant rebuke to the uncommitted church members. They did not want to be disturbed in their chase for pleasure, money, and fame. Those who accepted the advent doctrine may have been halting between Christ and the world but chose repentance and humility before God.

³¹⁶ Jones, H., *Modern Phenomena of the Heavens*, Exeter: Willaim Bale, 1847, p 23. [Reprinted from: F. Reed, in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, Dec. 13, 1833.]

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Modern_Phenomena_of_the_Heavens_reprinte/dj5VAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA23&printsec=frontcover

³¹⁷ Jones, H, p 23. [Reprinted from: The Connecticut Observer, November 25, 1833, Copied from the Old Countryman].

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Modern_Phenomena_of_the_Heavens_reprinte/dj5VAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover&pg=PA23

When the timeline of the prophetic periods could not be argued against using the Bible, opponents claimed that the prophecies were sealed and could not be understood. In doing this, they were doing what the Roman Catholic church had done before the Reformation, in saying that common people couldn't understand the Bible.^{318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326} But this is what Jesus said about the writings of the prophet Daniel. [Matthew 24:15](#) "The day is coming when you will see what Daniel the prophet spoke about--the sacrilegious object that causes desecration standing in the Holy Place." (Reader, pay attention!) [Matthew 24:15 NLT](#). The word Revelation itself would seem to contradict the idea of not being able to understand it. [Revelation 1:3](#) God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near. [Revelation 1:3 NLT](#).

It is the will and plan of Satan, the prince of darkness, that men should think the prophecies in the Bible cannot be understood. But Jesus, through John pronounced

³¹⁸ White. [It should be noted that in recent years a dramatic and positive change has occurred in this respect. On the one hand, the church has approved several versions prepared on the basis of the original languages; on the other, it has promoted the study of the Holy Scriptures by means of free distribution and Bible institutes. The church, however, continues to reserve for herself the exclusive right to interpret the Bible in the light of her own tradition, thus justifying those doctrines that do not harmonize with Biblical teachings.]

[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3162\(132.3163\)&index=0](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3162(132.3163)&index=0),

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA771&printsec=frontcover

³¹⁹ Fisher, George Park, *The Reformation*, New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Co., 1873, p 530-532.

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moa/afy9710.0001.001/560?rgn=full+text;view=image>

³²⁰ Gibbons, James, *The Faith of Our Fathers*, 110th edition, New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1917, ch 8.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Faith_of_Our_Fathers/vzblAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA63&printsec=frontcover

³²¹ Dowling, p 491-496.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_History_of_Romanism_from_the_Earlies/aQIQAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA492&printsec=frontcover,

p 621-625.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_History_of_Romanism_from_the_Earlies/aQIQAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA621&printsec=frontcover

³²² Bungener, L. Felix, *History of the Council of Trent*, New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1855, p 98-102.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Council_of_Trent/j6oAWGsNb_gC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA98&printsec=frontcover

³²³ Putnam, George Haven, *Books and their Makers During the Middle Ages*, New York: Hillary House Publishers Ltd., 1962, p 370. https://archive.org/details/bookstheirmakers0000putn_e2a9/page/370/mode/2up

³²⁴ *Index of Prohibited Books*, Vatican City: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1930, p IX-X.

<https://archive.org/details/indexofprohibite0000unse/page/n11/mode/2up>

³²⁵ Hurley, Timothy, *A Commentary of the Present Index Legislation*, New York, Cincinnati, Chicago: Benzinger Brothers, 1908.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_Commentary_on_the_Present_Index_Legisl/T1IEAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA71&printsec=frontcover

³²⁶ Catholic Church, *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*, New York, Cincinnati, Chicago: Benzinger Brothers, 1903, p 412 [Chapter III]

<https://archive.org/details/greatencyclicall00cathuoft/greatencyclicall00cathuoft/page/408/mode/2up>

a blessing on those who read, hear, and keep, the things written in the book of Revelation.

Chapter 19—Light Through Darkness

The repeated reformations that have occurred throughout history are the work of God. Understanding them is important to help us to recognize them in the present time. God uses man to accomplish his purposes of grace and mercy. Each person who plays a part in God's great plan is given the light that is needed at his time and for his task. No person has ever fully understood the great plan of redemption.

[Job 11:7](#) "Can you solve the mysteries of God? Can you discover everything about the Almighty? [Job 11:7 NLT](#). [Isaiah 55:8](#) "My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the LORD. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. [Isaiah 55:8 NLT](#).

[1 Peter 1:10](#) This salvation was something even the prophets wanted to know more about when they prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you. ¹¹ They wondered what time or situation the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about when he told them in advance about Christ's suffering and his great glory afterward. ¹² They were told that their messages were not for themselves, but for you. And now this Good News has been announced to you by those who preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen. [1 Peter 1:10-12 NLT](#).

Even when Jesus was living among them, the disciples were so blinded by their traditions and expectations, that they failed to fully understand what He was clearly saying to them. According to their understanding of Daniel, Jesus was the Messiah, the Prince, [[Daniel 9:25](#)] and they looked forward to the kingdom He would set up in Jerusalem, from which He would rule the whole earth. They preached the message Jesus gave them, and at the very time they expected to see Him take the throne of David, He was arrested, scourged, and condemned to die as a criminal.

There is a throne and kingdom of glory that Jesus spoke of: [Matthew 25:31](#) "But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered in his presence ... [Matthew 25:31-32 NLT](#). This kingdom is still in the future and will not be set up until the second coming of Christ.

Immediately after the fall, a plan was put in place for the redemption of the guilty race. But the kingdom of grace was not established until the death of Christ. When Jesus said, "it is finished," as He breathed His last breath, the plan of redemption was assured. The promise made to Adam and Eve was fulfilled, and the kingdom of grace was established.

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to some disciples on the road to Emmaus and beginning with the writings of Moses, then the prophets, and all their Scriptures, He explained how it all pointed to Himself [[Luke 24:13-27](#)].

After they finally understood how Jesus was the fulfillment of all that was written by Moses in the Law, and also what the prophets wrote, their sadness gave way to faith. [Luke 24:53](#) And they spent all of their time in the Temple, praising God. [Luke 24:53 NLT](#). People who knew only of the death of Jesus, could not understand how the disciples could be praising God, with gladness and a sense of victory. They had passed through the deepest disappointment, and when it looked like all was lost, they learned how the prophecies had been fulfilled. [Hebrews 6:18](#) So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. ... [Hebrews 6:18 NLT](#). [1 Peter 1:25](#) But the word of the Lord remains forever." ... [1 Peter 1:25 NLT](#). They learned where Jesus was and what He was doing. [Romans 8:34](#) Who then will condemn us? No one--for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us. [Romans 8:34 NLT](#).

The experience of the disciples who preached the "gospel of the kingdom" was similar to the experience of those who preached the gospel of the second coming. The preaching of the disciples was based on the 70-week prophecy in [Daniel 9](#). The message given by Miller and his associates was based on the 2,300-day prophecy of [Daniel 8:14](#). The two time periods were both part of the same great prophetic period. Like the disciples, Miller and his associates did not fully understand the importance of the message. In both cases, long-established errors in thinking led to an incorrect interpretation of the outcome. They both proclaimed the message given to them, and both suffered disappointment.

The Jewish sanctuary system was symbolic of the sacrifice on the cross and the priesthood of Christ in heaven. The cleansing of the Jewish sanctuary was the last service performed by the high priest in the yearly cycle. It was the closing work of putting away the sins of Israel. It symbolized the closing work of our heavenly High Priest, in the removal of the sins from His people. It is a work of investigation, and judgment, because when Christ returns in the clouds of glory, every case will have been decided. [Revelation 22:12](#) "Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds. [Revelation 22:12 NLT](#). The message that ended up being given was the first angel's message. [Revelation 14:7](#) "Fear God," he shouted. "Give glory to him. For the time has come when he will sit as judge. ... [Revelation 14:7 NLT](#). The right message was given at the right time, and even though they failed to understand the true meaning, God's purpose was still accomplished.

Though the disappointment was a result of their own misunderstanding, it served a purpose in testing the hearts of those who received and shared the warning. In their disappointment would they reject everything, or would they humbly study and pray to learn what they had misunderstood? It taught them the danger of accepting tradition, instead of allowing the Bible to be its own interpreter. With those remaining believers, as with the first disciples, the darkness that resulted from their misunderstanding would be made plain.

Chapter 20—A Great Religious Awakening

[Revelation 14:6](#) And I saw another angel flying through the sky, carrying the eternal Good News to proclaim to the people who belong to this world--to every nation, tribe, language, and people. ⁷ "Fear God," he shouted. "Give glory to him. For the time has come when he will sit as judge. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all the springs of water." [Revelation 14:6-7 NLT](#). The fulfillment of this prophecy led to a great religious awakening.

The angel was flying, and proclaimed its message to every nation, tribe, language, and people. This meant the fulfillment of this prophecy would be fast and global. The message was the good news of the gospel, but there was something in the message that specified the time. "For the time has come when He will sit as judge." What led to the message being given was the prophecy from [Daniel 8:14](#), which was a part of the book that would be sealed up until the time of the end. [Daniel 12:4](#) But you, Daniel, keep this prophecy a secret; seal up the book until the time of the end, when many will rush here and there, and knowledge will increase." [Daniel 12:4 NLT](#).

Paul told the church not to look for the second coming and the judgment in their day. [2 Thessalonians 2:3](#) ... For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed--the one who brings destruction. [2 Thessalonians 2:3 NLT](#). The rebellion and the falling away were characteristics of the era of papal dominance, which ended in 1798. Since 1798, knowledge of the prophecies of Daniel have increased.

Like the great Reformation of the 16th century, the advent movement appeared in different countries at the same time. In Europe and America, men of faith studying the Bible alone, determined that the second coming was near. In 1821, 3 years after Miller arrived at his conclusion, Dr. Joseph Wolff, began to preach the Lord's soon coming. Wolff was born in Germany to a devout Jewish family, his father being a rabbi. He had an active mind and wanted to understand things. One day he heard about Jesus of Nazareth and asked who He was. His father answered, a Jew of greatest talent, but when He claimed to be the Messiah, the Jews sentenced Him to death. He then asked, why is Jerusalem destroyed, and his father answered, because the Jews murdered the prophets. Joseph immediately thought, maybe Jesus was a prophet, and was killed by the Jews even though He was innocent.³²⁷

³²⁷ Wolff, Joseph, *Travels and Adventures of the Rev. Joseph Wolff*, London: Saunder, Otley & Company, 1861, p 4. https://www.google.com/books/edition/Travels_and_Adventures_of_the_Rev_Joseph/GTCurVPPNOUC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA4&printsec=frontcover

When he was 7 years old, he once boasted to an old Christian neighbor of the future glory of Israel when the Messiah would come. The old man said, dear boy, I will tell you who the real Messiah was. He was Jesus of Nazareth, whom your ancestors crucified as they did the prophets of old. Go home and read the 53rd chapter of Isaiah and you will be convinced that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.³²⁸ He went home and read that chapter and was amazed at how well it had been fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth. When he asked his father about it, he received such a displeased look of silence that he never dared to bring it up again. This response from his father only increased his curiosity and desire to learn more about Christianity.

When he was 11 years old, he left home to educate himself, and to choose his religion and life work. He was alone, and poor, but continued studying, and was able to support himself a little by teaching Hebrew. He chose to become a Catholic and decided that he would become a missionary to the Jews. When he went to college in Rome, his independent thought, and willingness to speak what was on his mind brought him trouble. He openly attacked the corruption of the church and urged reform. After some time, they realized they could not influence or change him, so they asked him to leave.

From Rome, he went to England and accepted the Protestant faith and joined the Church of England. In 1821, after studying for 2 years, he went on his first mission. Wolff preached that in His first coming, Christ was “a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.” But he also taught that there were prophecies that pointed to His second coming with power and glory.

He taught that Jesus would come a second time, in the clouds of heaven with the trump of the Archangel³²⁹ and would stand on the Mount of Olives, and be given the dominion once held by Adam [[Genesis 1:26](#); [3:17](#)]. Pain and sorrow would be replaced by praise and thanksgiving. Dead believers would rise in the first resurrection [[1 Thessalonians 4:16](#)]. Even the animal kingdom would be changed

³²⁸ Wolff, *Travels and Adventures of the Rev. Joseph Wolff*, p 5.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Travels_and_Adventures_of_the_Rev_Joseph/GTCurVPPNOUC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA5&printsec=frontcover

³²⁹ Wolff, Joseph, *Researches and Missionary Labors*, London: James Nisbet & Company, 1835, p 61.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Researches_and_Missionary_Labours_Among/hCPSAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA61&printsec=frontcover

[[Isaiah 11:6-9](#)], and there would be peace on earth.³³⁰ Then God could look upon it and once again say “it is very good.”³³¹

Wolff believed the coming of Jesus was near based on his interpretation of prophecies. He even proposed a time that was within a few years of that taught by Miller. When people pointed out what Jesus said, [Matthew 24:36](#) "However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows. [Matthew 24:36 NLT](#). Wolff’s response was, did He say it would never be known? Didn’t He give signs of the times to know when His coming would be near? [[Matthew 24:32](#)]. Enough shall be known by the signs of the times to convince us to prepare for His coming, as Noah prepared the ark.³³²

During the 24 years from 1821-1845, Wolff traveled to Africa (Egypt, Abyssinia), Asia (Palestine, Syria, Persia, Bokhara, India), and the United States (Saint Helena, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington). He was invited to speak in Congress by ex-President John Quincy Adams. He also spoke to the State governments of New Jersey and Pennsylvania.³³³

Wolff traveled in dangerous countries without the protection of any European government, and endured hardship and danger. He was beaten, starved, sold into slavery, condemned to die 3 times, attacked by thieves, nearly died from thirst. Once he was stripped of everything he possessed and left to travel hundreds of miles barefoot through the snowy mountains. When he was warned of the danger of some tribes, he said I have protection—prayer, eagerness for Christ, and confidence in His help. I also have the love of God and my neighbor in my heart, and my Bible in my hand.³³⁴ Wolff carried the Bible in English and Hebrew

³³⁰ Wolff, Joseph, *Journal of the Rev. Joseph Wolff*, London: James Burns, 1839, p 379.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Journal_in_a_Series_of_Letters_to_Sir_Th/EY3SvjqX6ycC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA379&printsec=frontcover

³³¹ Wolff, *Journal of the Rev. Joseph Wolff*, p 294.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Journal_in_a_Series_of_Letters_to_Sir_Th/EY3SvjqX6ycC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA294&printsec=frontcover

³³² Wolff, *Researches and Missionary Labors*, p 394.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Researches_and_Missionary_Labours_Among/hCPSAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA394&printsec=frontcover

³³³ Wolff, *Journal of the Rev. Joseph Wolff*, p 399.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Journal_in_a_Series_of_Letters_to_Sir_Th/EY3SvjqX6ycC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA399&printsec=frontcover

³³⁴ Adams, W. H. Davenport, *In Perils Oft*, London: John Hogg, 1885, p 192.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/In_perils_of_romantic_biographies_illus/6h4IAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA192&printsec=frontcover

everywhere he went. He said, I felt my power was in the Book, and that its might would sustain me.³³⁵

He took the message of the coming judgment to a large part of the world. He took the Bible to Jews, Turks, Parsees, Hindus, and many other nationalities. When he was in Bokhara, he met some isolated Arabs of Yemen, who had a book called *Seera*, which mentioned the second coming of Christ and His reign in glory. They expected the great events to take place in the year 1840.³³⁶ He spent some time with the children of Rechab in Yemen, who drink no wine, and sleep in tents. With them there were some Israelites from the tribe of Dan, and they both expected the soon coming of the Messiah in the clouds of heaven.³³⁷

Tartary, in Western Europe, was found by another missionary to have a belief based on prophecy, that Christ would come about 1844.

As early as 1826 the advent message was preached in England. The activity did not focus on a specific time, as in America, but the great truth of the second coming of Christ in glory was preached. Mourant Brock, an English writer, said there were about 700 ministers of the Church of England, who were preaching the gospel of the kingdom. In 1842, Robert Winter, an Englishman, heard the advent message in America, and returned to England to share the message.

In South America, Lacunza, a Spanish Jesuit learned of the truth of Christ's soon coming from the Scriptures. Wishing to share what he had learned without interference from Rome, he published his views under the name Rabbi Ben-Ezra. Lacunza lived in the prior century, but his book was translated to English in London in 1825.^{338 339}

³³⁵ Adams, p 201.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/In_perils_of_romantic_biographies_illus/6h4IAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA201&printsec=frontcover

³³⁶ Wolff, *Journal of the Rev. Joseph Wolff*, p 377.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Journal_in_a_Series_of_Letters_to_Sir_Th/EY3SvjqX6ycC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA377&printsec=frontcover

³³⁷ Wolff, *Journal of the Rev. Joseph Wolff*, p 389.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Journal_in_a_Series_of_Letters_to_Sir_Th/EY3SvjqX6ycC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA389&printsec=frontcover

³³⁸ Ben-Ezra, Juan Josafat, *The Coming of the Messiah in Majesty and Glory*, Vol I, London: L. B. Seeley and Son, 1827.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Coming_of_Messiah_in_Glory_and_Majes/f2pAAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PP9&printsec=frontcover

³³⁹ Ben-Ezra, Juan Josafat, *The Coming of the Messiah in Majesty and Glory*, Vol II, London: L. B. Seeley and Son, 1827.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Coming_of_Messiah_in_Glory_and_Majes/impAAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PP9&printsec=frontcover

Bengel was a Lutheran minister in Germany in the 18th century.³⁴⁰ While preparing a sermon from [Revelation 21](#) for advent Sunday, the light of the second coming dawned on him. The prophecies of Revelation were revealed to his understanding like never before. When he was preaching, again the subject came to him with such power and clarity, and from that time he devoted himself to studying the prophecies. He set a date for the second advent what was within a few years of that proposed by Miller. His writings were well received in his own state of Wurttemberg, and to some extent in other parts of Germany. Even after his death, the movement continued, and there are some German churches in Russia that believe in the soon coming of Christ.

In Geneva where Farel and Calvin spread the Reformation, Gaussen later preached the message of the second advent. He had become interested in prophecy in his youth after reading Rollin's *Ancient History*³⁴¹. He was amazed at how the prophecies from the 2nd chapter of Daniel were fulfilled so precisely. As he continued studying the prophecies, he arrived at the belief that the coming of the Lord was near. He had a great desire to bring this message to the people, and as Farel had done before, he began with the children³⁴², hoping to interest the parents through them. He was successful and soon his church was filled with eager listeners. He even began to print his lessons, hoping to reach more churches of French-speaking people. Later he became a professor in a theological school but still continued teaching children from the Scriptures on Sunday. For many years he continued teaching and was successful at reaching many people with the message of the soon coming of the Lord.

In Scandinavia, the advent message was also proclaimed to widespread interest. But the church leaders opposed it and imprisoned some who preached it. In places where the preachers had been silenced, God moved in a miraculous way on children, who began to teach, and the state couldn't stop them. The child preachers were mostly from poor families, some not more than 6 to 8 years of age. Normally, they spoke and behaved like children, but when they were preaching, it was apparent that they were moved by a higher power. Even their tone and manner changed, and they quoted the words from Scripture: Fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come. The Spirit of God led many to search

³⁴⁰ <https://www.journals.uts.edu/volume-xi-2010/102-the-end-time-calculation-of-johann-albrecht-bengel>

³⁴¹ Rollins, Charles, *Ancient History*, London: Printed for J. and F. Rivington, 1768.

<https://archive.org/details/ancienthistoryof0168roll>

³⁴² L. Gaussen, translated by Margaret Blackstone, *The Prophet Daniel Explained*, vol. 2, London: J. & C. Mozley, Winchester: Warren & Son, 1874, preface.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_prophet_Daniel_explained_tr_by_M_Bla/BqQCAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbv=1&pg=PP7&printsec=frontcover

the Scriptures and repent of their sins. Even the leaders of the state church had to admit that God was behind the movement.

When Jesus approached Jerusalem and the crowds were rejoicing and shouting hosanna to the Son of David, the Pharisees asked Him to silence them. Jesus responded, that if the people were silenced, the rocks would cry out in their place [[Luke 19:40](#)]. After Jesus chased out the people selling things in the temple, the children gathered around Him and cried out "Hosanna to the Son of David!" [[Matthew 21:15](#)]. When the chief priests and scribes asked Him to silence the children, He responded: [Matthew 21:16](#) They asked Jesus, "Do you hear what these children are saying?" "Yes," Jesus replied. "Haven't you ever read the Scriptures? For they say, 'You have taught children and infants to give you praise.'" [Matthew 21:16 NLT](#).

With Miller being the central figure, and many others who believed, America became the center of the advent movement. That is where the prophecy of the first angel's message was most directly fulfilled. But the writings of Miller and his associates were also carried to distant lands, and the message of the everlasting gospel was given to the world. [Revelation 14:7](#) "Fear God," he shouted. "Give glory to him. For the time has come when he will sit as judge. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all the springs of water." [Revelation 14:7 NLT](#).

As the message of the second coming spread across the United States, some ministers received the truth and joined in proclaiming the news, however the message was mostly spread by laymen [people not trained for religious jobs]. Many left their jobs or their businesses to spend all their time spreading the news. Their efforts were opposed by Satan, but the work went steadily forward. These workers were like John the Baptist, preparing the way for the coming of Christ. People from all classes of society came to meetings to hear the message of the second coming. The Lord held back the spirit of opposition while the message was presented. Sometimes the speaker was weak and not very impressive, but the Spirit of God gave power to the truth being presented.

The setting of a date for the time of Christ's return was opposed by many. [2 Peter 3:3](#) Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. ⁴ They will say, "What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? From before the times of our ancestors, everything has remained the same since the world was first created." [2 Peter 3:3-4 NLT](#). There were many who claimed to love the Lord, and said they believed in the second coming, but objected to the setting of a definite time. Many were not ready to meet the Lord, and to be judged by Him. Some who refused to accept the message made fun of those who did. Most of those who opposed, quoted

the words of Jesus: [Matthew 24:36](#) "However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows. [Matthew 24:36 NLT](#).

Believers explained how that statement by Jesus was given at the same time He gave many signs so that they could know when His coming was near, [Matthew 24:33](#) In the same way, when you see all these things, you can know his return is very near, right at the door. [Matthew 24:33 NLT](#). Those who opposed the warning and the signs would be like those living in the time of Noah, who were warned of a coming flood. [Matthew 24:37](#) "When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah's day.³⁸ In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat.³⁹ People didn't realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes. [Matthew 24:37-39 NLT](#). In the same conversation, Jesus also said to watch and be ready. [Matthew 24:42](#) "So you, too, must keep watch! For you don't know what day your Lord is coming. [Matthew 24:42 NLT](#). [Revelation 3:3](#) ... If you don't wake up, I will come to you suddenly, as unexpected as a thief. [Revelation 3:3 NLT](#).

Many who accepted the teachings of the soon coming Christ were persecuted by their unbelieving fellow church members. Many were kicked out of their churches for simply saying they believed Christ was coming soon. So, they took heart from the words of the prophet: [Isaiah 66:5](#) ... "Your own people hate you and throw you out for being loyal to my name. 'Let the LORD be honored!' they scoff. 'Be joyful in him!' But they will be put to shame. [Isaiah 66:5 NLT](#). Sadly, some were even discouraged from believing by husbands, wives, parents, or children.

As the appointed time drew near, those who believed looked forward to the coming of their Savior. For most, in the weeks leading up to the appointed time, jobs and usual business activities were ignored. Sincere believers searched their hearts to make sure they were ready, as a believer might do on their deathbed.

A great test was coming for God's people. It was as if His hand had covered a mistake in the interpretation of the prophecy. The anticipated time came and passed, and Christ did not come. Those who sincerely believed were bitterly disappointed, but everything was happening as God had foreseen. This turned out to be a test, of who sincerely desired their Lord to return, and who was simply going along from fear of missing out. When Jesus did not come as expected, those who were not sincere, claimed that they never really believed and were the first to make fun of the true believers. But Jesus and the angels looked with love and sympathy on the disappointed faithful ones. Angels were there to protect them from the attacks of Satan.

Chapter 21—A Warning Rejected

In the advent movement, William Miller and his associates never tried to get anyone to join a particular church. They only wished to prepare people for the coming judgment. Miller also never had the desire or thought to establish a new Christian denomination. His goal was to reach all denominations.³⁴³

Since he never attacked any denomination for their beliefs, and his preaching built up churches, ministers were friendly to him at first. But ministers and religious leaders eventually had to take a stand one way or the other, and those who rejected the advent message took an active stand against it. They even spoke out against the advent message and went as far as to try to prevent their members from attending meetings. This forced church members into a difficult position of choosing to maintain their current church membership or believe in the soon return of Jesus. In the summer of 1844 about 50,000 Christians, withdrew from their churches.

In the Christian churches in the United States over the years, there had been a gradual increase in worldliness, and a decline in spirituality. But in 1844, a marked decline, above the usual, was noticed. At a meeting of the presbytery of Philadelphia, Mr. Barnes, a pastor of one of the leading churches in that city said, he had been in the ministry for 20 years, and he had never seen such a lack of emotion or interest. There were no new conversions, no growth, none came to his Bible studies to talk about salvation. It was like this with all the denominations.³⁴⁴

Professor Finney of Oberlin College said, in general, the Protestant churches of our country could not care less or even greatly opposed moral reforms. There have been no revivals, and the trend has been to become more worldly concerning parties, fashion, dancing, etc.... The churches have become sadly degenerate. They have gone very far from the Lord, and He has withdrawn Himself from them.

A writer in the *Religious Telescope* wrote, we have never witnessed such a general decline of religion as at the present. When we see how few true conversions there are, and contrast that with hard heartedness, we ask, has God forgotten to be gracious, or is the door of mercy closed?

This type of spiritual darkness falls on nations, churches, and individuals for a reason. It is not due to a withdrawal of God's grace, but rather to the rejection of light that He is trying to give. This same thing occurred in the history of the Jews at the time of Christ's first coming. Their worldliness and neglect of the Scriptures

³⁴³ Bliss, p 328.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Memoirs_of_William_Miller/quw1rnlbYcwC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA328&printsec=frontcover

³⁴⁴ *Congregational Journal*, May 23, 1844. [I could not find a publicly available source for this on the Internet]

led to a lack of understanding, and their ignorance about the Messiah's arrival. In their pride and unbelief, they even rejected the Redeemer. Those who rejected the truth lost all desire for the gift of heaven. The light from heaven became like darkness to them.

Satan is fine with people belonging to religious organizations when they just follow rituals but have no true godliness. Even after killing their Messiah, the Jews continued their ancient rituals and ceremonies. The prophecies of Daniel so clearly pointed to the death of the Messiah that they discouraged people from studying them. Finally, the rabbis pronounced a curse on all who should attempt to use them to compute the time of the Messiah's coming.

He who knowingly ignores what he knows he should do because it is not convenient, will ultimately lose the power to distinguish between truth and error. The voice of conscience becomes quieter, the heart becomes hardened, and the soul becomes separated from God. When divine truth is rejected, the church will be left in darkness.

The first angel's message of [Revelation 14:6-7](#) announced the hour of God's judgment and called people to respect and worship Him. It was meant to awaken the church to see their true condition. If they had accepted the message and humbled themselves before the Lord, truly seeking to prepare themselves for His return, the Spirit and power of God would have been with them. The church would have reached the state of unity, faith, and love that it had in the days of the apostles. These were the results experienced by those who accepted the advent message. They came from different denominations, and their former differences no longer mattered. Unscriptural beliefs like the temporal millennium were abandoned.

But churches in general did not accept the warning. Ministers who should have been the first to study the prophecies and see the signs of the times failed. The fact that the message was first preached by people who were not trained in religious studies was one of the reasons used to reject it. The same argument was used against Jesus in His first coming. [John 7:48](#) "Is there a single one of us rulers or Pharisees who believes in him? [John 7:48 NLT](#). Many who trusted their pastors refused the warnings, and some who were convinced dared not say so because they feared they would be kicked out of the church. [John 12:42](#) Many people did believe in him, however, including some of the Jewish leaders. But they wouldn't admit it for fear that the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue. [John 12:42 NLT](#).

The first angel of [Revelation 14:6-7](#) is followed by a second: [Revelation 14:8](#) Then another angel followed him through the sky, shouting, "Babylon is fallen--that great city is fallen--because she made all the nations of the world drink the wine of

her passionate immorality." [Revelation 14:8 NLT](#). Babylon is symbolic in the Bible of false or corrupted religion. In [Revelation 17](#), Babylon is symbolized as a woman, and a woman symbolizes a church or religion. A pure woman symbolizes the true church of God, and a wicked woman, a false or corrupted religion or church.

In the Bible, the relationship between Christ and His church is represented by marriage. [Hosea 2:19](#) I will make you my wife forever, showing you righteousness and justice, unending love and compassion. [Hosea 2:19 NLT](#). [Jeremiah 3:14](#) "Return home, you wayward children," says the LORD, "for I am your master. I will bring you back to the land of Israel--one from this town and two from that family--from wherever you are scattered. [Jeremiah 3:14 NLT](#). [2 Corinthians 11:2](#) For I am jealous for you with the jealousy of God himself. I promised you as a pure bride to one husband--Christ. [2 Corinthians 11:2 NLT](#).

The unfaithfulness of the church is likened to a wife violating her marriage vows. At one time, the nation of Israel was God's church, and her wandering from the Lord was described by the prophets. [Ezekiel 16:8](#) And when I passed by again, I saw that you were old enough for love. So I wrapped my cloak around you to cover your nakedness and declared my marriage vows. I made a covenant with you, says the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine. ... ¹³ And so you were adorned with gold and silver. Your clothes were made of fine linen and were beautifully embroidered. You ate the finest foods--choice flour, honey, and olive oil--and became more beautiful than ever. You looked like a queen, and so you were! ¹⁴ Your fame soon spread throughout the world because of your beauty. I dressed you in my splendor and perfected your beauty, says the Sovereign LORD. ¹⁵ "But you thought your fame and beauty were your own. So you gave yourself as a prostitute to every man who came along. Your beauty was theirs for the asking. ... ³² Yes, you are an adulterous wife who takes in strangers instead of her own husband. [Ezekiel 16:8, 13-15, 32 NLT](#). [Jeremiah 3:20](#) But you have been unfaithful to me, you people of Israel! You have been like a faithless wife who leaves her husband. I, the LORD, have spoken." [Jeremiah 3:20 NLT](#).

Christians in the New Testament who seek the friendship of the world above the favor of God are described in similar language. [James 4:4](#) You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. [James 4:4 NLT](#).

The woman, Babylon, is described: [Revelation 17:4](#) The woman wore purple and scarlet clothing and beautiful jewelry made of gold and precious gems and pearls. In her hand she held a gold goblet full of obscenities and the impurities of her immorality.

⁵ A mysterious name was written on her forehead: "Babylon the Great, Mother of All Prostitutes and Obscenities in the World." ⁶ I could see that she was drunk-- drunk with the blood of God's holy people who were witnesses for Jesus. I stared at her in complete amazement. ... ¹⁸ And this woman you saw in your vision represents the great city that rules over the kings of the world." [Revelation 17:4-6, 18 NLT](#). The power that for so many centuries reigned over kings of the earth was the Christian church of Rome. The purple and scarlet, gold, and jewels, are symbolic of the pope proudly lording it over kings. No other power, over the period prophesied is more guilty of the blood of the saints.

Babylon was also said to be the mother of harlots, meaning her daughters followed her example in doctrine and alliances with the world. The fall described in [Revelation 14:8](#), must imply that before the fall, there was once purity. And in the timeline of the message, being given in the last days, the fall must include the daughters as well. The message in [Revelation 18:4](#), is a call to God's people to come out of Babylon, and at the time, most of God's people were coming out of the Protestant churches.

Many Protestant churches followed Rome's example of sinful connections with the kings of the earth. This was fulfilled by Protestant churches, after triumphing over the church of Rome, becoming the state church. Babylon also means confusion, and the different beliefs of the many denominations are also evidence of that. But the daughter churches were guilty of more than just the union with the world.

If the Church of Rome is guilty of idolatry in relation to the saints, her daughter, the Church of England, is guilty of the same, with 10 churches dedicated to Mary for each one that is dedicated to Christ.³⁴⁵ The Protestant churches have much of the antichrist in them, and are far from being wholly reformed from ... corruption and wickedness.³⁴⁶ Dr. Guthrie writes about the Presbyterian Church: three hundred years ago, our church, with an open Bible on her banner, and this motto, 'Search the Scriptures,' on her scroll, marched out from the gates of Rome. Did they come clean out of Babylon?³⁴⁷

³⁴⁵ Challoner, Richard, *The Catholic Christian Instructed*, Derby: Richardson & Son, 1843, p 19.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Catholic_Christian_Instructed/PNqSBDz1jU8C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA19&printsec=frontcover

³⁴⁶ Hopkins, Samuel, *The System of Doctrines, Contained in Divine Revelation, Explained and Defended*, Vol II, Boston: Lincoln & Edmands, 1811, p 506.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_System_of_Doctrines_contained_in_Div/t1gwn9ODnQsC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA506&printsec=frontcover

³⁴⁷ Guthrie, Thomas, *The Gospel in Ezekiel*, Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1856, p 230.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Gospel_in_Ezekiel/vkJVAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA230&printsec=frontcover

The origin of the great apostasy was accepting certain pagan practices to make it easier for heathens to become Christian. The apostle Paul wrote: [2 Thessalonians 2:7](#) For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way. [2 Thessalonians 2:7 NLT](#). During the lives of the apostles the church remained mostly pure. But the next generation began to remodel the cause.³⁴⁸ To gain more converts, the standards were lowered, and a flood of pagans flowed into the church, bringing with them their customs, practices, and idols.³⁴⁹

The same process was mostly repeated in each Protestant church. The founders had the true spirit of reform, then the next generation came along and remodeled the cause, while at the same time refusing to accept any new truth. The humility, self-denial, and rejection of the world disappeared along with the first generation, and a flood of worldly converts flowed in with succeeding generations, keeping their customs, practices, and idols.

How many professed followers of God, instead of rejecting worldliness, chase after it. John Wesley spoke of the right use of money. Do not waste it on expensive clothing, unneeded decorations, expensive furniture, or costly artwork. Don't accumulate things so you can be proud of it, or to gain the admiration or praise of men. Be content with the honor that comes from God.³⁵⁰

There are times when it is popular in the world to be associated with a particular religion. In those times, rulers, politicians, lawyers, doctors, and merchants may join the church to gain the respect and confidence of society, thus advancing their own interests. Churches benefit financially from these unconverted people and then use the wealth to beautify itself to make it more popular, and to gain more converts. Worshippers dress in expensive and fashionable clothes. A lot of money is paid for a pastor that is good at attracting and entertaining people and can say popular and pleasing things in his sermons, so the members can feel comfortable in their sins.

The church adapts to forms of worship that will make itself attractive. The line of separation between the godly and the unreligious becomes thin, and both sides

³⁴⁸ Robinson, Robert, *Ecclesiastical Researches*, Cambridge: Francis Hodsen, 1792, p 51.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Ecclesiastical_Researches/KwBNAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA51&printsec=frontcover

³⁴⁹ St. John, H. A., *Our Banquet*, San Francisco: H. A. St. John, 1894, p 358.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Our_Banquet/YmtFhxWCKOQC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA358&printsec=frontcover

³⁵⁰ Wesley, John, *Sermons on Several Occasion*, Hudson: William E. Norman, 1810, p 261.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Sermons_on_Several_Occasions/nmdGAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA261&printsec=frontcover

work to make differences between their activities and enjoyment even smaller. Allowing many to gain benefits from membership without giving anything up makes religion popular.

In the movement toward worldliness and pleasure seeking, self-denial and self-sacrifice for Christ's sake are almost nonexistent. Some were taught when young to make sacrifices to give something to Jesus. But now when money is needed, the church thinks it must entertain or give something to entice people to give.

Churches, without realizing it, are doing the work of the devil. Raffles and lotteries are used by churches and schools to raise money, teaching that something can be obtained without working for it. Good people are playing these games of chance, telling themselves it is for a good cause, but it may be habit forming for some.³⁵¹

The spirit of worldly conformity is invading Christian churches. Robert Atkins preached a sermon that drew a dark picture of the churches in England at the time. The professors of religion in the present day, in every church, are lovers of the world and its comforts, and seekers of respectability. Christ called his followers to suffer as He did, but they shrink from disapproval. Apostasy is written on the front of every church, but they do they realize it. Instead, they say 'we are rich, and increased in goods, and stand in need of nothing.'³⁵²

The great sin of Babylon is that she made all nations drink the wine of the wrath of her fornication. This wine represents the false doctrines that she developed because of her connection with the great ones of the earth. Friendship with the world corrupts her faith, and in turn she corrupts the world by teaching it doctrines that are opposed to the plain statements of the Bible.

The Reformation brought people back to the word of God, but again they are being taught to put their trust in the teaching of the church rather than the Scriptures. Speaking of the Protestant churches, Charles Beecher said: they shrink from any rude word against the creeds with the same sensitiveness with which those holy fathers would have shrunk from a rude word against the saints and martyrs. The Protestant evangelical denominations have so tied up one another's hands, and their own, that between them all, a man cannot become a preacher at all, anywhere

³⁵¹ *State of Wisconsin Governors Message*, 1872, Vol I, Madison, WIS: Atwood & Culver, 1873, p 11.

<https://www.google.com/books/edition/Message/9gE5AQAAAMAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA11&printsec=frontcover>

³⁵² Hull, Moses, *Two Volumes in One*, Buffalo, NY: Moses Hull & Co., Chicago: The Progressive Thinker, 1901, p 294.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Two_Volumes_in_One_Or_The_Question_of_th/XwU1AAAAMAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA294&printsec=frontcover

without accepting some book besides the Bible.³⁵³ If the world were not so drunk with the wine of Babylon, many would be convicted and converted by the plain truths of the Bible. But religious faith is so confusing, and contradictory, that people don't know what to believe.

The second angel's message of [Revelation 14:8](#) was first preached in the summer of 1844. It had a more direct application to the churches of the United States, where the warning was most widely proclaimed, and most generally rejected. The message of the second angel was not completely fulfilled in 1844. Following the rejection of the warning, the churches did experience a moral fall, but as they continued to reject additional light, they have fallen even lower and lower. But the ultimate fulfillment will not take place until she has made *all nations* drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

The Bible says that before the coming of the Lord, [2 Thessalonians 2:9](#) This man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles.¹⁰ He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them.¹¹ So God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies. [2 Thessalonians 2:9-11 NLT](#). This condition will be reached when the union of church and state is accomplished across all Christianity. At that time the fall of Babylon will be complete.

The great body of Christ's true followers are still in the fellowship of these churches which are sinking lower and lower. Many are not satisfied with their present condition and are longing for clearer light. They are looking for the image of Christ in their churches and cannot find it. As the church falls farther from the truth, and aligns herself more closely with the world, the gap between God's true followers and the churches will get so wide, that God's people will come out. They can no longer remain in fellowship with those who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness but denying its power [[2 Timothy 3:5](#)].

[Revelation 18](#) points to a time when, as the result of rejecting the three warnings of [Revelation 14:6-12](#), the church will have fully reached the condition stated by the second angel. At that time, the people of God still in Babylon will be called to separate from her. This message is the last that will ever be given to the world. Those who do not believe the truth will be left to believe a lie. The light of truth

³⁵³ *Christian Tracts*, Vol I, NY: William Clarke, 1847, p 140.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Christian_Tracts/_X9TAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA142&printsec=frontcover

will shine, and all the children of God who are still in Babylon will obey the call and come out of her [[Revelation 18:4](#)].

Chapter 22—Prophecies Fulfilled

At first it was the spring of 1844 when the Lord was expected to return. But when that time came and passed, the world treated the Adventists as having been defeated and deceived. At first those who were truly faithful had doubts and uncertainty, but they continued to search the prophecies for more light. The signs pointing to the soon coming of Christ were unmistakable, and the revival among Christians and the conversion of sinners was surely from God.

The words of the prophet Habakkuk were an encouragement to them at this time. [Habakkuk 2:1](#) I will climb up to my watchtower and stand at my guardpost. There I will wait to see what the LORD says and how he will answer my complaint. ² Then the LORD said to me, "Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others. ³ This vision is for a future time. It describes the end, and it will be fulfilled. If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed. ⁴ "Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked. But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God. [Habakkuk 2:1-4 NLT](#).

To obey the words of the Lord, Charles Fitch, in 1842 published a chart with the timeline of the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation. But no one had paid any attention to the words mentioning a waiting time. Now they took heart, from the words, "If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently, for it will surely take place."

The parable of the 10 virgins in [Matthew 25](#) also seemed to indicate a delay. [Matthew 25:1](#) "Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³ The five who were foolish didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps, ⁴ but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil. ⁵ When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. ⁶ "At midnight they were roused by the shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!' [Matthew 25:1-6 NLT](#).

The coming of Christ announced by the first angel's message was thought to be the coming of the bridegroom. In the parable of the virgins, all had their lamps, but half of them had oil and the rest did not. In this time of disappointment, those who had received the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, had studied the Scriptures and earnestly wished for purity of heart and life. They had a personal experience with God and faith in His word, and they could not be defeated by disappointment and delay. On the other hand, were others who had joined the movement impulsively, and were motivated by fear and emotion, and were looking

for an immediate reward. These were not prepared for delay and disappointment, and when it came, their faith failed, and their light went out.

About this time, fanaticism began to appear. Some who claimed to believe, rejected the Bible as the only unfailing guide, and claimed that they were led by the Spirit. They allowed themselves to be guided by their feelings, impressions, and imaginations, and denounced all who would not agree with them. Their ideas were not accepted by most Adventists, but their actions brought disgrace on the whole group.

Satan has always been present to oppose God's people as they make advances. In the entire history of the church, no reformation took place without obstacles. When the apostle Paul started a church, there were always some who would receive the faith, but brought heresies with them. Luther also suffered distress from the actions of fanatics, who claimed God had spoken to them, and placed their ideas above the word of God. Many who were not grounded in the word of God and who were always looking for some new thing, were led astray.

Miller had no sympathy for fanaticism, and like Luther before him, said every spirit should be tested by the word of God. He said the devil has great power over the minds of some at this time. How shall we know what spirit they are motivated by? The Bible answers: [Matthew 7:20](#) Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions. [Matthew 7:20 NLT](#). The spirit that does not motivate us to live soberly, righteously, and godly, is not of Christ. Many among us who pretend to be believers, but are still following the ways of the world, are as ignorant of the truth as those who don't believe.³⁵⁴

Can a person think he has the truth but be wrong? If his ideas are in complete harmony with the word of God, then he can believe he has truth. But if he does not find complete harmony with the Bible, he should be careful, lest he be caught in the snare of the devil.³⁵⁵

In the days of the Reformation, the evil results of fanaticism were always blamed on those who opposed it the most. The same occurred with the advent movement. Those who hated the Adventists not only blamed the evil results of the fanatics on them, but also other bad things that were not even true. The fact that a few fanatics arose out of the advent movement is no more reason to reject it than when fanatics appeared in Paul's or Luther's day.

³⁵⁴ Bliss, p 237.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Memoirs_of_William_Miller/quw1rnlbYcwC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA237&printsec=frontcover

³⁵⁵ *The Advent Herald and Signs of the Times Reporter*, January 15, 1845, Vol VIII, No 23, Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1845, p 7. https://adventistdigitallibrary.org/islandora/object/adl%3A422061/%3Fview_only%3Dtrue

The fanatics did not arise out of the advent movement until after the disappointment in the spring of 1844, and the Adventists were uncertain about what happened. This was the time when the bridegroom was delayed. [Matthew 25:5](#) When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.⁶ "At midnight they were roused by the shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!'"⁷ "All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. [Matthew 25:5-7 NLT](#). In the summer of 1844, the midpoint between spring and fall, the message, 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming,' was proclaimed.

At this time Adventists discovered that the decree of Artaxerxes went into effect in the fall of the year 457 BC That would of course mean that the end of the 2300 years would be in the fall of 1844. This discovery was reinforced by the fact that the cleansing of the sanctuary in the Old Testament also occurred in the fall of the year. In that system, the Day of Atonement, when the sanctuary was cleansed, occurred on the 10th day of the 7th month on the Jewish calendar. In 1844, the 10th day of the 7th month fell on October 22. Everything seemed in harmony and the conclusion seemed undeniable. This led to the midnight cry that "the bridegroom is coming."

The movement swept over the country like a tidal wave. Fanaticism disappeared along with doubt and uncertainty. The character and results of the movement were the same as Spirit led movements in the past. There was deep searching of the heart, confessing of sin, and forsaking the world, as Adventists prepared to meet their Lord. Great expressions of emotion, joy, shouting, and singing were held for the great anticipated day when Jesus would return.³⁵⁶

Of all the great religious movements since the days of the apostles, none have been freer from human imperfection and the interference from Satan than what occurred in the fall of 1844. The call went out, 'the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' As in the initial advent movement, the work was mostly carried forward by those who were not preachers and religious teachers. Those who had led out in the prior movement were the last to join. Most churches closed their doors to this message, and individuals who accepted it had to withdraw from their churches. The two messages, the "bridegroom is coming" and the second angel's message had more power when combined.

³⁵⁶ Bliss, p 271.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Memoirs_of_William_Miller/quw1rnlbYcwC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA270&printsec=frontcover

Those who had received the message and were waiting for their Lord to appear often met with each other to pray. There was great unity in the group, and the assurance of their Savior's approval was more important to them than food.

But the time came and passed, and their Savior did not appear, and they were greatly disappointed. Many who had been counted among the believers immediately renounced their faith. Their pride was hurt, they were embarrassed, and they complained to God like Jonah, saying they would rather die than live. Fear that the message might be true had restrained the unbelieving world, but after seeing nothing happen, they resumed their ridicule.

Earnest and sincere believers had given up all for Christ to share the last warning message with the world. They had expected to be with their Master in heaven, and now they had to resume their daily activities which they had neglected. In addition to that was added the trial of the taunts, sneers, and mockery of the world.

But great as this disappointment was, it was not as bad as what the disciples had experienced when Jesus died. He had just ridden triumphantly into Jerusalem and His followers were sure He would take the throne of David and deliver them from their oppressors. Not even one of their expectations had been met, and all their hopes died with Jesus. Not until the resurrection did they begin to understand the prophecies about the Messiah. If the followers of Jesus had understood the truth at the time, the prophecy of Zechariah would not have been fulfilled. [Zechariah 9:9](#) Rejoice, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey--riding on a donkey's colt. [Zechariah 9:9 NLT](#).

In a similar way, the Adventists fulfilled prophecy by giving a message to the world that it was supposed to receive. The first and second angel's messages were given at the right time and accomplished the work God intended for them. The world had expected the whole advent movement to completely disappear after the great disappointment. But there were some who stood firm in their belief that the movement was of God. They believed that the Holy Spirit had been present in the preaching of the second coming, but they had not yet found the error in their interpretation of the time of the prophecy.

When Jonah preached in the streets of Nineveh that within 40 days the city would be destroyed, the Lord accepted the humiliation of the Ninevites and extended their period of probation. Clearly Jonah's message was from God. In the same way Adventists believed that God had led them to give the warning of the coming judgment. The message was given, and it tested the hearts of all who heard it. It awakened either love or hatred for the Lord's appearance. It drew a line, separating those who would have exclaimed, "Behold, this [is] our God; We have waited for

Him, and He will save us." [[Isaiah 25:9](#)], from those who would have said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! [[Revelation 6:16](#)].³⁵⁷

William Miller said, if I were to live my life over with the same evidence that I then had, to be honest with God and man I should have to do as I have done. I hope that I have cleansed my garments from the blood of souls. I feel that, as far as it was in my power, I have freed myself from all guilt in their condemnation.

Although I have been twice disappointed, I am not yet cast down or discouraged. My hope in the coming of Christ is as strong as ever. I have done only what, after years of solemn consideration, I felt it my solemn duty to do. I have preached nothing but what I believed, and God has been with me.³⁵⁸

God did not forsake His people. [Hebrews 10:35](#) So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! ³⁶ Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised. ³⁷ "For in just a little while, the Coming One will come and not delay. ³⁸ And my righteous ones will live by faith. But I will take no pleasure in anyone who turns away." ³⁹ But we are not like those who turn away from God to their own destruction. We are the faithful ones, whose souls will be saved. [Hebrews 10:35-39 NLT](#). This promise seemed especially applicable to the Adventists at this time. They had done the will of God in following His Spirit and His word, yet they did not understand His purpose. The prophecies had clearly been unsealed, and the signs of the times showed that the coming of Christ was near. But now was the time to live by faith. The world made fun of them, and said they were deceived, but their only safe course of action was to hold on to the light that they had received, continue to search the Scriptures, and patiently wait to receive more light.

³⁵⁷ *The Advent Herald and Signs of the Times Reporter*, November 13, 1844, Vol VIII, No 14, Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1844, p 5. https://adventistdigitallibrary.org/islandora/object/adl%3A422052/%3Fview_only%3Dtrue

³⁵⁸ Bliss, p 280.

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Chapter 23—What is the Sanctuary

The Bible verse that had been the central pillar of the advent movement was: [Daniel 8:14](#) The other replied, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the Temple will be made right again." [Daniel 8:14 NLT](#). The prophetic timeline had been determined to end in the fall of 1844. The common belief was that the earth or at least some part of it, was the sanctuary. The cleansing of the sanctuary was then assumed to be the purification of the earth with fire on the last great day. Hence the conclusion that Christ would return on that day.

True believers knew that God's word could not fail, so it must be their interpretation that was wrong. Many immediately assumed the timeline was wrong, but to do so would mean rejecting the interpretation of the 483-year prophecy which ended with the first advent of Christ [[Daniel 9:25-27](#)]. The two prophecies had the same starting point and the 483-year prophecy ended in the past, meaning one could know if the starting point was correct. 483 years added to 457 BC was the year 27 when Jesus is believed to have been baptized (anointed), followed by His 3.5-year ministry that ended with the crucifixion in 31. The second half of the final week, 3.5 more years, ended in 34 when the deacon Stephen is believed to have been stoned, signifying the final rejection of the gospel by the Jews. Rejection of 1844 as the end of the 2,300-year prophecy meant rejecting already fulfilled prophecy of the first advent.

Some who still believed the timeline of the prophecy, continued their Bible study with earnest prayer, trying to discover their mistake. Since they could not find any error with the prophetic timeline, they began to investigate the subject of the sanctuary. They couldn't find any biblical support for the popular view that the earth is the sanctuary. But they did find many references to the Jewish sanctuary, explaining its design, location, and services. In New Testament times, after the end of the earthly sanctuary services, Paul wrote: [Hebrews 9:1](#) That first covenant between God and Israel had regulations for worship and a place of worship here on earth. ² There were two rooms in that Tabernacle. In the first room were a lampstand, a table, and sacred loaves of bread on the table. This room was called the Holy Place. ³ Then there was a curtain, and behind the curtain was the second room called the Most Holy Place. ⁴ In that room were a gold incense altar and a wooden chest called the Ark of the Covenant, which was covered with gold on all sides. Inside the Ark were a gold jar containing manna, Aaron's staff that sprouted leaves, and the stone tablets of the covenant. ⁵ Above the Ark were the cherubim of divine glory, whose wings stretched out over the Ark's cover, the place of atonement. But we cannot explain these things in detail now. [Hebrews 9:1-5 NLT](#).

God Himself instructed the Israelites to build the sanctuary, and He provided detailed instructions to Moses. [Exodus 25:8](#) "Have the people of Israel build me a holy sanctuary so I can live among them. [Exodus 25:8 NLT](#). It was to be a mobile temple since they were traveling through the wilderness. It had wood walls that were covered with gold and connected together with silver sockets. The roof was like a very elaborate tent and there were angels embroidered on curtains within the structure. There was an outer courtyard with an altar for burnt offerings, and the sanctuary was divided into two compartments, a holy, and a most holy place. The two compartments of the sanctuary were separated by a beautiful curtain that was called a veil.

The holy place contained 3 pieces of furniture. A candlestick with seven oil lamps; a table for the shewbread; and an altar of incense. All three were completely covered with gold. The smoke of the burning incense rose and could flow over the veil into the most holy place where the presence of God was.

In the most holy place was the ark of the covenant. It was a chest made of wood and completely covered with gold. It held the two tables of stone containing the Ten Commandments, written by God Himself. The lid for the ark had two magnificently crafted cherubim on top, surrounding the mercy seat. The cloud of glory from the presence of God would be centered on the mercy seat between the two angels.

Many years after the wandering in the wilderness had ended, the tabernacle was replaced by the temple that Solomon built. It was larger but built to the same scale. The temple built by Solomon existed for hundreds of years, until it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar at the time of the prophet Daniel. It was rebuilt after the 70-year exile and then destroyed again by the Romans in AD 70 and was never rebuilt.

The sanctuary in the wilderness followed by the temple, according to Paul, were of the first covenant. But Paul also has something to say about a new covenant sanctuary. [Hebrews 8:1](#) Here is the main point: We have a High Priest who sat down in the place of honor beside the throne of the majestic God in heaven. ² There he ministers in the heavenly Tabernacle, the true place of worship that was built by the Lord and not by human hands. ³ And since every high priest is required to offer gifts and sacrifices, our High Priest must make an offering, too. ⁴ If he were here on earth, he would not even be a priest, since there already are priests who offer the gifts required by the law. ⁵ They serve in a system of worship that is only a copy, a shadow of the real one in heaven. For when Moses was getting ready to build the Tabernacle, God gave him this warning: "Be sure that you make

everything according to the pattern I have shown you here on the mountain." [Hebrews 8:1-5 NLT](#).

We see here that the sanctuary of the first covenant was built by Moses, but it was a copy, or a shadow of the true tabernacle built by the Lord. In the new covenant, Christ is our great High Priest who ministers at the right hand of God. One sanctuary was on earth and the other in heaven. Important lessons from the heavenly sanctuary about man's salvation were illustrated in the earthly sanctuary and its services.

In Revelation, John wrote of his vision of heaven where he saw "seven lamps." [[Revelation 4:5](#)]. He saw an angel standing at an altar, with much incense, that was offered with the prayers of the saints [[Revelation 8:3](#)]. Then later, he was allowed to see beyond the veil into the most holy place of the heavenly temple, where he saw the ark of the covenant [[Revelation 11:19](#)].

The temple in heaven is the dwelling place of God. The ark contains the law by which all are judged, but it is covered with the mercy seat before which Christ pleads with His blood on the sinner's behalf. This represents the combination of justice and mercy in the plan of redemption.

At the end of the 2,300 years in 1844, there had been no sanctuary on earth for hundreds of years. So, the prophecy must be referring to the sanctuary in heaven. But what does cleansing the sanctuary in heaven mean? Hebrews 9 teaches that there is a cleansing of both the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries. [Hebrews 9:22](#) In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.²³ That is why the Tabernacle and everything in it, which were copies of things in heaven, had to be purified by the blood of animals. But the real things in heaven had to be purified with far better sacrifices than the blood of animals. [Hebrews 9:22-23 NLT](#).

In the earthly sanctuary, priests ministered daily in the holy place, but once a year on the day of atonement, the high priest performed a special cleansing of the sanctuary. In the daily sacrifices, sinners placed their hands on the head of their victim, and confessed their sins, symbolically transferring their sin to the innocent animal. "Without shedding of blood we cannot be made right with God." [Leviticus 17:11](#) for the life of the body is in its blood. I have given you the blood on the altar to purify you, making you right with the LORD. It is the blood, given in exchange for a life, that makes purification possible. [Leviticus 17:11 NLT](#). In some cases, blood was taken by the priest and sprinkled before the veil, thus symbolically transferring the sin from a person to the sanctuary [[Leviticus 4:6](#)]. In other cases, the sacrifice would be eaten by the priest, in which case the priest would be symbolically

carrying the guilt [[Leviticus 10:17](#)]. In both cases the sin was transferred from the sinner to the sanctuary.

Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered the most holy place. On that day, two goats were brought to the door of the tabernacle. Lots were cast, to select one for the Lord, and the other to be the scapegoat [[Leviticus 16:8](#)]. The goat for the Lord was killed as a sin offering, and sprinkled on the alter, but unlike the daily sacrifices, blood from this goat was taken into the most holy place and sprinkled on the mercy seat [[Leviticus 16:15](#)]. The high priest would then lay both hands on the head of the scapegoat, and confess all the sins of the children of Israel, symbolically transferring them to the goat, then the goat would be taken into the wilderness and left to die [[Leviticus 16:21-22](#)].

The sacrifices and sanctuary services taught that a substitute could be accepted in place of the sinner. But the sin was not cancelled by the blood of the sacrifice. The blood allowed it to be transferred from the sinner to the sanctuary, and then once a year, all the accumulated sins were transferred from the sanctuary to the scapegoat. The earthly sanctuary services were like a shadow of the real things that would happen in the heavenly sanctuary. The work that the priests did throughout the year in the holy place of the sanctuary, were symbolic of the real things that Jesus did when He went back to heaven. Then once, He would enter the most holy place. [Hebrews 9:11](#) So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world.¹² With his own blood--not the blood of goats and calves--he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever. [Hebrews 9:11-12 NLT](#).

For 18 centuries Christ worked in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. His blood was offered to repentant believers, so they could be pardoned and accepted by the Father. But their sins remained on the books and would eventually need to be cleansed from the sanctuary. But before the sins can be removed, an examination must take place so there will be a record to prove who has truly repented and as a result is entitled to the benefits of Christ's atoning blood. This examination is a work of judgment which must be done before the second coming, because when He comes, everyone's reward will already be decided [[Revelation 22:12](#)].

The remaining Adventists realized that the end of the 2,300 years in 1844 was not when Christ would return to earth, but it was the time when He would begin the work of cleansing the sanctuary in heaven in preparation for His return. It was obvious that the sin offerings in the sanctuary service pointed to Christ as the sacrifice. They saw the high priest as a representation of Jesus in heaven. They

understood the scapegoat represented Satan, who would bear the consequences of the sins of those who repented. And they believed it was the blood of Christ that made it possible to transfer the sins from repentant sinners to the scapegoat. In the end Satan will be forever banished from the presence of God, along with his followers, and they will suffer the consequences of their sin, which is death.

Chapter 24—The Holy of Holies

Understanding the sanctuary was the key that unlocked the mystery of the disappointment in 1844. As the disciples were glad when they saw Jesus after their terrible disappointment, so now did those rejoice who had been disappointed, as they thought of their Lord in the most holy place. They realized that God had been leading them, and though they had failed to understand the message, it had fulfilled the Lord's purpose. The 2,300 year prophecy of [Daniel 8:14](#) and the first angel's message [[Revelation 14:6-7](#)], both pointed to the ministry in the most holy place, the investigative judgment, and not the second coming. Though they were disappointed, the Bible had not failed, and the event that was prophesied had taken place.

Malachi wrote of the coming of the Lord to His temple. [Malachi 3:1](#) "Look! I am sending my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. Then the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so eagerly, is surely coming," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. [Malachi 3:1 NLT](#). They were expecting Him to come to earth, but instead He had gone to His temple.

[Malachi 3:2](#) "But who will be able to endure it when he comes? Who will be able to stand and face him when he appears? For he will be like a blazing fire that refines metal, or like a strong soap that bleaches clothes. ³ He will sit like a refiner of silver, burning away the dross. He will purify the Levites, refining them like gold and silver, so that they may once again offer acceptable sacrifices to the LORD. [Malachi 3:2-3 NLT](#). Those living on the earth when the intercession of Christ in the sanctuary ends, will need to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, and their characters purified from sin by the blood of the Lamb. As the sanctuary in heaven is being cleansed of the sins of repentant believers, there should be a special work of purification among God's people on earth. When this work is finished, then the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing. [Malachi 3:4](#) Then once more the LORD will accept the offerings brought to him by the people of Judah and Jerusalem, as he did in the past. [Malachi 3:4 NLT](#). [Ephesians 5:27](#) He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. [Ephesians 5:27 NLT](#).

The execution of the judgment to take place at the second coming is also written of in Malachi. [Malachi 3:5](#) "At that time I will put you on trial. I am eager to witness against all sorcerers and adulterers and liars. I will speak against those who cheat employees of their wages, who oppress widows and orphans, or who deprive the foreigners living among you of justice, for these people do not fear me," says the

LORD of Heaven's Armies. [Malachi 3:5 NLT](#). This execution of judgment is also mentioned in the New Testament. [Jude 1:14](#) Enoch, who lived in the seventh generation after Adam, prophesied about these people. He said, "Listen! The Lord is coming with countless thousands of his holy ones ¹⁵ to execute judgment on the people of the world. He will convict every person of all the ungodly things they have done and for all the insults that ungodly sinners have spoken against him." [Jude 1:14-15 NLT](#).

In the summer and fall of 1844, the message, "Behold, the bridegroom is coming," [[Matthew 25:6](#)] was given. The wise virgins represented those who had been preparing themselves and looked forward with joy to their Lord's coming. The foolish virgins represented those who joined the movement out of fear but had not really prepared themselves to meet their Lord. In this parable, the coming of the bridegroom occurs before the marriage feast.

The marriage takes place when Christ receives His kingdom, which is the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. [Revelation 21:9](#) Then one of the seven angels who held the seven bowls containing the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come with me! I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰ So he took me in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. [Revelation 21:9-10 NLT](#).

The bride represents the Holy City, and the virgins represent the church. In [Revelation 19:9](#) those who are called as guests to the marriage supper also represent the church. So, in these symbols, the church is represented by the wedding guests, and the virgins, but not the bride.

Christ will receive from the Ancient of Days in heaven, "dominion and glory and a kingdom." [[Daniel 7:14](#)]. Revelation says He will receive the "Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." [[Revelation 21:2](#)]. Having received the kingdom, He will come in glory, as King of kings and Lord of lords, for the redemption of His people, who will "sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven," [[Matthew 8:11](#)] for the "marriage supper of the Lamb." [[Revelation 19:9](#)].

Another parable of Jesus in Luke 12 describes people waiting for the master to return from the wedding. [Luke 12:36](#) as though you were waiting for your master to return from the wedding feast. Then you will be ready to open the door and let him in the moment he arrives and knocks. [Luke 12:36 NLT](#). When the message was given, "the Bridegroom is coming," Jesus did not come to His people on earth but went to the Ancient of Days to receive His kingdom. In any case the followers of God are not present in person at the wedding because it takes place in heaven, while they are still on earth. In the parable of the virgins, it was those that had oil

that went into the marriage. The oil represents the knowledge of the truth from Scriptures, and the Spirit and grace of God. Those who waited patiently through the bitter trial and disappointment, who searched the Bible for clearer light follow Him by faith into the marriage, by understanding His work.

In another parable in Matthew 22, the symbol of a marriage is used again. [Matthew 22:11](#) "But when the king came in to meet the guests, he noticed a man who wasn't wearing the proper clothes for a wedding. [Matthew 22:11 NLT](#). This parable clearly shows a judgement taking place before the marriage feast. This is the investigative judgement taking place in the most holy place since the fall of 1844. The wedding garments are robes that are washed white by the blood of the Lamb. [[Revelation 7:14](#)].

When the judgment in the most holy place is finished, then probation will be closed, and the door will be shut. [Matthew 25:10](#) ... Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked. [Matthew 25:10 NLT](#).

After the time came and passed, Adventists in 1844 still believed that His coming was near. They had a belief that there would be a short period of time between the close of probation and the coming of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. This was inferred from knocking on the door, and it not being opened for them. [Matthew 25:11](#) Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!' ¹² "But he called back, 'Believe me, I don't know you!' [Matthew 25:11-12 NLT](#). They wondered if the date that came and passed was the close of probation.

But clearer light came to them, and they understood that though the work of Christ in the holy place in heaven was done, a door of mercy was still open, as the work of judgment continued in the most holy place.

When the Jews rejected the light given at Christ's first coming, and refused to believe in Him as the Savior, they could no longer receive pardon for their sins. The reason was because their sacrifices and offerings were useless, because the door they had formerly found access to God was no longer open. The condition of the unbelieving Jews demonstrates the condition of careless unbelieving Christians, who remain willingly ignorant of the ministry of our High Priest in heaven. On the shadow Day of Atonement, the Israelites were required to gather around the sanctuary and humble themselves that they might receive pardon for their sins. [Leviticus 23:27](#) "Be careful to celebrate the Day of Atonement on the tenth day of that same month--nine days after the Festival of Trumpets. You must observe it as an official day for holy assembly, a day to deny yourselves and present special gifts to the LORD. [Leviticus 23:27 NLT](#). Christians today should be doing the same thing on the real Day of Atonement.

Men cannot remain guiltless when they reject warnings sent by God. In Noah's day, those who rejected the warning died in the flood. In Abraham's day, everyone in Sodom except Lot, his wife, and two daughters were destroyed by fire. In Jesus' day, he said: [Matthew 23:38](#) And now, look, your house is abandoned and desolate. [Matthew 23:38 NLT](#). The apostle Paul wrote: [2 Thessalonians 2:10](#) ... because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them. ¹¹ So God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies. ¹² Then they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth. [2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 NLT](#). God's Spirit will withdraw from those who reject light and the teachings of His word, and they will be left to the deceptions they love.

The time following their disappointment in 1844 was a period of great trial to those who still held to the advent faith. The new light about the sanctuary in heaven was the only thing they could cling to at this time. So, they waited, watched, and prayed to know the will of God. They were given a clearer understanding of the first and second angels' messages, and were prepared to receive and give to the world the warning of the third angel [[Revelation 14:9](#)].

Chapter 25—God’s Law Unchangeable

[Revelation 11:19](#) Then, in heaven, the Temple of God was opened and the Ark of his covenant could be seen inside the Temple. ... [Revelation 11:19 NLT](#). In the ministry of the earthly tabernacle, the shadow of heavenly things, the ark of the covenant was only seen once a year on the Day of Atonement. The announcement of the angel in heaven that the ark was seen, was an announcement that the ministry of Christ in the most holy place had begun.

The ark on earth contained the two tables of stone on which were written the law of God. The ark was made sacred by the law of God that it held. The ark in heaven contains the law that God spoke with thunders on Mount Sinai and also wrote on the tables of stone placed in the ark on earth. The law of God in the sanctuary in heaven is the original, and the tables of stone contain the law translated into human language. Jesus said this law is unchangeable. [Matthew 5:18](#) I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. [Matthew 5:18 NLT](#). The psalmist says: [Psalm 119:89](#) ... Your eternal word, O LORD, stands firm in heaven. [Psalm 119:89 NLT](#). [Psalm 111:7](#) All he does is just and good, and all his commandments are trustworthy.
⁸ They are forever true, to be obeyed faithfully and with integrity. [Psalm 111:7-8 NLT](#).

In the heart of the Ten Commandments, the fourth says: [Exodus 20:8](#) "Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ You have six days each week for your ordinary work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the LORD your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy. [Exodus 20:8-11 NLT](#).

The remaining Adventists were honest seekers of truth and were impressed by the Spirit of God that they had been breaking the 4th commandment by not keeping the 7th day holy. They searched the Bible and could not find any evidence that the 4th commandment had been done away with or changed. Those who accepted this truth began to keep the 7th day sabbath holy. But it was not easy to go against the great majority of Christians who went to church on the 1st day of the week.

Those who accepted the work of Christ in the most holy place, and the unchangeable law of God, saw these things pointed out in the three angel’s messages of Revelation 14. These messages were designed to prepare people for

the Lord's second coming.³⁵⁹ Immediately following the 3 messages is a reminder that the saints are those who keep the commandments of God. [Revelation 14:12](#) This means that God's holy people must endure persecution patiently, obeying his commands and maintaining their faith in Jesus. [Revelation 14:12 NLT](#). In preparation for the judgment, the law of God should be kept.

The message of the 1st angel calls men to "Fear God and give glory to Him," "and worship Him who made heaven and earth." [[Revelation 14:7](#)]. Solomon said, [Ecclesiastes 12:13](#) That's the whole story. Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty. [Ecclesiastes 12:13 NLT](#). The apostle John wrote, [1 John 5:3](#) Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. [1 John 5:3 NLT](#).

We should worship God because He is the creator. In the Bible, God's claim to reverence and worship is that He is the creator. And the Bible is clear that God is the creator. [Isaiah 40:25](#) "To whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?" asks the Holy One.²⁶ Look up into the heavens. Who created all the stars? He brings them out like an army, one after another, calling each by its name. Because of his great power and incomparable strength, not a single one is missing. [Isaiah 40:25-26 NLT](#). [Isaiah 45:18](#) For the LORD is God, and he created the heavens and earth and put everything in place. He made the world to be lived in, not to be a place of empty chaos. "I am the LORD," he says, "and there is no other. [Isaiah 45:18 NLT](#). [Psalm 100:3](#) Acknowledge that the LORD is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. [Psalm 100:3 NLT](#). [Revelation 4:11](#) "You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased." [Revelation 4:11 NLT](#).

The 1st angel says to "worship Him who made heaven and earth." [[Revelation 14:7](#)]. The 4th commandment tells us to keep the sabbath holy, [Exodus 20:11](#) For in six days the LORD made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy. [Exodus 20:11 NLT](#).

The Sabbath should always remind us that God is our creator and that is why He deserves our worship. The true reason to worship God in general, not just on the

³⁵⁹ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3171\(132.3174\)&index=0](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3171(132.3174)&index=0), https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/_NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA772&printsec=frontcover

seventh day is that we are created by Him. This great fact must never be forgotten.³⁶⁰

The message of the 3rd angel identifies another class of people. [Revelation 14:9](#) Then a third angel followed them, shouting, "Anyone who worships the beast and his statue or who accepts his mark on the forehead or on the hand ¹⁰ must drink the wine of God's anger. ... [Revelation 14:9-10 NLT](#).

To understand these symbols, go back to Revelation 12. [Revelation 12:4](#) ... and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. [Revelation 12:4 KJV](#). The dragon is Satan, [Revelation 12:9](#) This great dragon--the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, ... [Revelation 12:9 NLT](#). After Satan failed to destroy Jesus when He was an infant, through the actions of Herod, he persecuted the followers of Jesus represented by the woman [[Revelation 12:13-17](#)]. In the first centuries, Satan's instrument of persecution was the Roman empire.

In Chapter 13 another beast is described, "The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority." [[Revelation 13:2](#)]. Most protestants believe this beast represents the papacy which assumed the power, throne, and great authority when the Roman empire fell. [Revelation 13:5](#) Then the beast was allowed to speak great blasphemies against God. And he was given authority to do whatever he wanted for forty-two months. [Revelation 13:5 NLT](#). This beast sounds a lot like the little horn in Daniel 7. [Daniel 7:24](#) Its ten horns are ten kings who will rule that empire. Then another king will arise, different from the other ten, who will subdue three of them. ²⁵ He will defy the Most High and oppress the holy people of the Most High. He will try to change their sacred festivals and laws, and they will be placed under his control for a time, times, and half a time. [Daniel 7:24-25 NLT](#).

42 months is a prophetic time period, as is the "time," "times," and "half a time."

- "time" is a year [[Daniel 4:25](#)].
- "times" is 2 years.
- "half a time" is half a year.
- 150 days = 5 months [[Genesis 7:11,24](#); [8:4](#)].
 - 150 / 5 = 30 days/month.
 - 12 months/year x 30 days/month = 360 days/year
- 42 months x 30 days/month = **1260 days** [[Revelation 13:5](#)].

³⁶⁰ Andrews, J. N., *History of the Sabbath*, Battle Creek, Mich: SDA Publishing Association, 1873, p 510.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Sabbath_and_First_Day_of/ZlpOo4hl6CsC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA510&printsec=frontcover

- “time” + “times + “half a time” [360 + 720 + 180 = 1260 days] [[Daniel 7:25](#)].

This 1260 prophetic days or 1260 literal years were mentioned in this book’s prior [chapters 3, 15, 17](#). The period began with the supremacy of the papacy in 538 and ended with his capture and imprisonment in 1798.

A little bit further in chapter 13, another beast is introduced. [Revelation 13:11](#) Then I saw another beast come up out of the earth. He had two horns like those of a lamb, but he spoke with the voice of a dragon. [Revelation 13:11 NLT](#). This beast is different from all the other beasts in both Daniel and Revelation, in both appearance and behavior, firstly because it came up out of the earth, while all the others came out of the sea. Secondly, the other beasts rose to power by attacking and conquering, whereas this beast at least initially had lamblike qualities. The sea in prophetic vision is said to represent “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.” [[Revelation 17:15](#)].

The new beast with lamblike horns came out of the earth, meaning it didn’t rise up to power where there were lots of people, or civilizations, such as the middle east or western Europe. What nation was rising to power in 1798, with promise of strength and greatness? It was without question, the United States of America. Like a silent seed we grew into an empire.³⁶¹ A European journal in 1850 spoke of the United States as a wonderful empire, which was “emerging,” and “amid the silence of the earth daily adding to its power and pride.”³⁶²

Lamblike horns represent youth, innocence, and gentleness. The declaration of Independence, stated the truth that “all men are created equal” and endowed with the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” The constitution gave the people the right to govern themselves by voting for their government officials. There was freedom from religious persecution, and every person was given the right to worship God according to their own conscience. The government was formed as a republic, and the founders, being mostly Protestant, had Christian principles. Oppressed and persecuted throughout the world have turned to this land of hope. Millions have arrived on its shores, and the United States rose to a place among the most powerful nations of the earth.

³⁶¹ Townsend, George Alfred, *The New World Compared with the Old*, Hartford, CONN, Cincinnati, OHIO: S. M. Betts & Company, 1872, p 635.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_New_World_Compared_with_the_Old/4Y5hGZr4L3IC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA635&printsec=frontcover

³⁶² *The Family Favorite and Temperance Journal*, Vol I, No 1, December 1849, p 106.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Family_Favorite_and_Temperance_Journal/61HiAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA106&printsec=frontcover

But this beast eventually spoke as a dragon. [Revelation 13:12](#) He exercised all the authority of the first beast. And he required all the earth and its people to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. ¹³ He did astounding miracles, even making fire flash down to earth from the sky while everyone was watching. ¹⁴ And with all the miracles he was allowed to perform on behalf of the first beast, he deceived all the people who belong to this world. He ordered the people to make a great statue of the first beast, who was fatally wounded and then came back to life. [Revelation 13:12-14 NLT](#).

The lamblike horns and the dragon voice show a big difference between the founding principles and the eventual actions of the beast. The “speaking” of the nation has to do with the laws. Speaking as a dragon means it would make laws that restrict freedom of worship, and exercising the authority of the first beast means it will enforce those laws through persecution. In fact, causing all who dwell on the earth to worship the first beast, seems to indicate honoring and obeying the papacy. Clearly this would go against the founding principles of the USA, since they were in part designed to give relief and freedom from persecution by the papacy.

“Telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast,” is the use of the power of the government. This is additional evidence that this beast represents the USA. What is the “image to the beast” or “image of the beast?” An image of something looks like whatever it is an image of. If you want to know what the image the beast will be like, you simply need to look at the characteristics of the beast, which is the papacy.

When the early church became corrupted with heathen customs, she lost the Spirit and power of God. Then to control the conscience of the people, she used the power of the state. Eventually the papacy grew more powerful and controlled the state and used its authority for its own purpose. The image of the beast would then seem to indicate religion controlling the government and laws of the country.

Whenever a church has civil power, it has always used it to punish those who disagree with her. Many of the Protestant churches that broke away from Rome, did the same thing when they became the state church in place of the church of Rome. In fact, the founders of the USA were fleeing the persecution of the church of England, which had created its own image to the beast.

Apostasy in the church was followed by the union with civil power, and eventually control of the state. This is what the apostle Paul predicted. [2 Thessalonians 2:3](#) Don't be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed--the one who brings destruction. [2 Thessalonians 2:3 NLT](#). [2 Timothy 3:1](#) You should know this, Timothy,

that in the last days there will be very difficult times. ² For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred.

³ They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. ⁴ They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. ⁵ They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that! [2 Timothy 3:1-5 NLT](#). When this state of ungodliness is reached, the same results will follow as in the first centuries. And so, apostasy of the church in America will prepare the way for the image to the beast.

The differences in Protestant church doctrines would seem to make it impossible to come up with national laws that would satisfy all. But there has been a push among Protestants to unite based on common beliefs and doctrines. But to accomplish this, each would have to turn their backs on something that is Biblically important to them. But when leading churches in the USA unite on common doctrines and influence the government to make laws to enforce them, then America will have formed an image of the beast, and punishment and persecution will follow.

This two horned beast, [Revelation 13:16](#) He required everyone--small and great, rich and poor, free and slave--to be given a mark on the right hand or on the forehead.

¹⁷ And no one could buy or sell anything without that mark, which was either the name of the beast or the number representing his name. [Revelation 13:16-17 NLT](#). But the 3rd angel's message warns against receiving this mark. [Revelation 14:9](#) Then a third angel followed them, shouting, "Anyone who worships the beast and his statue or who accepts his mark on the forehead or on the hand ¹⁰ must drink the wine of God's anger. ... [Revelation 14:9-10 NLT](#). Immediately following the 3rd angel's message about those who receive the mark of the beast, is contrasted those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Daniel said this about the little horn, the papacy: "And shall intend to change times and law." [[Daniel 7:25 KJV](#)]. Paul called him the man of sin who would exalt

himself above God [[2 Thessalonians 2:3-4](#)]. By changing God's law, the pope places himself above God.^{363 364 365 366 367 368}

The papacy has in fact dropped the 2nd commandment, which forbids image worship, and changed the 4th to authorize worship on the 1st instead of the 7th day. The change in days for the 4th commandment clearly is a change in times in the law of God. Anyone who follows the altered 4th commandment is honoring the papacy above God.

Those who worship on Sunday often claim that Jesus changed the Sabbath, but Jesus disproved this with His own words. [Matthew 5:17](#) "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. ¹⁹ So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. [Matthew 5:17-19 NLT](#)."

In fact, Protestants who know the Scriptures, admit there is no Biblical command to change the Sabbath. "Up to the time of Christ's death, no change had been made

³⁶³ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3171\(132.3175\)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/_NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA773&printsec=frontcover](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3171(132.3175)&index=0,https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Great_Controversy_the_Conflict_of_th/_NGw1PCAjB4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA773&printsec=frontcover)

³⁶⁴ Manning, Henry Edward, *The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ*, London: Burns & Lambert, 1862. https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Temporal_Power_of_the_Vicar_of_Jesus/O55eAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PP7&printsec=frontcover

³⁶⁵ Gibbons,

ch 5.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Faith_of_Our_Fathers/vzblAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA32&printsec=frontcover,

ch 9.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Faith_of_Our_Fathers/vzblAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA78&printsec=frontcover

ch 10.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Faith_of_Our_Fathers/vzblAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA89&printsec=frontcover

ch 12.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Faith_of_Our_Fathers/vzblAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA111&printsec=frontcover

³⁶⁶ Jalland, Trevor Gervase, *The Church and the Papacy*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

<https://archive.org/details/TheChurchAndThePapacyByJalland/page/n3/mode/2up>

³⁶⁷ Littledale, Richard Frederick, *The Petrine Claims*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1889.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Petrine_Claims/SW8NAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1

³⁶⁸ Coleman, Christopher B., *The Treatise of Lorenzo Valla on the Donation of Constantine*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Treatise_of_Lorenzo_Valla_on_the_Don/FqNcfd8on5cC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PP9&printsec=frontcover

in the day;” and “so far as the record shows, they [the apostles] did not ... give any explicit command supporting the change of the seventh-day Sabbath, and its observance on the first day of the week.”³⁶⁹

Roman Catholics acknowledge that the change of the Sabbath was made by the church, and declare that by worshipping on Sunday, Protestants recognize her power. “Because by keeping Sunday they acknowledge Church's power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin: and by not keeping the rest by her commanded, they again, deny in fact, the same power.”³⁷⁰

What then is the change of the Sabbath, but a sign, or mark of the authority of the Roman Church— “the mark of the beast?” When Protestants accept the Sabbath of her making, and reject the Bible Sabbath, they accept the authority of Rome. They also ignore one of the founding principles of their separation from Rome, that the Bible and the Bible only is the rule of their faith.

When the time comes that the Protestant churches join the Roman Catholics in enforcing a law of worship on Sunday, they will be making everyone worship the beast. When Protestants use secular power to enforce religious worship, they will have created an image of the beast.

There have been many Christians in past generations that have worshipped on Sunday, truly believing they were keeping the Bible Sabbath. The same can be said about many Christians today. But when a law is established, punishing those who refuse to obey, every Christian will be forced to ask themselves the question, what is the true Sabbath? Then whoever chooses to disobey the command of God will be honoring the pope above God. They will be worshipping the beast and his image. Those who do so will be choosing and accepting “the mark of the beast.”

It is a terrible sin that calls down the wrath of God, poured out full strength [[Revelation 14:10](#)]. But the third angel’s message will not leave men in ignorance for the choice they must make. All Christianity will be divided into two great classes, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. The church and state will join hands to try to force everyone to receive the mark [[Revelation 13:16](#)]. But there will be some who will not receive the mark. [Revelation 15:2](#) I saw before me what seemed to be a glass sea mixed with fire. And on it stood all the people who had been victorious over the beast and his statue and the number

³⁶⁹ Waffle, Albert Edward, *The Lord’s Day*, Philadelphia: The American Sunday-School Union, 1885, p 188. <https://archive.org/details/lordsdayitsunive00waff/page/188/mode/2up>

³⁷⁰ Tuberville, Henry, *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine*, New York: John Doyle, 1833, p 58. https://www.google.com/books/edition/An_Abridgment_of_the_Christian_Doctrine/2SkPAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA58&printsec=frontcover

representing his name. They were all holding harps that God had given them.³ And they were singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your works, O Lord God, the Almighty. Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations. [Revelation 15:2-3 NLT](#)."

Chapter 26—A Work of Reform

[Isaiah 56:1](#) This is what the LORD says: "Be just and fair to all. Do what is right and good, for I am coming soon to rescue you and to display my righteousness among you. ² Blessed are all those who are careful to do this. Blessed are those who honor my Sabbath days of rest and keep themselves from doing wrong. ... ⁶ "I will also bless the foreigners who commit themselves to the LORD, who serve him and love his name, who worship him and do not desecrate the Sabbath day of rest, and who hold fast to my covenant. ⁷ I will bring them to my holy mountain of Jerusalem and will fill them with joy in my house of prayer. I will accept their burnt offerings and sacrifices, because my Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations. ⁸ For the Sovereign LORD, who brings back the outcasts of Israel, says: I will bring others, too, besides my people Israel." [Isaiah 56:1-2, 6-8 NLT](#)

The fact that verse 8 mentions gathering the outcasts of Israel, tells us that this chapter applies to the Christian era. And a blessing is promised to those who keep the Sabbath.

[Isaiah 8:16](#) Preserve the teaching of God; entrust his instructions to those who follow me. [Isaiah 8:16 NLT](#). The seal of God's law is found in the fourth commandment. It is the only one of the 10 to mention both the name and title of the Lawgiver. His title, Creator of the heavens and the earth, justifies His claim to reverence and worship. In fact, none of the other 9 commandments explain or justify, on whose authority the law is given. When the Sabbath was changed by the church, the seal was removed from the law. God calls his true followers to restore it by keeping and teaching the true Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

[Isaiah 58:1](#) "Shout with the voice of a trumpet blast. Shout aloud! Don't be timid. Tell my people Israel of their sins! ² Yet they act so pious! They come to the Temple every day and seem delighted to learn all about me. They act like a righteous nation that would never abandon the laws of its God. They ask me to take action on their behalf, pretending they want to be near me. [Isaiah 58:1-2 NLT](#). It is not unbelievers, but "My people," who are sinning, even though they seek God daily, and delight to know His ways.

In addition to showing mercy to the poor and needy, God tells them what their sin is. [Isaiah 58:12](#) ... Then you will be known as a rebuilders of walls and a restorer of homes. ¹³ "Keep the Sabbath day holy. Don't pursue your own interests on that day, but enjoy the Sabbath and speak of it with delight as the LORD's holy day. Honor the Sabbath in everything you do on that day, and don't follow your own desires or talk idly. ¹⁴ Then the LORD will be your delight. ... [Isaiah 58:12-14 NLT](#). It is time for the Sabbath to be restored.

The Sabbath has existed since it was hallowed by the Creator on the seventh day of creation. It was kept by Adam, and the patriarchs down through Noah. It was kept by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When the children of Israel were slaves in Egypt, they had lost the knowledge of God's law, but shortly after delivering them, God gave them His law in written form. From that day to the present, the 10 Commandments have never been lost, and in every generation, there have always been some who kept the Sabbath. During the 1260 years of papal supremacy, there were groups that honored the Sabbath, that had to hide for their lives.

The 3 angel's messages in Revelation 14 describe what will happen in the last days. And immediately following that is the description of the church of God in those days. [Revelation 14:12](#) This means that God's holy people must endure persecution patiently, obeying his commands and maintaining their faith in Jesus. [Revelation 14:12 NLT](#). Then two verses later is the description of the Son of Man coming on the white cloud to reap the harvest from the earth [[Revelation 14:14](#)].

Those who were first disappointed when Christ did not come but were then filled with joy when they received the light of the sanctuary, were now confronted with the light of the true Sabbath. They could see that its keeping would put them out of harmony with the Christian world. Many argued that Sunday had been the day of worship for centuries. Many good and holy men died keeping Sunday. If they were faithful servants of God, why must they change to this new Sabbath? What would a small group keeping the seventh day Sabbath hope to accomplish against the entire Christian world? At the time of Luther, papists reasoned that true Christians had lived and died as Catholics, so that should be sufficient for salvation. But with such reasoning, no new light would ever be accepted.

As attention was called to the seventh day Sabbath, popular ministers interpreted Scripture to satisfy the curiosity of those who did not study the Bible for themselves. Those who were convicted based on their own study of God's word, withstood the attacks of men of learning, who were angered and powerless against the simple reasoning straight from the Bible. It is often the case that new light must be brought through those who do not study themselves. The educated experts in religious matters, trust in their knowledge and theories and systems, rather than in God.

Most of those who were looking for Christ to come in 1844, did not accept the sanctuary or the Sabbath truth. Many gave up their faith in the advent movement entirely, and some continued setting dates and kept being disappointed. When the Thessalonian church received some false ideas about the second coming, Paul recommended testing everything against the word of God. He reminded them of prophecies of things that must take place first [[2 Thessalonians 2:3](#)]. Whether the

time of Christ's coming is far off, or completely unknown, we can still follow the example of the apostles, by spreading the good news and always being prepared.

There are parallels between the Exodus and the trial at the Red Sea, and the advent movement and disappointment in 1844. If everyone who originally worked to spread the message in 1844 had accepted the 3rd angel's message and proclaimed it with the power of the Holy Spirit, the world would have been warned, and Christ could have returned by now. God didn't want the Israelites to wander for 40 years in the wilderness, but they could not enter because of their unbelief. In the same way, it was not God's will to delay His second coming so long. It is in mercy that Jesus delays his coming, that sinners will have the opportunity to hear the warning, so they can choose.

As has always been the case, truth reproves sin and error and will be opposed. [John 3:20](#) All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. [John 3:20 NLT](#). When popular beliefs cannot be supported by Scripture, its defenders will often resort to name calling. The Bible even warns that a time is coming when laws of the state will be so at odds with the law of God, that whoever obeys God will be considered a law breaker by the state.

Is expected opposition to the truth a reason to not share it? No, if God gives light to His servants in this generation, they should let it shine forth to the world. [Ezekiel 3:7](#) But the people of Israel won't listen to you any more than they listen to me! For the whole lot of them are hard-hearted and stubborn. [Ezekiel 3:7 NLT](#). [Ezekiel 2:7](#) You must give them my messages whether they listen or not. But they won't listen, for they are completely rebellious! [Ezekiel 2:7 NLT](#).

Everyone who has received the light of truth is under an obligation and responsibility like Ezekiel. [Ezekiel 33:7](#) "Now, son of man, I am making you a watchman for the people of Israel. Therefore, listen to what I say and warn them for me. ⁸ If I announce that some wicked people are sure to die and you fail to tell them to change their ways, then they will die in their sins, and I will hold you responsible for their deaths. ⁹ But if you warn them to repent and they don't repent, they will die in their sins, but you will have saved yourself. [Ezekiel 33:7-9 NLT](#).

The only problems with sharing the truth are that it is inconvenient, and many will reject or even make fun of you for it. But true followers of Christ accept the cross with the apostle Paul. [2 Corinthians 4:17](#) For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! [2 Corinthians 4:17 NLT](#). [Hebrews 11:26](#) He thought it was better to suffer for the sake of Christ than to own the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to his great reward. [Hebrews 11:26 NLT](#). We should choose to do what is right because it is right and leave the results to God.

[Isaiah 51:7](#) "Listen to me, you who know right from wrong, you who cherish my law in your hearts. Do not be afraid of people's scorn, nor fear their insults. ⁸ For the moth will devour them as it devours clothing. The worm will eat at them as it eats wool. But my righteousness will last forever. My salvation will continue from generation to generation." [Isaiah 51:7-8 NLT](#).

Chapter 27—Modern Revivals

Every time the word of God is faithfully preached, positive results will follow. The Spirit of God goes with the message shared by His servants and gives power to the word. [John 1:9](#) The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. [John 1:9 NLT](#). The light shines on the dark and hidden things in the soul and reveals sin to sinners. [Romans 7:24](#) Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? [Romans 7:24 NLT](#). It is only the sacrifice of Christ on the cross at Calvary that can atone for sins and bring people back into a right relationship with God. It is only through faith, humility, and accepting the sacrifice of Christ, the anyone can be freed from the penalty of sin.

The result of true repentance and acceptance of the gift of salvation is a new life. Sins once loved are hated, and spiritual things once hated are loved. Pride turns to humility, drunkards become sober, and vain fashions of the world are set aside. [1 Peter 3:3](#) Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. ⁴ You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. [1 Peter 3:3-4 NLT](#).

A Revival not only brings the character changes mentioned above, but also a great desire for the salvation of souls. People experiencing revival will also rejoice when they are worthy to suffer hardship and scorn for Christ's sake. This is the result of the work of the Spirit of God.

Many modern revivals have not produced the fruit described above. There is widespread interest, many claim conversion, and large numbers join the church, but the spiritual changes are not present. When the light that flamed up soon dies out, the darkness is more dense than before. Popular revivals too often appeal to emotion and those converted have little desire to listen to the Bible. Unless the religious service is entertaining, they are not interested. They have no interest in the plain warnings from the word of God.

For the truly converted, relationship with God and eternal things will be the topics of interest. But many popular churches today lack the spirit of commitment to God. New converts don't have to give up their pride and love of worldly things. They are not willing to deny self or take up their cross to follow the humble and lowly Jesus. Property, possessions, and worldly occupations fill the mind, and things of eternal interest hardly receive a passing thought.

But there are still true followers of Christ and before the final judgement God's Spirit will be poured out on them. At that time, many will separate themselves

from their churches in which the love of the world has replaced love for God and His word. At that time, many ministers and members will gladly accept the great truths that will be proclaimed to prepare a people for the Lord's second coming. Satan wishes to prevent this from happening and will introduce his counterfeit. In churches that he succeeds in bringing under his power, it will appear that there is great religious interest and that God's blessing is being poured out. Many will claim that God is working marvelously in their church when it is actually the work of another spirit.

With God's word, it is not difficult to distinguish between the true and the counterfeit revival. Wherever the Bible is neglected, self-denial and giving up of worldly things will be absent, and there we may be sure that God's blessing will not be given. This is the rule that Jesus Himself gave to distinguish the true from the counterfeit. [Matthew 7:16](#) You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. ... [Matthew 7:16 NLT](#). It is by the truths in God's word that we can be protected from the deceptions of Satan.

God reveals truths about Himself in the Bible, and knowing and accepting these truths shields us against the deceptions of Satan. It is the neglect of these truths that has opened the door to the evils that are so common in the religious world. The nature and importance of the law of God has largely been lost sight of. Not understanding the character of the law, that it never changes, and our obligation to keep it, have led to a misunderstanding of how we are made acceptable for God to save. This has led to lower standards of behavior and conscience in the church.

Edward A. Park said: One source of danger is the neglect of the pulpit to enforce the divine law. In former days the pulpit was an echo of the voice of conscience. ... Our most brilliant, outstanding preachers taught that the law and the gospel are mirrors reflecting the true character of God. Those who do not love the law and the gospel, will underestimate the evil of sin.

There is a tendency to underestimate the justice of God, because of His love. This can lead to underestimating the grace of God and atonement for sin. Then the gospel loses its value and importance, and soon men are ready to practically cast aside the Bible itself.

Many religious teachers claim that Christ abolished the law, making man free from its requirements. Some say the law is a heavy burden, that we are free from under the gospel. But the prophets and apostles didn't teach this about the law of God. [Psalm 119:44](#) I will keep on obeying your instructions forever and ever. ⁴⁵ I will walk in freedom, for I have devoted myself to your commandments. [Psalm 119:44-45 NLT](#). [James 2:8](#) Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: "Love your neighbor as yourself." [James 2:8 NLT](#). [James 1:25](#) But if you

look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. [James 1:25 NLT](#). [Revelation 22:14](#) Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life. [Revelation 22:14 NLT](#).

If it was possible for the law to be changed, then Christ need not have died to save man from the penalty of sin. His death proved how unchangeable the law of God is. [Isaiah 42:21](#) Because he is righteous, the LORD has exalted his glorious law. [Isaiah 42:21 NLT](#). [Matthew 5:17](#) "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. [Matthew 5:17-18 NLT](#). [Psalm 40:8](#) I take joy in doing your will, my God, for your instructions are written on my heart." [Psalm 40:8 NLT](#).

The law of God reveals the will and the character of its Author. Truth, righteousness, holiness and love are characteristics of God. [Psalm 119:142](#) Your justice is eternal, and your instructions are perfectly true. ... ¹⁷² Let my tongue sing about your word, for all your commands are right. [Psalm 119:142, 172 NLT](#). [Romans 7:12](#) But still, the law itself is holy, and its commands are holy and right and good. [Romans 7:12 NLT](#). [Romans 13:10](#) Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law. [Romans 13:10 NLT](#).

It is the work of conversion and growth in divine grace that brings people into harmony with God and His law. In the beginning, man was created in the image of God, so he was in harmony with nature and the law of God. But after sin, he was no longer in harmony with God or the law of God. [Romans 8:7](#) For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. [Romans 8:7 NLT](#). But because God loved the world, He gave His only Son, to bring the world back into harmony with Him [[John 3:16-17](#)]. This change is the new birth Jesus speaks of. [John 3:3](#) Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." [John 3:3 NLT](#).

The first step to being reconciled to God is the conviction or realization that we are sinners. [Romans 3:20](#) For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are. [Romans 3:20 NLT](#). The law lets us know what sin is, but it doesn't provide a solution, it demands death as the penalty. The good news is that Christ can take care of the penalty, through the death He suffered on our behalf.

Does that mean we are free to sin because we have Christ's death to cover the penalty? [Romans 6:1](#) Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us

more and more of his wonderful grace? ² Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? [Romans 6:1-2 NLT](#). [1 John 5:3](#) Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. [1 John 5:3 NLT](#). It is the new birth into harmony with God and His law that helps us to stop sinning. [Psalm 119:97](#) ... Oh, how I love your instructions! I think about them all day long. [Psalm 119:97 NLT](#).

Sadly, there are many who go to church who have not been converted. They are not in harmony with God or His law and feel no guilt or need of repentance. The Bible teaches what sanctification is and how to receive it. [John 17:17](#) Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. [John 17:17 NLT](#). Paul taught that the Holy Spirit sanctifies us [[Romans 15:16](#)]. [John 16:13](#) When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. ... [John 16:13 NLT](#). [Psalm 119:142](#) ... your instructions are perfectly true. [Psalm 119:142 NLT](#). Jesus gave us the perfect example of being in harmony with the law of God. [John 15:10](#) When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. [John 15:10 NLT](#). [John 8:29](#) And the one who sent me is with me--he has not deserted me. For I always do what pleases him." [John 8:29 NLT](#).

It is by the grace of God that we can form characters in harmony with the law of God and hence receive sanctification. This doesn't mean that we will not be tempted to sin. But our human weakness is reinforced by divine strength. [1 Corinthians 15:57](#) But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ. [1 Corinthians 15:57 NLT](#). The Bible also teaches that sanctification is a work in progress. [Philippians 3:13](#) ... I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. [Philippians 3:13-14 NLT](#). [2 Peter 1:5](#) In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. ... ¹⁰ So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never fall away. [2 Peter 1:5-7, 10 NLT](#).

People who are experiencing true sanctification, will like the great men of the Bible, see their unworthiness in humility. Moses: [Numbers 12:3](#) (Now Moses was very humble--more humble than any other person on earth.) [Numbers 12:3 NLT](#). Daniel was "greatly beloved" in heaven [[Daniel 10:11](#)], yet in his prayer, he included himself with sinful Israel. Job: [Job 42:6](#) I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance." [Job 42:6 NLT](#). Isaiah: [Isaiah 6:5](#) Then I said, "It's

all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the LORD of Heaven's Armies." [Isaiah 6:5 NLT](#). Paul: [Ephesians 3:8](#) Though I am the least deserving of all God's people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. [Ephesians 3:8 NLT](#). Those nearest to Jesus will see most clearly the sinfulness of humanity, and realize their only hope is through the crucified and risen Savior.

But the "sanctification" now becoming popular in the religious world today has a spirit of self-exaltation and disregard for the law of God. It is taught that sanctification occurs instantly, by faith alone. "Only believe," they say, no further effort is required. At the same time, they claim they are released from obligation to keep the commandments. The desire for an easy religion that requires no striving and self-denial has made the doctrine of faith and faith alone a popular doctrine. This is what the apostle James had to say about faith and works: [James 2:14](#) What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? ... ¹⁷ So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. ¹⁸ Now someone may argue, "Some people have faith; others have good deeds." But I say, "How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds." ... ²⁴ So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone. [James 2:14, 17-18, 24 NLT](#).

Let no one fool themselves into thinking that they can become holy while knowingly breaking one of God's commandments. [1John 3:6](#) Anyone who continues to live in him will not sin. But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know him or understand who he is. [1 John 3:6 NLT](#). [1John 2:4](#) If someone claims, "I know God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. ⁵ But those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. [1 John 2:4-5 NLT](#). When someone is far from Christ, they may appear righteous in their own eyes.

Paul taught that we are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. [Romans 12:1](#) And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice--the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. [Romans 12:1 NLT](#). In ancient Israel, an animal brought for sacrifice was examined, and if any defects were found, it was rejected. God doesn't want a half-hearted commitment; we are commanded to love the Lord with all our heart. Those who truly love God with their whole heart, will give Him the best they have to offer, and will want to be in harmony with His law.

How many so called Christians are dividing their commitment to God with the pursuit of wealth or seeking the approval of men. How many are harming their bodies by overeating, smoking, drinking alcohol, or participating in other forbidden pleasures. If Jesus were to enter churches of today, would He not drive out those conducting unholy activities, and those acting as the money changers of old. [Revelation 21:27](#) Nothing evil will be allowed to enter, nor anyone who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty--but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. [Revelation 21:27 NLT](#). [1 Corinthians 6:19](#) Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, ²⁰ for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. [1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NLT](#). If all who profess to be followers of Christ were truly sanctified, they would give to relieve the poor and to support the sharing of the gospel. They would also set an example of temperance, self-denial, and self-sacrifice, and they would be the light of the world.

But following God is not only giving and sacrifice. When we fully obey His requirements, we have access to the throne of infinite power through Christ. [Romans 8:32](#) Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? [Romans 8:32 NLT](#). [Luke 11:13](#) So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him." [Luke 11:13 NLT](#). [John 14:14](#) Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it! [John 14:14 NLT](#). [John 16:24](#) You haven't done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy. [John 16:24 NLT](#).

Just because the true Christian is humble, does not mean they will be sad and putting themselves down all the time. [Nehemiah 8:10](#) ... Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength!" [Nehemiah 8:10 NLT](#). [Philippians 4:4](#) Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again--rejoice! [Philippians 4:4 NLT](#).

Chapter 28—Facing Life’s Record

In vision, Daniel saw God the Father sitting as judge, where each person will be judged based on the things written in the books about their lives.

[Daniel 7:9](#) I watched as thrones were put in place and the Ancient One sat down to judge. His clothing was as white as snow, his hair like purest wool. He sat on a fiery throne with wheels of blazing fire,¹⁰ and a river of fire was pouring out, flowing from his presence. Millions of angels ministered to him; many millions stood to attend him. Then the court began its session, and the books were opened. [Daniel 7:9-10 NLT](#). [Daniel 7:13](#) As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence.¹⁴ He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal--it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed. [Daniel 7:13-14 NLT](#).

The coming of Christ described here is not His second coming to earth. In this same vision, where Daniel saw the Ancient of Days seated in judgment, Christ, “One like the Son of Man,” came before Him. When the work as mediator was complete, at the end of the 2300 years in 1844, our great High Priest entered the most holy place in heaven, appearing before God the Father.

In the sanctuary service on earth, it was only those who had confessed sins throughout the year, those whose sins had been transferred to the sanctuary through the blood of the sacrifices, that the Day of Atonement was for. So, in the real sanctuary in heaven, the only cases judged at that time are those who have confessed sins, those who have claimed or chosen to follow God. The judgment of the wicked takes place at a later time. [1 Peter 4:17](#) For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin with God's household. And if judgment begins with us, what terrible fate awaits those who have never obeyed God's Good News? [1 Peter 4:17 NLT](#).

The book of life has the names of all who have ever chosen God. Jesus told His disciples: [Luke 10:20](#) ... rejoice because your names are registered in heaven." [Luke 10:20 NLT](#). Paul spoke of his fellow workers whose names were written in the book of life. [Philippians 4:3](#) ... the rest of my co-workers, whose names are written in the Book of Life. [Philippians 4:3 NLT](#). Daniel wrote about the book again: [Daniel 12:1](#) ... Then there will be a time of anguish greater than any since nations first came into existence. But at that time every one of your people whose name is written in the book will be rescued. [Daniel 12:1 NLT](#). John wrote in Revelation: [Revelation 21:27](#) Nothing evil will be allowed to enter, nor anyone who practices

shameful idolatry and dishonesty--but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. [Revelation 21:27 NLT](#).

There is also a book of remembrance. [Malachi 3:16](#) ... a scroll of remembrance was written to record the names of those who feared him and always thought about the honor of his name. [Malachi 3:16 NLT](#). [Nehemiah 13:14](#) Remember this good deed, O my God, and do not forget all that I have faithfully done for the Temple of my God and its services. [Nehemiah 13:14 NLT](#). The psalmist wrote: [Psalm 56:8](#) You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book. [Psalm 56:8 NLT](#).

There is also a record of sins. [Ecclesiastes 12:14](#) God will judge us for everything we do, including every secret thing, whether good or bad. [Ecclesiastes 12:14 NLT](#). [Matthew 12:36](#) And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. ³⁷ The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you." [Matthew 12:36-37 NLT](#). [1 Corinthians 4:5](#) So don't make judgments about anyone ahead of time--before the Lord returns. For he will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due. [1 Corinthians 4:5 NLT](#). [Isaiah 65:6](#) "Look, my decree is written out in front of me: I will not stand silent; I will repay them in full! Yes, I will repay them – ⁷ both for their own sins and for those of their ancestors," says the LORD. ... [Isaiah 65:6-7 NLT](#).

Those who are judged to be worthy will be raised in the resurrection of the righteous. [Luke 20:35](#) But in the age to come, those worthy of being raised from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage. ³⁶ And they will never die again. In this respect they will be like angels. They are children of God and children of the resurrection. [Luke 20:35-36 NLT](#). [John 5:29](#) and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment. ... [John 5:29 NLT](#). The righteous dead will not be alive when they are judged, because they will not be resurrected until after the decision is made, but Jesus will speak on their behalf. [1 John 2:1](#) ... But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. [1 John 2:1 NLT](#). [Hebrews 7:25](#) Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf. [Hebrews 7:25 NLT](#).

The lives of all who have ever believed in Jesus are reviewed before God. When sins which have not been repented of and forgiven remain on the books, that name is removed from the book of life. Their good deeds in the book of remembrance are useless and will be erased. [Exodus 32:33](#) But the LORD replied to Moses, "No, I will erase the name of everyone who has sinned against me. [Exodus 32:33 NLT](#).

[Ezekiel 18:24](#) However, if righteous people turn from their righteous behavior and start doing sinful things and act like other sinners, should they be allowed to live? No, of course not! All their righteous acts will be forgotten, and they will die for their sins. [Ezekiel 18:24 NLT](#).

But those who have truly repented of their sins and claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, will have their sins blotted out, and will be counted worthy of eternal life. [Isaiah 43:25](#) "I--yes, I alone--will blot out your sins for my own sake and will never think of them again. [Isaiah 43:25 NLT](#). [Revelation 3:5](#) All who are victorious will be clothed in white. I will never erase their names from the Book of Life, but I will announce before my Father and his angels that they are mine. [Revelation 3:5 NLT](#). Jesus said: [Matthew 10:32](#) "Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³ But everyone who denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in heaven. [Matthew 10:32-33 NLT](#).

When Satan deceived our race, he intended to ruin God's creation. But now Christ seeks not only pardon and justification for His people, but a share in His glory and a seat upon His throne. Satan points to their sins that he has tempted them to commit and claims them as his. Jesus doesn't deny that they have sinned, but He shows that they have repented and offers His life and sacrifice in their place. [Zechariah 3:2](#) And the LORD said to Satan, "I, the LORD, reject your accusations, Satan. Yes, the LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebukes you. This man is like a burning stick that has been snatched from the fire." [Zechariah 3:2 NLT](#). Christ will clothe His faithful ones with His own righteousness. [Ephesians 5:27](#) He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. [Ephesians 5:27 NLT](#). [Revelation 3:4](#) ... They will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. [Revelation 3:4 NLT](#).

At the close of His work as mediator, Christ will appear to bless His people with eternal life. As the priest used to remove sin from the sanctuary and place them on the scapegoat, so Christ will place all forgiven sins on Satan, the originator of sin. [Leviticus 16:22](#) As the goat goes into the wilderness, it will carry all the people's sins upon itself into a desolate land. [Leviticus 16:22 NLT](#). So, Satan will bear the guilt of all the sins God's people had repented of and will for a thousand years be confined to a desolate earth.

Sins which have not been repented of will not be forgiven and erased from the book, and they will stand as a witness against the sinner on the day of judgment. It matters not if the sin was committed in the open, or in secret so that no other person ever knew of it, because angels of God witness every sin and record them in a book. God has an exact record of every sin, and He is not influenced by the

outward appearance of goodness. Men may be deceived when judging, but God sees and knows all.

According to the parable of the talents, even our use of the gifts and abilities God gave us will be examined in the Judgment [[Matthew 25:14-30](#)]. Will God receive what he gave us with interest? Have we improved or made good use of the talents He gave us? How have we used our time, voice, money, and influence? What have we done for the poor, afflicted, orphan, and widow? All of this is recorded in heaven. Simply claiming faith in Christ with no accompanying works is worthless. But whatever is done out of love for Christ, however small, is rewarded by God.

Satan comes up with many ways to distract us from what we should be doing. He knows he wins if he can keep us from spending our time learning more about Jesus and the great truths about His sacrifice for us. Whoever wishes to share in the benefits of the Savior's mediation should spend their time praying and studying the word of truth. The sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. Otherwise, it will be impossible for them to have the faith needed at this time, or to fulfill the plan God has for them.

The intercession of Christ on our behalf in the sanctuary in heaven, is just as important for our salvation as was His death on the cross. By His death, he began the work, which He continued when He went back to heaven. The sanctuary in heaven is at the center of Christ's work for our salvation at this time. It is the part of the plan of redemption that takes us to the close of time. It is of great importance for us to understand this subject, so that we can give an answer to anyone that asks the reason for our hope.

[Proverbs 28:13](#) People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy. [Proverbs 28:13 NLT](#). Satan rejoices, when we sin in secret and do not repent, and can even use that to mock Christ. If those who love Christ could see this, they would quickly confess their sins and put them away. It is through these cherished sins that Satan can gain complete control of us. He is always trying to deceive Christ's followers into believing that it is impossible for them to overcome sin. But the words of Jesus to Paul were: ² [Corinthians 12:9](#) ... "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." ... ² [Corinthians 12:9 NLT](#). Jesus also said: [Matthew 11:29](#) Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." [Matthew 11:29-30 NLT](#).

On the Day of Atonement once a year, Israelites were instructed to afflict their souls by repentance and humiliation before the Lord. Since we are living in the great day of atonement, we should be doing the same thing. There should be deep

searching of the heart for anything that is offensive to God. [Ephesians 5:27](#) He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. [Ephesians 5:27 NLT](#). But no one will be saved by just being part of a church that is without spot or wrinkle. Each individual must be without spot or wrinkle to be part of that glorious church.

No one knows when the judgment will be finished, and their case closed. [Mark 13:33](#) And since you don't know when that time will come, be on guard! Stay alert! [Mark 13:33 NLT](#). [Revelation 3:3](#) ... If you don't wake up, I will come to you suddenly, as unexpected as a thief. [Revelation 3:3 NLT](#). When that time comes, the announcement will be made: [Revelation 22:11](#) Let the one who is doing harm continue to do harm; let the one who is vile continue to be vile; let the one who is righteous continue to live righteously; let the one who is holy continue to be holy." ¹² "Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds. [Revelation 22:11-12 NLT](#).

The righteous and wicked will both be living on the earth, both carrying on with life, when the final decision is made in the sanctuary in heaven. Before the flood, Noah was shut up in the ark and the wicked were locked out. For 7 days people went on about their lives, even mocking those locked up in the ark, not knowing that they were already judged. [Matthew 24:39](#) ... That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes. [Matthew 24:39 NLT](#). [Mark 13:35](#) You, too, must keep watch! For you don't know when the master of the household will return--in the evening, at midnight, before dawn, or at daybreak. ³⁶ Don't let him find you sleeping when he arrives without warning. [Mark 13:35-36 NLT](#). Those who grow weary of waiting, who become absorbed in the pursuit of gain, pleasure, and the approval of the world, may in that hour have their sentence pronounced. [Daniel 5:27](#) ... you have been weighed on the balances and have not measured up. [Daniel 5:27 NLT](#).

Chapter 29—The Origin of Evil

For many people, the existence of sin or evil has been a stumbling block to the belief in an all wise, powerful and loving God. Many use that as an excuse to reject God and His word, but those who look for answers outside of God's word will not be satisfied. Many are also unsatisfied with the answers provided through tradition, and false interpretations of the Bible.

There is really no explanation for the reason sin exists, but the Bible clearly teaches that God is not responsible for creating or causing sin. The definition of sin according to the Bible is that it is the transgression of the law. [1 John 3:4](#) Everyone who sins is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God. [1 John 3:4 NLT](#).

Before sin, there was peace and joy throughout God's created universe. Everything existed in harmony with the Creator's will. All created beings loved God above all else and loved each other without reservation. Christ, also called the Word, and the Only Begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father. He was the only being in the universe that could participate in planning with the Father. Christ is the one who created the heavenly beings. [Colossians 1:16](#) for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see--such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. [Colossians 1:16 NLT](#).

Love is the foundation of the law and government of God. The happiness of all created beings was assured if they remained in harmony with God's law. God desires love and worship based on an intelligent knowledge and appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in forced allegiance, and so He gives free will, so that seeing His love for them, they will choose to love and serve Him.

Sin originated with one who was most highly honored by God, and who stood highest in power and glory among the angels in heaven. Before his fall, Lucifer was holy and perfect. [Ezekiel 28:12](#) ... "You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and exquisite in beauty. ¹³ You were in Eden, the garden of God. Your clothing was adorned with every precious stone--red carnelian, pale-green peridot, white moonstone, blue-green beryl, onyx, green jasper, blue lapis lazuli, turquoise, and emerald--all beautifully crafted for you and set in the finest gold. They were given to you on the day you were created. ¹⁴ I ordained and anointed you as the mighty angelic guardian. You had access to the holy mountain of God and walked among the stones of fire. ¹⁵ "You were blameless in all you did from the day you were created until the day evil was found in you. [Ezekiel 28:12-15 NLT](#).

But the prophet goes on to say: [Ezekiel 28:17](#) Your heart was filled with pride because of all your beauty. Your wisdom was corrupted by your love of splendor. ... [Ezekiel 28:17 NLT](#). But Lucifer was not satisfied being the highest created being, he wanted to be like the Most High. [Ezekiel 28:6](#) "Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because you think you are as wise as a god, [Ezekiel 28:6 NLT](#). [Isaiah 14:13](#) For you said to yourself, 'I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God's stars. I will preside on the mountain of the gods far away in the north. ¹⁴ I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.' [Isaiah 14:13-14 NLT](#). Lucifer began to covet the honor that Christ had and wanted the worship of the angels for himself.

Initially when God was honored, there was peace and happiness in heaven. But Lucifer wished to exalt himself and began to spread thoughts of discontent among the angels. Christ tried to get him to recognize the greatness and goodness of God, and the importance of His law. Lucifer was warned that dishonoring God would bring ruin on himself, but he became more determined.

With his power and glory, Lucifer thought he should be equal to God. In his position in heaven, he was loved and honored by all the angels. He had wisdom and glory above all other angels, but the Son of God was still above him, one in power and authority with the Father. Christ participated in the councils of God, where Lucifer was not allowed. He questioned why Christ should have supremacy over him.

Lucifer began to spread discontent among the angels, but he did so in a way that seemed it was out of reverence for God. He suggested that since angels were holy by nature, they should not be restrained by the law of God and should be able to follow their own will. He also tried to get the angels to see that God was unfair with him in honoring Christ above him. He also claimed that he was trying to secure freedom for all the angels from the restrictions of God's law, so they could reach a higher state of existence.

God was patient with Lucifer, and he was not immediately punished and thrown out of heaven. He was even allowed to continue in his position of leadership, even after he started to spread lies. Finally, he was even offered pardon if he would repent and submit to the law of God. At that time Lucifer did not see the end result of the path he was taking. At some point Lucifer probably realized that he was wrong, and God was just and fair and that he should admit it. If he had done this, he might have saved himself and many angels. If he had repented, God would have restored him to his original position, but his pride kept him from submitting. He claimed he had nothing to repent of and fully committed himself to the great controversy against his maker.

Now all the powers of that superior mind were fully dedicated to deceiving as many angels as possible and to gaining their sympathy. Satan now complained to his closest allies that his ideas had not been respected by God, and his freedom had been restricted. He accused the Son of God of trying to humiliate him in front of all the angels. Those who remained loyal to God, he accused of doing exactly what he was really doing. One of the things he did was to cause the angels to question seemingly minor things that God said. He took the clearest statements of God and made them seem mysterious. His high position in heaven gave greater weight to his arguments and in the end many joined his rebellion.

For a time, God allowed Satan to continue his rebellion in heaven. Unfortunately, it was necessary to allow his plans to develop so that others could see their true nature. As their leader, he was greatly loved by the angels, and he had great influence over them. He thought if he could win enough angels to his side, he could also begin to take over other worlds God had created. His power to deceive was so great that even loyal angels had difficulty seeing the true nature of his plans.

Satan had at first disguised his work as being for the good of heaven. He claimed he was trying to promote the honor of God, and the good of everyone in heaven. At the same time that he was sowing seeds of discontent, he made it appear that he was trying to take away their unhappiness. He proposed changes to God's laws that he claimed would promote more harmony in heaven.

In dealing with Satan, God could only use goodness and truth, but Satan could use flattery and deceit. He questioned, why should God have the right to make laws and rules that angels must obey? He claimed that in requiring obedience and worship, God was just seeking to exalt Himself. The unrest that was beginning to be seen in heaven, Satan blamed on the law and government of God.

The time finally came that God could not allow Satan to continue his deception in heaven. But even then, among the angels and other created worlds, the true nature and consequences of sin were not obvious. God in His infinite wisdom did not destroy Satan at that time, because doing so, before everyone could see the true nature and end results of his plans, would have caused everyone to serve God out of fear. For the good of the entire universe, Satan must be allowed to continue on his course, so that all created beings can see the difference between his government and God's. All must be able to see beyond question that God is just, merciful, and His law unchangeable, and that it is for the good of all created beings. The history of this terrible experiment with rebellion against the law of God will be a safeguard to prevent sin from ever occurring again.

The same spirit that prompted rebellion in heaven still inspires rebellion on earth. Men think they can have true freedom without the restrictions of the law of God. When they are reprovved for breaking God's law, they justify themselves and look for sympathy from those who agree with them. Instead of turning from their error, they get angry at those who reprove them.

The character of God is misrepresented, as being oppressive, harsh and unjust. But God Himself tells a different story: [Exodus 34:6](#) ... The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. ⁷ I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty. ... [Exodus 34:6-7 NLT](#). When man sinned by believing the deceiver, God showed His character of love by sacrificing His only Son, to provide a path to redemption for the fallen race.

During Christ's life on earth, the attacks of Satan were merciless and full of hatred. Nothing could have done a better job of showing his true nature and making him lose any remaining sympathy he had with angels or other created beings. Satan led his followers on earth to reject Christ. He did everything he could to destroy Jesus. He used men to do what he couldn't do to fill the life of Christ with suffering and sorrow. Finally, the cry, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" filled the entire onlooking universe with amazement and horror.

When the sacrifice was complete, Jesus returned to heaven and went straight to the Father and probably repeated something similar to this prayer. [John 17:24](#) Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began! [John 17:24 NLT](#). The response of the Father was probably something like this. [Hebrews 1:6](#) ... "Let all of God's angels worship him." [Hebrews 1:6 NLT](#).

Satan's character was now fully revealed as a liar and a murderer. Everyone could now see the type of government he would run by looking at his followers on earth. This is what would have occurred anywhere his lies and deception were accepted. He claimed that not having to keep the law of God was liberty, and exaltation, but everyone could now see that it was slavery to sin and evil and was actually degradation. In heaven, Satan had charged God with unjustly requiring obedience and worship from the angels. Now it was seen that for the salvation of His created subjects, God was willing to suffer self-denial, humiliation, and death. Satan wanted to elevate himself to be like God, yet Christ, to destroy sin, had humbled Himself to the point of sacrificing His life. [Philippians 2:8](#) he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. [Philippians 2:8 NLT](#).

After Lucifer succeeded in deceiving the human race, he claimed that if God's law was unchangeable, they could never be saved. But Christ took the penalty of their

sin upon Himself, satisfying the law. Now man can accept the righteousness of Christ and with humble repentance, gain victory over Satan as Christ had.

Christ came to earth, not only to suffer and die, but also to exalt the law and make it honorable. [Isaiah 42:21](#) Because he is righteous, the LORD has exalted his glorious law. [Isaiah 42:21 NLT](#). If the law could have been changed to save man, then the Son of God need not have died. Christ proved that both justice and mercy are characteristics of God and are the foundation of His law and government.

[Hebrews 2:14](#) ... the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. [Hebrews 2:14 NLT](#). Lucifer wished to exalt himself. [Isaiah 14:13](#) For you said to yourself, 'I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God's stars. I will preside on the mountain of the gods far away in the north. ¹⁴ I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.' [Isaiah 14:13-14 NLT](#). But God said: [Ezekiel 28:18](#) ... I brought fire out from within you, and it consumed you. I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. ¹⁹ ... You have come to a terrible end, and you will exist no more." [Ezekiel 28:18-19 NLT](#). [Malachi 4:1](#) The LORD of Heaven's Armies says, "The day of judgment is coming, burning like a furnace. On that day the arrogant and the wicked will be burned up like straw. They will be consumed--roots, branches, and all. [Malachi 4:1 NLT](#).

In the end, the whole universe will be able to witness the nature and results of sin. When sin is finally destroyed, God's creation will not serve Him out of fear, because they will have seen the curse that sin was. They will also see that God is love, and worthy to be worshipped, through the way humanity was saved. The Bible says that sin will not rise up again. [Nahum 1:9](#) ... affliction shall not rise up the second time. [Nahum 1:9 KJV](#). The law of God that Satan claimed made slaves of those who kept it, will be honored as giving freedom from the curse of sin.

Chapter 30—Hostility Between Man and Satan

[Genesis 3:15](#) And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." [Genesis 3:15 NLT](#). But sinful man is in harmony with Satan, so what is this referring to? If God had not intervened, the human race would have been fully united with Satan against God. This verse is part of God's judgment against Satan, but it is also a prophecy, covering time to the end of the great conflict. Satan was being informed that his efforts to corrupt our world would be interrupted, and a way would be provided for man to resist his power.

Satan hates the human race because they are the recipients of God's love and mercy. So, he does whatever he can to convert human beings who were created in the image of God into his image. When he can do this and at the same time cause human beings to reject salvation, he knows he can cause sadness in heaven. Then, he causes humanity to blame God for all the evil, pain, and misery in the world.

It is only through the grace of God that we can receive His power to resist our sinful nature and not be on Satan's side. This hostility was clearly shown in the world's reception of Jesus. It was not only because Jesus appeared as a poor low-class citizen that He was rejected by the Jews. The miracle working power He possessed more than compensated for His lowly appearance. It was the purity and holiness of Christ that brought out the most hatred against Him. His humility, self-denial, and sinlessness were a constant rebuke against the pride and sinfulness of the Jews who rejected Him. Satan and his angels joined with evil men to fight against Jesus and make His life miserable.

The followers of Jesus will experience the same hatred that He did. Whoever taps into the power from God and resists temptation, will invite the wrath of Satan and his followers. [2 Timothy 3:12](#) Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. [2 Timothy 3:12 NLT](#). And so, back to the words of God in Genesis, there will be hostility between the followers of God and the followers of Satan on earth. Satan and his followers will do what they can, including deceit, and even misquoting scripture, to attack and destroy the followers of God on earth.

Why is Satan meeting so little resistance against his attacks? Why do the soldiers of Christ seem to lack energy or motivation to fight back? It is because they are lacking God's Spirit and do not hate sin enough. The result is that there is not enough hostility on their side against sin and Satan. Many who claim to follow Christ, barely acknowledge the existence of Satan, the mastermind, and mighty general, who even had great success against angels in heaven. Satan has been

perfecting his attacks throughout the history of this world, and he uses them to prevent the salvation of souls.

Satan is continually working to overcome the people of God by breaking down the barriers that separate them from the world. In the renewed heart, there is hatred of sin and resistance against it. Those who do not actively and purposely choose God and allow Him to give them a new heart, will default to their sinful nature and will end up choosing Satan.

Conforming to worldly ways never succeeds in bringing the world to Christ, it only converts the church to the ways of the world. Trying to become comfortable with sin will make it seem less evil. Those who choose to associate with the servants of Satan will soon become comfortable with the master of evil. If we persist in placing ourselves in the path of temptation, we will fall sooner than later.

Satan can often be most successful by working through those least suspected of being under his control. People with great talent or education are admired and honored, but those traits do not mean they honor God. Talent and popularity may be gifts from heaven, but without love for God, those gifts will lead away from Him. Every Christian should be courteous but not everyone who is courteous is a Christian. Many men who are cultured, intelligent, and pleasant, who would not do something commonly thought of as immoral, can be instruments for Satan. King Solomon was given great wisdom, but when he turned away from God and depended on himself, he fell into sin. Then the great gifts he was given were used by Satan.

[Ephesians 6:12](#) For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. [Ephesians 6:12 NLT](#). [1 Peter 5:8](#) Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. [1 Peter 5:8 NLT](#). [Ephesians 6:11](#) Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. [Ephesians 6:11 NLT](#).

Whoever chooses to follow Christ will be attacked by Satan. In fact, the closer they are to following God's plan, the more they will be attacked by Satan. Jesus was attacked with Satan's best, his fiercest, and his most tricky temptations, but Jesus was victorious every time. This same strength to overcome Satan is available to all who desire it.

Chapter 31—Evil Spirits

The fact that there are angels and evil spirits is clearly taught in the Bible, but there is a growing tendency to not believe in the existence of evil spirits. Many today have been led to believe that angels are the spirits of the dead.

Before the creation of man, there were angels in heaven. [Job 38:6](#) What supports its foundations, and who laid its cornerstone ⁷ as the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy? [Job 38:6-7 NLT](#). [Genesis 3:24](#) After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. [Genesis 3:24 NLT](#). Angels are superior to man. [Psalm 8:5](#) For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. [Psalm 8:5 KJV](#).

What do angels do? [Psalm 103:19](#) The LORD has made the heavens his throne; from there he rules over everything. ²⁰ Praise the LORD, you angels, you mighty ones who carry out his plans, listening for each of his commands. ²¹ Yes, praise the LORD, you armies of angels who serve him and do his will! [Psalm 103:19-21 NLT](#).

How many angels are there? [Revelation 5:11](#) Then I looked again, and I heard the voices of thousands and millions of angels around the throne and of the living beings and the elders. [Revelation 5:11 NLT](#). [Daniel 7:10](#) ... Millions of angels ministered to him; many millions stood to attend him. ... [Daniel 7:10 NLT](#). [Hebrews 12:22](#) No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering. [Hebrews 12:22 NLT](#).

They are bright and can move like lightning. [Ezekiel 1:14](#) And the living beings darted to and fro like flashes of lightning. [Ezekiel 1:14 NLT](#). [Matthew 28:2](#) Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. ³ His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. ⁴ The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint. [Matthew 28:2-4 NLT](#).

A single angel can overpower any number of human beings. [2 Kings 19:35](#) That night the angel of the LORD went out to the Assyrian camp and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. ... [2 Kings 19:35 NLT](#).

There are many more references to angels. They appeared to Abraham with promises of blessing [[Genesis 22:15-18](#)]. To Lot to rescue him from Sodom [[Genesis 19](#)]. To Elijah when he was tired and hungry in the wilderness [[1 Kings 19:5-7](#)]. To Elisha with chariots and horses of fire [[2 Kings 6:16-17](#)]. To Daniel to

help him understand a vision [[Daniel 8:15-26](#)], or to protect him in the lion's den [[Daniel 6:22](#)]. To Peter in Herod's dungeon [[Acts 12:5-11](#)]. To Paul and his companions before the shipwreck [[Acts 27:21-26](#)]. To Cornelius to instruct him how to receive the gospel [[Acts 10:1-8](#)]. In these ways throughout the ages, angels have ministered to God's people.

Angels are appointed as guardians around every follower of Christ. [Job 1:9](#) Satan replied to the LORD, "Yes, but Job has good reason to fear God. ¹⁰ You have always put a wall of protection around him and his home and his property. ... [Job 1:9-10 NLT](#). [Psalm 34:7](#) For the angel of the LORD is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him. [Psalm 34:7 NLT](#). [Matthew 18:10](#) "Beware that you don't look down on any of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels are always in the presence of my heavenly Father. [Matthew 18:10 NLT](#).

God's people are promised the protection of angels for a reason. There are many mighty angels roaming about tirelessly, trying to do evil. We should not be ignorant of their existence. Evil spirits were originally sinless angels that were equal in nature and power with the holy angels of God today. They united with Satan in his rebellion, and their purpose is to cause the destruction of mankind.

There is not much mention of evil angels in the Old Testament, but during the time Christ lived on the earth, there was a lot of evidence of their work. Jesus came to earth to carry out the plan for the redemption of man, but Satan claimed he had a right to control the world. He had succeeded in suppressing the knowledge of the true God everywhere except among the Jews. Christ came to bring light to the world, and a knowledge of God's love and His desire to give pardon and peace. Evil angels realized that if Jesus succeeded, their rule on earth would end, so Satan raged like a chained lion, clearly demonstrating the power he had over the bodies and souls of men.

The New Testament clearly states that men can be possessed and controlled by evil spirits. This condition is not a disease, or a natural condition and Jesus recognized it for what it was. The power of God over the forces of evil was clearly demonstrated by the healing of the demoniacs of Gadara. Under the control of evil spirits, they could not be restrained, they raged, foamed at the mouth, harmed their own bodies, and cried out, threatening any who might come near. Satan was pleased to be able to degrade beings created in God's image to this sad state. [Mark 5:9](#) Then Jesus demanded, "What is your name?" And he replied, "My name is Legion, because there are many of us inside this man." [Mark 5:9 NLT](#). In the Roman army, a legion was 3-5 thousand men. Satan's armies are also organized into groups and this one was no less than a legion.

At the word of Jesus, the entire legion of evil spirits left their victims, leaving them sitting calmly at the feet of Jesus, in control of their own minds and bodies. Jesus had allowed the demons to control a herd of pigs which promptly ran off a cliff to their deaths in the sea. The financial loss of the animals was more important to the people than the benefits Christ brought, and He was asked to leave. One of Satan's well used plans is to get people to blame their financial losses on Christians, rather than allowing it to fall on him where it belongs.

Jesus allowed the herd of pigs to be destroyed because those Jews should not have been raising unclean animals as a business. If Christ had not restrained the legion, they would have run the keepers and owners into the sea as well. This experience also served as a lesson to the disciples of the cruel power of Satan over man and beast. Even though Jesus agreed to leave, He knew that He would be leaving behind the two men, who would share with everyone the great things Jesus had done for them.

The daughter of a Syrophoenician woman was possessed by a demon and Jesus cast it out with a word [[Mark 7:26-30](#)]. Another demon possessed man was blind and couldn't talk [[Matthew 12:22](#)]. Another was possessed since he was a young child, and the spirit tried to harm the boy by throwing him in water and fire [[Mark 9:17-27](#)]. There were many more, but with a word Jesus healed them [[Luke 4:36](#)].

Satan's possession did not always cause suffering. Some invited Satan to gain supernatural power, such as the sorcerers Simon [[Acts 8](#)], Elymas [[Acts 13](#)], and the girl who could predict the future [[Acts 16](#)].

Those in the greatest danger of falling under the influence of evil spirits are the ones who deny their existence. Satan and his angels have a tremendous advantage over those who are ignorant of their tricks and techniques. As the time of the end approaches, Satan will work to spread the belief that he doesn't exist, which gives him more freedom and greater power to deceive and destroy.

Satan's worst fear is that people become aware of his real power and his tricks and deceptions. He is happy for people to ridicule the concept of the devil because it makes it much easier for him to hide his real purpose. He is pleased to be painted as some ridiculous half human, half animal, monster. And he loves to hear his name being made fun of by those who think they are intelligent and well informed.

The fact that so many question the existence of a being that is so clearly described in Scripture is evidence of the success of his disguise. Satan can most easily control the minds of those who are unaware of his power and influence. That is why God, in His word, has given us so many examples of Satan's evil work, so that we can be on guard against his attacks.

We should be truly alarmed at the power and hatred of Satan and his angels if we did not have the promise of protection and deliverance of our Redeemer. We are careful to lock our doors to protect our homes from evil men but are so careless when it comes to protecting our minds from Satan. In fact, we are powerless on our own against the attacks of Satan and his evil angels, but we can be safe under the watchful care of our Savior. There are angels from heaven that are stronger than the wicked angels, and God is pleased to send them to protect His people.

Chapter 32—Snares of Satan

The great controversy between Christ and Satan has been going on for about 6 thousand years, but it will soon end. Knowing his time is short, Satan increases his efforts to keep as many as possible in darkness until it is too late for them to repent.

When a church is just casually coasting along, making no effort to resist his power, Satan has no need for concern. In this state, he knows he is not in danger of losing them. But when people get serious about being saved, then he must step up his effort to counteract the influence of the Holy Spirit.

When people gather for church, evil angels can be present, doing their best to distract people from receiving the words of blessing they need. They may stir up some business issue to draw someone's attention from what is being said, that might have otherwise been a blessing.

Satan can see if people are discouraged or burdened with spiritual darkness. He can hear their spoken prayers. Then he can plan his attack to hit them where they are weak. He can use appetite or other forms of self-pleasing activities to lessen their interest in spiritual things. He knows that when people neglect prayer and study of the scriptures, he can overcome them with his attacks. So, he tries to occupy the mind with trivial and unimportant things so that people will not have time for study and prayer. There are some who try to act holy but are constantly looking for faults in others that they can criticize. These are Satan's right-hand men because he is the accuser of the brethren [[Revelation 12:10](#)]. They will misrepresent the words and actions of true servants of God and will by their actions try to tear them down. But no one needs to be deceived by them because by their fruit we can know them [[Matthew 7:16](#)].

Satan has people working for him, and many of these are in churches, encouraging doubt and unbelief, and hindering the work of God from advancing. Through them, error is sometimes accepted by the church as doctrine.

One of Satan's most successful deceptions is that it doesn't really matter what you believe. He introduces false theories, and fake stories to distract people from the truth of the gospel. True servants of God like Elijah, Jeremiah, and Paul have always had to contend with these false teachers.

The many conflicting beliefs found in the Christian world are the work of our great enemy, designed to cause division. Many, instead of humbly studying the word of God for truth, are searching it to support their favorite theory. They will take words from the Bible out of context to prove their point, using only half the verse, where

the other half might have disproved their point. Others pick numbers or symbols from the Bible, and use their imagination to arrive at an interpretation, with no regard to whether it is consistent with the rest of Scripture. Then they present these vague theories as teachings of the Bible.

Papal leaders used to select certain sections of Scripture that supported what they wanted, then taught them to the people. At the same time, they denied people access to the Scriptures so they could not study and understand them for themselves. People should have access to the whole Bible and read it for themselves. The Bible will be a guide to all who want to know more about their Creator and His will for them. The word of God is made plain to all who study it with a prayerful heart. [Habakkuk 2:2](#) Then the LORD said to me, "Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others. [Habakkuk 2:2 NLT](#). [Psalm 97:11](#) Light shines on the godly, and joy on those whose hearts are right. [Psalm 97:11 NLT](#).

Science can be a blessing and a curse. If not guided by the word of God in their research, the greatest minds can become confused as they try to investigate the relationship between science and religion. Human knowledge of earth science and spiritual things is incomplete and imperfect, and so on his own, man is not capable of harmonizing science and the Scriptures. Too many accept scientific theories as fact and then try to test God's word against them. [1 Timothy 6:20](#) Timothy, guard what God has entrusted to you. Avoid godless, foolish discussions with those who oppose you with their so-called knowledge. [1 Timothy 6:20 NLT](#). Those who doubt the Scriptures, will usually then doubt the existence of the God of the Bible, then they will be like a boat without an anchor, and easily fall to the temptations of the devil.

One of Satan's tricks is to keep people busy trying to understand and figure out what God hasn't revealed in His word. Sin started in heaven when Lucifer was not happy that some of God's plans were kept from him, and he stirred up discontent among the angels, causing them to fall with him. Now he seeks to do the same thing with us.

Those who are unwilling to accept the plain and sometimes inconvenient truths of the Bible, will look for answers and explanations that will make them feel better. Doctrines that are less spiritual, less self-denying, and less humiliating will be more popular. People who think they are too wise to accept Biblical truth will have no shield against the attacks of Satan. He is happy to promise people their hearts desire in place of the truth. All who neglect the word of God because they do not want to be at odds with the world, will accept heresy for religious truth. [2 Thessalonians 2:10](#) He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to

destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them.

¹¹ So God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies.

¹² Then they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth. [2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 NLT](#).

One of Satan's most successful deceptions are the teachings and lying wonders of spiritualism. Another dangerous error is to deny that Christ is God and equal with the Father. Also, some believe that He did not exist before His incarnation into a human body. There are many who claim to believe the Bible that accept these beliefs, which are direct contradictions of the plainest statements of Jesus. These beliefs degrade the sacrifice made by God to save man.

Another widely believed error preached from most pulpits is the idea people go to heaven immediately after death, rather than waiting for the resurrection at the second coming of Christ.

Satan has been tricking people into believing they can meet Jesus in secret places here on earth, and many souls have been lost to this deception. [Matthew 24:23](#) "Then if anyone tells you, 'Look, here is the Messiah,' or 'There he is,' don't believe it. ²⁴ For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones. ²⁵ See, I have warned you about this ahead of time. ²⁶ "So if someone tells you, 'Look, the Messiah is out in the desert,' don't bother to go and look. Or, 'Look, he is hiding here,' don't believe it! [Matthew 24:23-26 NLT](#).

The wisdom of the world teaches that prayer accomplishes nothing. Men of science claim there can be no answers to prayer because it would violate the law of the universe put in place by God Himself. But the Bible teaches otherwise. It is part of God's plan to answer prayers if He sees fit when He might otherwise not act.

There are many doctrines that Christians claim are Biblical which are not. Many people have rejected Christianity and the Bible because of some doctrine they think is not fair, merciful, or loving. Satan's greatest desire is to destroy confidence in God and His word. There are many who don't like the Bible and reject it because it reproves and condemns their sins. Many only read the Bible or listen to its teachings to find fault with it. Some knowingly argue on the wrong side of an issue because they enjoy controversy, but do not realize that by doing so they are in danger of being caught in Satan's trap.

The contents of the Bible provide enough evidence of its divine origins. With the help of the Holy Spirit, which is promised to all, every person can understand the truths they need from the Bible. But men are not capable of fully understanding the reasons for everything God does. [Romans 11:33](#) Oh, how great are God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions

and his ways! [Romans 11:33 NLT](#). God will reveal to us as much as is necessary, and in our best interests to know, and beyond that we must trust. All who look for hooks to hang their doubts on will find them. And all who refuse to accept and obey God's word until every objection has been removed, will never accept it. There is only one course of action for those who wish to be free of doubts. It is to move forward in faith with the light they have and more will be given. [John 1:9](#) The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. [John 1:9 NLT](#). [Matthew 7:7](#) "Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. [Matthew 7:7 NLT](#).

The followers of Christ do not know all the plans the devil has against them, but God does. He can intervene, but He allows His people to be confronted with some temptation and trials because it is part of the journey to final victory. If His people will humble their hearts, confess and put away their sins, and claim His promises, every temptation may be successfully resisted. [Zechariah 4:6](#) Then he said to me, "This is what the LORD says to Zerubbabel: It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. [Zechariah 4:6 NLT](#).

Balaam was enticed by the promise of rich rewards to try to curse God's people. But God would not allow it and only allowed blessing. [Numbers 23:8](#) But how can I curse those whom God has not cursed? How can I condemn those whom the LORD has not condemned? [Numbers 23:8 NLT](#). The Israelites were loyal to God at the time, but the curse which Balaam could not pronounce against them, he brought on them by getting them to fall into sin.

Satan knows that the weakest soul who depends on Christ cannot be overcome. That is why he must first entice them to leave their fortress in Christ, and venture outside of their protection, onto his ground. It is only by humbly leaning on God and keeping His commandments that we can be secure.

Chapter 33—The First Great Deception

In the beginning, Adam and Eve were perfectly happy obeying the law of God. This disproved Satan's claim that God's law was oppressive and did not serve the good of His creatures. Satan was envious of the beautiful world made for Adam and Eve, and determined to cause them to fall, so he could gain possession of earth, and use humans in his fight against God.

Adam and Eve had been warned about Satan, and if he had come straight out and introduced himself, he would have been immediately rejected. But, hiding behind the serpent, he spoke to Eve. [Genesis 3:1](#) The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" [Genesis 3:1 NLT](#). If Eve had immediately turned away instead of entering into conversation with the tempter, she would have been safe, but she stayed and fell victim to his lies. In the same way many today are overcome when they doubt or question the requirements of God, instead of accepting and obeying.

[Genesis 3:2](#) "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. ³ "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'" ⁴ "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵ "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil." [Genesis 3:2-5 NLT](#). Satan was selling what he desired in heaven which was to be like God. Eve gave into temptation, and through her Adam was led into sin as well. Eve believed the serpent and doubted God. The words of Satan were partially true in that their eyes were opened, and they learned about evil. Satan sold this knowledge as a something to be desired, but Adam and Eve learned very shortly after that it was not.

The tree of life grew in the middle of the Garden of Eden, and if Adam and Eve had remained faithful to God, they would have continued to have free access to the tree and would have lived forever. But when they sinned, they were no longer allowed to eat the fruit from the tree of life and would eventually die. They were made from dirt, and they would become dirt again after they died. This sentence of death would be passed on to all mankind because the sinful nature of Adam and Eve and would also be passed on to all their descendants. [Romans 5:12](#) When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. [Romans 5:12 NLT](#)

But God, through the sacrifice of His Son has brought everlasting life back within our reach. [2 Timothy 1:10](#) And now he has made all of this plain to us by the appearing

of Christ Jesus, our Savior. He broke the power of death and illuminated the way to life and immortality through the Good News. [2 Timothy 1:10 NLT](#). [Romans 2:7](#) He will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers. [Romans 2:7 NLT](#).

Satan told Eve she would not die from disobeying God. This was the first sermon on the immortality of the soul, and it continues to be believed by most of the world and is even preached in almost every Christian church. It is interesting how Satan is believed more than the clear word of God.

If man had been allowed to continue eating from the tree of life even after sin, they could have lived forever, but God would not allow that. [Genesis 3:24](#) After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. [Genesis 3:24 NLT](#).

Part of the lie of immortality that Satan sold, includes the suffering forever in hell. This, Satan uses to misrepresent God as one who delights in causing everlasting torture and suffering for those who disobey Him. In this way Satan gets people to view God with his own characteristics, which are cruelty and hate. But God says He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. [Ezekiel 33:11](#) As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of wicked people. I only want them to turn from their wicked ways so they can live. Turn! Turn from your wickedness, O people of Israel! Why should you die? [Ezekiel 33:11 NLT](#). It is impossible to fully understand the evil effects of this terrible doctrine of eternal torment in hell.

Satan is successful today using the same approach that caused the fall of our first parents. He gets people to doubt that God's way is just and in their best interest. If he can get people to view God as a cruel, hateful tyrant, he can justify his rebellion. He can even appear to be the victim for being thrown out of heaven.

[Revelation 14:8](#) Then another angel followed him through the sky, shouting, "Babylon is fallen--that great city is fallen--because she made all the nations of the world drink the wine of her passionate immorality." [Revelation 14:8 NLT](#). One of the elements of the wine that all nations drank is the doctrine of eternal torment. It is true that this doctrine was passed down from our church fathers, and that many good men in the past did not reject it. But if we reject the light we now have and say we will continue believing what we were taught by our fathers, we will fall under the condemnation pronounced on Babylon for drinking the wine of her abomination.

The opposite extreme of the doctrine of eternal torment in hell is that idea that God is so loving and compassionate that everyone will be saved. This can lead people to believe they can live a life of selfishness and pleasure, ignore the law of God, and

still go to heaven when they die. This places all the emphasis on God's mercy but ignores His justice. One Bible verse that is used to support this comes from the tragic story of king David's son Amnon. He raped his sister and was killed by her brother for this terrible act. This is how the Bible describes the emotions of David after the death of his oldest son Amnon. [2 Samuel 13:39](#) And [the soul of] king David longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead. [2 Samuel 13:39 KJV](#). The argument goes, since David was a prophet, he would have known if Amnon was in hell, and since he was comforted, assuming Amnon was alive somewhere, he must be in heaven.

This is an example of taking a single verse from the Bible and inferring a conclusion from a statement. With this being taught and believed by so many, is it any wonder that there is so much wickedness in the world? This belief could also be credited with people's willingness to commit suicide, if they think the next thing they will know is eternal happiness in heaven.

God has made it clear in His word that the wicked will be punished. Those who think God is too merciful to punish the sinner should ask themselves why Jesus had to die. [Romans 6:23](#) For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. [Romans 6:23 NLT](#). The sacrifice of Christ provided a way for sinners to be freed from the penalty of sin, but everyone who doesn't choose to accept it will be punished for their own sins.

[Revelation 21:6](#) And he also said, "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega--the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. [Revelation 21:6 NLT](#). To receive the gift of life, one must thirst for it. Thirsting means to feel the need for water. The following verse contains a promise for those who receive the water of life and overcome. [Revelation 21:7](#) All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children. [Revelation 21:7 NLT](#).

[Isaiah 3:10](#) Tell the godly that all will be well for them. They will enjoy the rich reward they have earned! ¹¹ But the wicked are doomed, for they will get exactly what they deserve. [Isaiah 3:10-11 NLT](#). [Ecclesiastes 8:12](#) But even though a person sins a hundred times and still lives a long time, I know that those who fear God will be better off. ¹³ The wicked will not prosper, for they do not fear God. Their days will never grow long like the evening shadows. [Ecclesiastes 8:12-13 NLT](#). [Romans 2:5](#) But because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ He will judge everyone according to what they have done. [Romans 2:5-6 NLT](#). [Ephesians 5:5](#) You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a

greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. [Ephesians 5:5 NLT](#). [Revelation 22:14](#) Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life.

¹⁵ Outside the city are the dogs--the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idol worshipers, and all who love to live a lie. [Revelation 22:14-15 NLT](#).

The Bible is very clear that God is indeed merciful, gracious, and long-suffering, but it is just as clear that the wicked will be destroyed. God's character is the perfect combination of mercy and justice. Jesus gave us a demonstration of the characteristics of God and His government when He said, love your enemies [[Matthew 5:44](#)]. The justice executed on the wicked could even be considered for their own good. God would make them happy if He could within the framework of His law, but they despise His love and reject His mercy. It is not possible for them to live a life in rebellion against God's law on earth and then be suddenly transformed as they are transported to heaven and still retain their free will. They could not be happy in heaven, living in harmony with God's law. They would welcome death rather than face Him who died for them.

God will never force anyone to follow or obey Him. He wishes His created beings to love and obey Him by choice, because they see his wisdom, justice, and love.

Permitting Cain, the murderer to live, demonstrated the result of allowing unrestricted sin to run its course. Through the influence of Cain, his descendants were led into sin until the whole earth was full of evil. [Genesis 6:5](#) The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. [Genesis 6:5 NLT](#). [Genesis 6:11](#) Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. [Genesis 6:11 NLT](#). For the benefit of the world, God destroyed the wicked in Noah's time, as He also did to the sinners in Sodom. At the end of earth's sinful history, God will finally destroy all the wicked for the benefit of the entire universe, but in reality, they will be receiving the just reward for their refusal to reject sin.

Through Adam's sin, the whole human race was condemned to die as sinners, but through the plan of salvation, all will be brought back to life. [Acts 24:15](#) I have the same hope in God that these men have, that he will raise both the righteous and the unrighteous. [Acts 24:15 NLT](#). [1 Corinthians 15:22](#) Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. [1 Corinthians 15:22 NLT](#). [John 5:28](#) Don't be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God's Son, ²⁹ and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment. [John 5:28-29 NLT](#).

[Revelation 20:6](#) Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. For them the second death holds no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him a thousand years. [Revelation 20:6 NLT](#).

The wicked will suffer punishment in proportion to their wickedness, but it will end in death, not eternal torture in hell. [Psalm 37:10](#) Soon the wicked will disappear. Though you look for them, they will be gone. [Psalm 37:10 NLT](#). [Obadiah 1:16](#) Just as you swallowed up my people on my holy mountain, so you and the surrounding nations will swallow the punishment I pour out on you. Yes, all you nations will drink and stagger and disappear from history. [Obadiah 1:16 NLT](#).

According to the doctrine of natural immortality, those who have died are already in heaven, able to observe the suffering of loved ones left behind. How could those in heaven be enjoying happiness in this way? According to the Bible, man is not conscious in death. [Psalm 146:4](#) When they breathe their last, they return to the earth, and all their plans die with them. [Psalm 146:4 NLT](#). [Ecclesiastes 9:5](#) The living at least know they will die, but the dead know nothing. They have no further reward, nor are they remembered. ⁶ Whatever they did in their lifetime--loving, hating, envying--is all long gone. They no longer play a part in anything here on earth. ... ¹⁰ Whatever you do, do well. For when you go to the grave, there will be no work or planning or knowledge or wisdom. [Ecclesiastes 9:5-6, 10 NLT](#).

The evidence just continues. [Psalm 6:5](#) For the dead do not remember you. Who can praise you from the grave? [Psalm 6:5 NLT](#). [Acts 2:29](#) "Dear brothers, think about this! You can be sure that the patriarch David wasn't referring to himself, for he died and was buried, and his tomb is still here among us. [Acts 2:29 NLT](#).

Tyndale said this about the state of the dead. [paraphrase: I am not persuaded that they be already in the full glory that Christ or the angels are in. Neither is it a part of my faith, for if it were so, what would be the point of the resurrection.]³⁷¹

“The doctrine of the resurrection appears to have been thought of much more consequence among the primitive Christians than it is now! How is this? The apostles were continually insisting on it, and exciting the followers of God to diligence, obedience, and cheerfulness through it. And their successors in the present day seldom mention it! What the apostles preached, the primitive Christians believed; so, what we preach, our hearers believe. There is not a

³⁷¹ Demaus, Robert, edited by Lovett, Richard, *William Tyndale a Biography*, London: The Religious Tract Society, 1886, p 357.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/William_Tyndale_a_Biography/dy5qAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA375&printsec=frontcover

doctrine in the gospel on which more stress is laid; and there is not a doctrine in the present system of preaching which is treated with more neglect!”³⁷²

If the dead are already in heaven, why did Jesus tell His disciples He would come again. [John 14:2](#) There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. [John 14:2-3 NLT](#). The apostle Paul says this about the second coming: [1 Thessalonians 4:16](#) For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. ¹⁷ Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ So encourage each other with these words. [1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 NLT](#).

The theory of the immortality of the soul was one of those false doctrines that Rome borrowed from paganism and incorporated into Christianity. Martin Luther included it among the “monstrous fables that form part of the Roman dunghill of decretals.”³⁷³ Luther also wrote, “There is, saith he, no duty, no science, no knowledge, no wisdom there. Solomon judgeth that the dead are asleep, and feel nothing at all. For the dead lie there, accounting neither days nor years, but when they are awaked, they shall seem to have slept scarce one minute.”³⁷⁴

There is no place in the Scriptures that says the righteous go to their reward or the wicked to their punishment at death, except a single parable. But there are many more verses supporting the idea of death as sleep, followed by the resurrection. [[1 Thessalonians 4:14](#), [Job 14:10-11](#), [Job 14:21](#), [1 Corinthians 15:52-55](#)].

³⁷² Clarke, Adam, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, with Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol II, New York: Daniel Hitt and Abraham Paul, 1818, p 38.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Holy_Bible/k1c7AQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=RA8-PA6-IA10&printsec=frontcover

³⁷³ Petavel, E., *The Problem of Immortality*, London: Elliot Stock, 1892, p 255.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Problem_of_Immortality/x31CAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA255&printsec=frontcover

³⁷⁴ Luther, Martin, *Exposition of Solomon's Book Called Ecclesiastes or the Preacher*, London: John Daye, 1573, p 151. https://btlib.org/An_Exposition_of_Salomons_Booke_Called_E.pdf

Chapter 34—Can Our Dead Speak to Us?

The work of holy angels is taught in the Bible and should be comforting to every follower of Christ. But this belief has been confused by the false doctrine of our dead going to heaven, which teaches that they are the “ministering spirits” mentioned in the Bible. [Hebrews 1:14](#) Therefore, angels are only servants--spirits sent to care for people who will inherit salvation. [Hebrews 1:14 NLT](#).

The doctrine of our departed loved ones as ministering spirits has prepared the way for modern spiritualism. If they are in the presence of God and the holy angels, they must have knowledge they could use to benefit and protect their loved ones on earth. For people that believe their loved ones are alive as spirits, how could they not believe it when someone appears before them who looks and behaves like their departed loved. If evil angels can appear as good angels, surely, they can appear like a human being. [2 Corinthians 11:14](#) But I am not surprised! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. [2 Corinthians 11:14 NLT](#). With the added behavioral familiarity, the counterfeit is perfect. Many are comforted when they think they are seeing their loved ones, but do not realize they are listening, obeying, and learning from evil spirits.

With this deception in place, evil angels can appear as friends or loved ones who were not believers or followers of God. They can communicate that they are happy in heaven, perhaps even with important jobs, showing that there is no difference in the end for being righteous or wicked on earth.

Many will be comforted when they learn their loved ones are happy and will be deceived by what they are told. [1 Timothy 4:1](#) Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons. [1 Timothy 4:1 NLT](#). At first the spirit might warn of some small thing which proves correct. Then slowly as confidence is gained, demons can eventually teach false doctrines that are contrary to the Bible. The deception is made stronger by mixing truth with error and at times predicting future events. Finally, the law of God is set aside.

Many people will claim that mysterious and seemingly impossible acts are the result of illusion and sleight of hand. While that is true at times, sometimes there truly are supernatural powers at work. The mysterious rapping that started modern spiritualism was the work of evil angels. Many will continue to discredit and explain away these mysterious events until something so large happens that they cannot help but call it supernatural. At that point they will be deceived into accepting it as the power of God.

The Bible warns of this. [2 Thessalonians 2:9](#) This man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles. ¹⁰ He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them. [2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 NLT](#). [Revelation 13:13](#) He did astounding miracles, even making fire flash down to earth from the sky while everyone was watching. [Revelation 13:13 NLT](#).

Satan is so familiar with human nature that he knows exactly how to adapt his temptation for each person. He can present spiritualism in a way that appeals to people who are cultured and refined. Evil spirits can appear as angels of light when it suits their purpose. They can appeal to our better nature, captivating us with themes of love and charity. Our imagination can be excited with grand ideas, leading us to take pride in our own selves and our own wisdom to the point that we don't need God. Anyone who is not shielded by divine power will not be able to resist the temptations of the devil.

Satan continues to be as successful today using flattery as he was with Eve, by exciting the desire for self-exaltation. [Genesis 3:5](#) "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil." [Genesis 3:5 NLT](#). Spiritualism teaches that man is on a journey to godhead. The throne is within you. One spiritualistic teacher said we are all demigods. And another said, any just and perfect being is Christ.

Satan has substituted sinful human nature as the object of adoration, in place of the righteous perfection of God. It is a law of nature that by beholding, we become changed. If self is his highest ideal, man will never reach anything higher, in fact he will sink lower and lower.

To the self-indulgent, pleasure-lover, Satan presents spiritualism in a different light than he did to the more refined intellectual. He knows the weakness of each person and makes sure that there are plenty of opportunities for them to indulge their tendency to evil. He is also successful in getting people to overindulge in things that in moderation are not sinful. Ultimately, he can communicate through spirits that knowledge places man above law, and all sins are really innocent. When people then believe that desire is the highest law, and man is accountable only to himself, can anyone wonder why there is so much evil everywhere?

The word of God has sufficient warnings so that we don't need to be deceived by the claims of spiritualism. The foundation of spiritualism is the immortality of the soul, and the Bible clearly teaches that the dead know not anything. In addition to that, God in His word forbids attempts to communicate with departed spirits, with the death penalty for those who help to make it happen. [Leviticus 19:31](#) "Do not defile yourselves by turning to mediums or to those who consult the spirits of the dead. I

am the LORD your God. [Leviticus 19:31 NLT](#). [Leviticus 20:6](#) "I will also turn against those who commit spiritual prostitution by putting their trust in mediums or in those who consult the spirits of the dead. I will cut them off from the community. [Leviticus 20:6 NLT](#). [Leviticus 20:27](#) "Men and women among you who act as mediums or who consult the spirits of the dead must be put to death by stoning. They are guilty of a capital offense." [Leviticus 20:27 NLT](#).

This is talking about witchcraft, a word that is understood to be the act of communicating with evil spirits and having power from them. But today spiritualism has millions of followers, and is embraced by scientists, churches, governments, and kings. But spiritualism is simply a new disguise of witchcraft which was condemned and forbidden in the Bible, and at times in more recent history.

Spiritualism teaches that there is no difference in the afterlife for the purest disciples of Christ and the most corrupt servants of Satan. Satan convinces his followers that no matter how wicked you are, and regardless of whether you believe in God and the Bible, heaven is your home in the afterlife. God says He is weary of these false teachings, [Malachi 2:17](#) You have wearied the LORD with your words. "How have we wearied him?" you ask. You have wearied him by saying that all who do evil are good in the LORD's sight, and he is pleased with them. You have wearied him by asking, "Where is the God of justice?" [Malachi 2:17 NLT](#). [Isaiah 5:20](#) What sorrow for those who say that evil is good and good is evil, that dark is light and light is dark, that bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter. [Isaiah 5:20 NLT](#).

Since the Bible speaks against the lies of spiritualism, Satan tries to get the world to think of the Bible as fiction, or at best something that humans needed in ancient times but is now obsolete. He gets people to accept communication with the spirit world as a replacement for learning from the Bible. In this way he would be in complete control and could make the world believe anything he communicates through this channel. The Bible that warns about him and his deceptions, is cast aside or left in the shadows. In the same way he gets people to push Jesus into the background, questioning His divinity, and resurrection, and finally thinking their own miracle working power is greater than that of Christ's.

Spiritualism today is so much more dangerous than witchcraft of old, because of its disguise. It claims to accept the Bible and Christ, which is how it finds its way into Christianity, but the words of the Bible are twisted so that sinners do not feel the need to change. The love of God is emphasized, and His justice and hatred of evil are kept out of sight, and the law of God is taught to be obsolete.

Most people do not understand the deceptive power of spiritualism and the danger of coming under its control. Many would be horrified at the thought of being controlled by spirits but are curious and without any serious faith in it, they explore it. But once they put themselves under the power of Satan, he can control them against their will. From that point it is impossible to break away without the power of God.

Isaiah gives the following warning to steer us clear of the devil's trap: [Isaiah 8:19](#) Someone may say to you, "Let's ask the mediums and those who consult the spirits of the dead. With their whisperings and mutterings, they will tell us what to do." But shouldn't people ask God for guidance? Should the living seek guidance from the dead? ²⁰ Look to God's instructions and teachings! People who contradict his word are completely in the dark. [Isaiah 8:19-20 NLT](#). When people refuse to receive the clear word of God regarding the state of the dead, they walk straight into Satan's trap and become his prey. [2 Thessalonians 2:9](#) This man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles. ¹⁰ He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them. ¹¹ So God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies. [2 Thessalonians 2:9-11 NLT](#).

Those who oppose the teachings of spiritualism are fighting directly against Satan and his angels. But they can win the battle the same way Jesus did, by quoting Scripture. Satan can also quote Scripture, taken out of context, to support his deception. He can even appear as relatives or friends who have died, communicating whatever he wishes and performing miracles to support his claims. That is why it is important for us to spend time studying and understanding the Bible. We must be armed with the knowledge that the dead know not anything, and those who seemingly return from the dead are evil angels.

There is a trial coming to the whole world that God says He will protect us from if we keep His word. [Revelation 3:10](#) "Because you have obeyed my command to persevere, I will protect you from the great time of testing that will come upon the whole world to test those who belong to this world. [Revelation 3:10 NLT](#). The power of Satan's deception is great, but those who earnestly search for truth in the Bible will not be overcome. God would send every angel in heaven if necessary to protect one person who trusts in Him from the attacks of Satan.

So many today reject the word of God yet eagerly accept the deceptions of Satan. Those who cling to the faith of the prophets and apostles are made fun of and accused of being intolerant of alternate lifestyles. Accepting what God says in the Bible and obeying His law is considered narrow minded and superstitious. Those who think they are safe from the judgments described in the Bible are like people

who have made a deal with death and hell. [Isaiah 28:15](#) You boast, "We have struck a bargain to cheat death and have made a deal to dodge the grave. The coming destruction can never touch us, for we have built a strong refuge made of lies and deception." [Isaiah 28:15 NLT](#).

Satan has been planning and preparing for his last great deception. The foundation of his plans have been laid with the lie he told in Eden, [Genesis 3:4](#) "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵ "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil." [Genesis 3:4-5 NLT](#). The last great deception is described in the following verses in Revelation. [Revelation 16:13](#) And I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs leap from the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. ¹⁴ They are demonic spirits who work miracles and go out to all the rulers of the world to gather them for battle against the Lord on that great judgment day of God the Almighty. [Revelation 16:13-14 NLT](#). Only those whose faith is solidly grounded on the word of God and are protected by His power will be able to withstand the last great deception.

This is what God says about those who think they are safe from death and hell because of Satan's deception. [Isaiah 28:17](#) I will test you with the measuring line of justice and the plumb line of righteousness. Since your refuge is made of lies, a hailstorm will knock it down. Since it is made of deception, a flood will sweep it away. ¹⁸ I will cancel the bargain you made to cheat death, and I will overturn your deal to dodge the grave. When the terrible enemy sweeps through, you will be trampled into the ground. [Isaiah 28:17-18 NLT](#).

Chapter 35—Liberty of Conscience Threatened

The pope is thought of much more favorably by Protestants now than he was at the time of the Reformation. In countries where the Catholic church is not growing, they are being friendly to Protestants, emphasizing common beliefs and trying to gain influence. The opinion is growing among Protestants that there is not that much difference between them and Catholics on the most important points of Christianity, and maybe agreeing with Rome on some of their differences would improve their relationship.

There was a time when liberty of conscience did not exist and only came after a long and costly struggle. The children of the Reformers who won that liberty, were taught that trying to make peace with Rome was disloyalty to God.

Many say it is unfair to judge the Catholic church today by the alleged terrible actions in the dark ages, and that she has changed with modern civilization. But those who do so, choose to overlook the fact that the proud power of the papacy that claimed the church has never erred, continues to do so with the statement, “the Romish church never erred, nor will it, according to the Scriptures, ever err.”³⁷⁵

Since she has never erred, any persecution of those who disobey is justified, and when the opportunity to do so again arises, she will. If secular governments united with the Catholic church, her former power would return, and the persecution would immediately follow.

Many claim that fear of the Catholic church in the United States is due to religious intolerance and ignorance. They don’t see how the church could affect the freedom of its citizens. But look at some of the fundamental differences between the USA and the Catholic church.

The first amendment of the Constitution of the USA guarantees freedom of conscience.³⁷⁶ The Catholic church has taught that liberty of conscience can lead to “corruption of youths, contempt of sacred things and holy laws—in other words, a pestilence more deadly to the state than any other.”³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ Murdock, James, *Mosheim’s Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*, 5th edition, London: William Tegg, 1867, p360. https://www.google.com/books/edition/Mosheim_s_Institutes_of_Ecclesiastical_H/EIEPAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA360&printsec=frontcover

³⁷⁶ <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-1/>

³⁷⁷ Pope Gregory XVI, Encyclical Letter, *Mirari Vos*, 14, Aug. 15, 1832. <https://www.catholic.com/magazine/online-edition/religious-liberty>, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/greg16/g16mirar.htm>, <https://www.csun.edu/~hcfl1004/Greg16.html>, https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Pope_Gregory_XVI

The fact that the Catholic church is tolerant in the USA is not because she has changed, it is because she is helpless. In the encyclical letter of December 8, 1864, Pope Pius IX, included the following points (remember these are stated as errors). “24. The Church has not the power of using force, nor has she any temporal power, direct or indirect. — Apostolic Letter “Ad Apostolicae,” Aug. 22, 1851.” “78. Hence it has been wisely decided by law, in some Catholic countries, that persons coming to reside therein shall enjoy the public exercise of their own peculiar worship. — Allocution “Acerbissimum,” Sept. 27, 1852.” “79. Moreover, it is false that the civil liberty of every form of worship, and the full power, given to all, of overtly and publicly manifesting any opinions whatsoever and thoughts, conduce more easily to corrupt the morals and minds of the people, and to propagate the pest of indifferentism. — Allocution “Nunquam fore,” Dec. 15, 1856.”³⁷⁸

Prior to 1791, the bishop’s consecration oath contained a phrase in Latin which says: ‘Haeireticos, Schismaticos, et rebelles eidem domino nostro vel successoris praedictis, pro posse persequar et impugaabo.’³⁷⁹ Translated by google to English, it reads: ‘Heretics, schismatics, and rebels to the same lord or to the aforesaid successors, I will persecute and oppose.’ According to a copy of the oath found on the biblicalcyclopedia.com, it reads: ‘Heretics, schismatics, and rebels against our said lord or his aforesaid successors I will, as far as I can, follow after (persequar) and fight against.’³⁸⁰

While it is true that there are real Christians and followers of Christ in the Roman Catholic church, Romanism as a system is no more in harmony with the gospel of Christ now than at any time in her history. The Roman church is doing everything she can to extend her influence and increase her power to regain control of the world and to undo what Protestantism has done.

Many Protestants today consider the pope the head of the entire Christian church. They have compromised and willingly given up some of the hard-won differences that separated them from the mother church of the dark ages. Papists themselves are even pleasantly surprised that Protestants so willingly make these compromises.

Some Protestants think the Catholic religion is dull and filled with meaningless ceremony. But they are wrong, because it is an impressive display that fascinates

³⁷⁸ <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius09/p9syll.htm>

³⁷⁹ *The New Zealand Tablet*, Vol XXXI, December 24, 1903, p 2. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/imageserver-periodicals/NZT19031224.pdf> or https://btlb.org/NZT_19031224.pdf

³⁸⁰ *McClintock and Strong Biblical Cyclopedia* <https://www.biblicalcyclopedia.com/O/oath-of-conformity-and-obedience.html>

and overwhelms the senses and silences reason and conscience. The human love of beauty is fed by the magnificent churches, golden altars, jeweled shrines, and art. The music with full pipe organ, and choir in grand cathedrals brings awe and reverence.

But true Christianity, and the cross of Christ, is so pure and lovely that no earthly beauty can enhance its value. The person looking for religion who has not been born again can be attracted by earthly beauty and overwhelmed senses.

Another doctrine of the church of Rome that is the cause of much evil in the world is that of penance and confession to a human being. For the unconverted person who wants to continue sinning, it suits them better to perform penance, and get absolution from a priest, than to give up their sin. This removes the guilt and makes it easier to keep sinning.

There is a similarity between the Church of Rome and the Jewish religion at the time of Christ. The Jews revered the law as the Romanists reverence the cross. The Jews broke God's law in secret, while they openly put on a show of keeping the laws they had created around and in place of the law of God. Unconverted Romanists reverence the cross but do not accept the changing power of Him who died on it. Papists place crosses everywhere, even wearing them. But the teachings of Christ are buried under tradition. The words of Jesus to the Jews applies to the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church. [Matthew 23:4](#) They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden. [Matthew 23:4 NLT](#). Church leaders are living in luxury and pleasure, while the members are kept constantly in fear of offending an angry God.

Satan uses the worship of images and relics [things associated with or used by revered saints], praying to saints, and exalting the pope, to draw the minds of people away from God. Satan's deceptive reasoning lessens the importance of the law of God, making people feel better about sin.

The Roman Catholic Church was the combination of paganism and Christianity. Like paganism, the church misrepresented the character of God as a cruel and extremely offensive being. On top of that, they used torture to enforce compliance with her doctrines. The number of people she cruelly killed will never be known until the day of judgment. But worse than the killing was the devices of torture she invented and used. Motivated by Satan, these instruments of torture were designed to cause the greatest pain and suffering without killing the victim.

For members who actually cared about repentance and forgiveness for sins, they were taught they needed to perform penance. This often took the form of hurting oneself physically, even to the extent of whipping and starvation. Some were taught that the only way to overcome their tendencies to sin was to cut the ties of

family and friends and live in monasteries. Satan succeeded because he got people to ignore the Bible, which if read would reveal a God of love who doesn't lay heavy burdens on us. [Matthew 11:28](#) Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." [Matthew 11:28-30 NLT](#). If the Bible were read, one could easily see the great contrast between the cruel popes of the dark ages, and the humble Man from Galilee. [Luke 9:56](#) For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save [them]. And they went to another village. [Luke 9:56 KJV](#).

The Roman church downplays and apologizes for her past cruelties and puts forward a good face to the world. Outwardly she acts Christlike, but she is unchanged. The papacy that Protestants are so ready to honor, is the same that ruled the dark ages. She is exactly what she is prophesied to be. [2 Thessalonians 2:3](#) Don't be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed--the one who brings destruction. ⁴ He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God. [2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 NLT](#). She still declares, "Faith ought not be kept with heretics, nor persons suspected of heresy."³⁸¹

Today, Protestants claim that their differences with Catholicism aren't as great as they used to be. They are correct, but it is Protestantism and not Catholicism that has changed. Yet many are now apologizing to Rome for the former hard feelings and asking for forgiveness.

Even those who don't like Roman Catholicism don't seem to have any fear of her power. They say ignorance in the Middle Ages is the reason she could spread her doctrines, superstitions, and oppression. They claim we are too enlightened now to allow a repeat of that history. But the greater the light, the greater the darkness will be for those who twist it for their use or reject it. Man's belief in their so-called science, will lead them to discredit the Bible. But ignorance or rejection of the Bible is what paved the way for the papacy in the Dark Ages.

The papacy meets the needs of the world by appealing to those who would save themselves, and those who would be saved without giving up their sins.

³⁸¹ Lenfant, p 516.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_History_of_the_Council_of_Constance/B0WPqThQowMC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA516&printsec=frontcover

Protestants in the USA are contemplating using the power of government to support their cause, for the good of the country, of course. But they are actually opening the door for the papacy to rise to power again, by thinking of making a law to enforce worship on Sunday.

The first Sunday law was created by Constantine in 321. It decreed that all work should stop on that day, except that farmers could work if necessary.³⁸² Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea at the time was quoted as saying, “whatever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord’s Day.”³⁸³

Eustace Abbat of Flaye went to England around 1200, forbidding anyone from holding a market, and selling on the Lord’s Day. He carried with him a document that he said had come down from heaven onto the altar of St. Simeon, in Golgotha where Christ was crucified. It was an elaborate and detailed document, supposedly written by God Himself. It detailed curses or punishments for those who did not keep the Lord’s Day holy. It forbade work from 9 PM on Saturday to sunrise on Monday.³⁸⁴

In the council of Scotland in 1203, under Pope Innocent III, a law was passed including more of the 7th day, forbidding work from noon on Saturday to Monday morning.³⁸⁵

When it suited them, the church was happy to claim the divine authority to change the Biblical sabbath to the Lord’s Day. In the 16th century a papal council plainly declared: “Let all Christians remember that the Seventh-day was Consecrated by God, and hath been received and observed, not only by the Jews, but by all others, who pretend to Worship God, though we Christians have changed their Sabbath into the Lord's-day.”³⁸⁶ This clearly showed that they knew what the law of God said and they were setting themselves above God to change it.

³⁸² Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sunday-day-of-week>

³⁸³ Cox, Robert, *Sabbath Laws and Sabbath Duties*, Edinburgh: MacLachlan and Stewart, and Simpkin, Marshall, and co. London, 1853, p 538.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Sabbath_Laws_and_Sabbath_Duties/IEosAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA538&printsec=frontcover

³⁸⁴ De Hoveden, Roger, *The Annals of Roger De Hoveden Comprising the History of England Vol II*, London, H. G. Bohn, York Street, Covenant Garden, 1853, p 526-530.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Annals_of_Roger_de_Hoveden_A_D_1181/isQyLeHQHIsC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA528&printsec=frontcover

³⁸⁵ Morer, Thomas, *A Discourse in Six Dialogues on the Name, Notion, and Observation of the Lord’s Day*, printed for Thomas Newborough, at the Golden Ball in St. Paul’s Church-yard, 1701, p290.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_Discourse_in_Six_Dialogues_on_the_Name/gLJVAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA290&printsec=frontcover

³⁸⁶ Morer, p281.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_Discourse_in_Six_Dialogues_on_the_Name/gLJVAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA281&printsec=frontcover

During the dark ages, the Christians in Ethiopia had been lost sight of by the church of Rome. In keeping with the law of God they had still been keeping Saturday, though they also kept the Lord's Day in honor of the resurrection of Christ.³⁸⁷ When the papacy re-established contact with the Ethiopian church, they convinced them to pass laws to make them work on Saturday.^{388 389}

The Abyssinian church had a similar experience to Ethiopia, but when the papal tyranny became so heavy, they determined to throw it off. When they finally succeeded, their ancient faith was restored, and after that happily remained unknown to the rest of the Christian world.

For the prophecy in [Revelation 13:11-16](#), that was discussed previously, the lamb-like beast will cause the earth to worship the leopard-like beast. This was interpreted to mean that Protestants will work with the United States government to create a Sunday law, thus creating an image to the beast. But they will not be alone, because the beast whose deadly wound will be healed will rise again in power. [Revelation 13:8](#) And all the people who belong to this world worshiped the beast. They are the ones whose names were not written in the Book of Life before the world was made--the Book that belongs to the Lamb who was slaughtered. [Revelation 13:8 NLT](#).

The Roman Catholic church is just waiting for the pieces to fall into place when she will return to her former power. Even now, Protestant churches are worshipping her by their acceptance of the false sabbath. All that remains is uniting with civil power to enforce it.

The Roman Catholic church is a worldwide organization under the control of and designed to serve the interests of the pope. Leaders in the church have pledged allegiance to the church and the pope. These leaders are citizens of different countries throughout the world, but their first allegiance is to Rome.

History can show what Rome desires to return to. For example, in 1204, Pope Innocent III extracted from Peter II, king of Arragon the following oath. "I, Peter, king of Arragonians, profess and promise to be EVER FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT TO MY LORD, POPE INNOCENT, to his Catholic successors, and the Roman church, and

³⁸⁷ Geddes, Michael, *The Church History of Ethiopia*, London: printed for Ki. Chilwell, at the Role and Crown in St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1696, p 87-88.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Church_history_of_Ethiopia/R60AAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA87&printsec=frontcover

³⁸⁸ Geddes, p 313.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Church_history_of_Ethiopia/R60AAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA313&printsec=frontcover

³⁸⁹ White. [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3190\(132.3186\)&index=0](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3190(132.3186)&index=0)

faithfully to preserve my kingdom in his obedience, defending the Catholic faith and PERSECUTING HERETICAL PRAVITY. . . .”³⁹⁰

Rome has boasted that she never changes, so the principles of pope Gregory VII and Innocent III are still the principles of the Roman Catholic Church today. When she gets the power to do so, she will put them into practice again. Protestants have no idea what they are getting into when they work together with Rome to promote Sunday worship. Once this is established in the United States, the church will control the power of the state, and religious laws will be enforced by the government. Then the victory of Rome will be assured.

³⁹⁰ Dowling, John, *The History of Romanism*, 4th edition, New York: Edward Walker, 114 Fulton Street, 1845, p 298.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_History_of_Romanism_from_the_Earlies/aQIQAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA298&printsec=frontcover

Chapter 36—The Impending Conflict

Beginning with the great controversy in heaven, it has been Satan's goal to overthrow God's law. This can be accomplished if he can get men to just break one of the laws. [James 2:10](#) For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's laws. [James 2:10 NLT](#).

Satan has succeeded in getting men to change just a few doctrines, so that millions who claim to believe the Bible, are believing a lie. The Bible which has been handed down to us at such a great cost, is not valued by many. There is a great battle coming between the true teachings of God and the religious tradition of men. But since so many do not even read the Bible for themselves, they are ignorant of what it says and merely believe what they are taught in church.

The facts of creation, the fall of man, salvation, and the law of God are all partially or completely rejected by many who claim to be Christians. Many take pride in their scientific knowledge, claiming that simple faith in the Bible is weakness. Many preachers even say the law of God has been changed or done away with.

Rejecting these truths is the same as rejecting the Giver. Creating false doctrines and theories is the same as making idols of wood or stone. Many people have created some idea of a god they believe in rather than accepting the living God that is revealed in the Bible. Many think of nature as a god and deny the God that made nature. Today, the god accepted by many wise and educated people, the god taught of in universities and theological institutions, is little better than Baal mentioned in the Bible.

The worst error that is taught by many in the Christian world is that keeping the law of God is no longer required. But what would happen if a nation did away with its laws? What if people began to teach that a nation's laws restricted the freedoms of its citizens? The killing and tyranny during the revolution in France is an example of what happens when a nation completely rejects God, giving the prince of evil free reign.

Let the law of God be set aside and human law will soon after be ignored as well. People would just take whatever they want from anyone. The strongest would become the richest and most powerful. Marriages and the family would fall apart. Without the fifth commandment, children could mistreat or kill their parents. There would be no justice, with false testimony, and judges and rulers take bribes. Such a nation would turn into a horde of robbers and killers. [Isaiah 59:14](#) Our courts oppose the righteous, and justice is nowhere to be found. Truth stumbles in the streets, and honesty has been outlawed. [Isaiah 59:14 NLT](#).

Strangely, the same people who claim the law of God is not binding, including the keeping of the 7th day Sabbath, think that enforcing the observance of Sunday will improve the morals of society. In America the push for Sunday observance is also combined with teaching of moderation of appetites and desires. Any who oppose the combined work are denounced as enemies of reform. But combining something good with error doesn't make the error truth, any more than adding something good to poison neutralizes the effect of the poison. Combining truth and error is one of Satan's best tactics.

Right now, Satan has the Protestant church believing two great errors, the immortality of the soul and the sacredness of Sunday. The first will cause them to join with spiritualism and the second with Rome. Together these three in the USA will follow in the footsteps of Rome by getting rid of freedom of conscience.

As spiritualism overlaps more and more with Christianity, Satan's power to deceive grows because he can appear to Christians as an angel of light and tell them anything. He will also work through his agents to heal the sick and perform miraculous signs. These spirits can even claim to support the Bible and the church.

There are many today who claim to be Christians that are barely different from unbelievers. They love the things of the world and will easily be swept into the ranks of spiritualism by Satan. Those who believe that miracles are a sign of the true church will also be swept up in the deception. Satan can appear as a supernatural being that is working for the good of humanity. But Satan loves war and will lead his deceived followers down the path of bloodshed.

Satan has studied nature for thousands of years, and will seem to be able to control it, even as he did against Job. God would normally protect His people against the attacks of Satan, but when they break His law, He will withdraw His protection, and they will be left to the mercy of Satan. Even as Satan and his evil angels are seemingly healing sickness and curing disease in one place, they are stirring up disease and disaster in another. Satan is able to cause famine by destroying a field before harvest. He can cause thousands to die by introducing a pandemic. [Isaiah 24:4](#) The earth mourns and dries up, and the crops waste away and wither. Even the greatest people on earth waste away. ⁵ The earth suffers for the sins of its people, for they have twisted God's instructions, violated his laws, and broken his everlasting covenant. [Isaiah 24:4-5 NLT](#).

When Satan has control of men who hold the reins of power, he will persuade them that the true followers of God are the cause of all the evil that he himself is causing. Those who refuse to honor the Lord's Day as the sabbath will be accused of bringing trouble on the world. He will even use his miracle-working power against true followers of God. When Satan began the great controversy in heaven,

he claimed to be working for the good of God's government, while he was really trying to overthrow it. He blamed the loyal angels of doing the very thing he was trying to accomplish. This approach has worked for him throughout earth's history and will be used again in the final conflict. The very ones who are keeping the law of God, will be accused of being law breakers. Those who honor the Bible Sabbath will be accused of causing the moral breakdown in society and even bringing God's judgment on the earth.

Protestant churches will reject the plain words of the Bible and will try to silence those whom they cannot convince. Church and state will unite to force everyone to honor Sunday. Even in America, the land of the free, law makers and law enforcers will go along with the movement to enforce Sunday worship. Freedom of conscience which was bought at such a high price will be trampled on. We will see the fulfillment of the words written in Revelation. [Revelation 12:17](#) And the dragon was angry at the woman and declared war against the rest of her children--all who keep God's commandments and maintain their testimony for Jesus. [Revelation 12:17 NLT](#).

Chapter 37—The Scriptures a Safeguard

[Isaiah 8:20](#) Look to God's instructions and teachings! People who contradict his word are completely in the dark. [Isaiah 8:20 NLT](#). The Bible is the ultimate guard against false teachings and the deceptions of Satan. That is why he does everything he can to keep people from studying it. In the last days, the Antichrist will appear to perform miracles, and his teachings will be so close to the truth that only way to distinguish them from truth will be by studying the Bible.

Those who try to obey all God's commands will be opposed and made fun of. Only by strengthening the mind with the truths of the Bible, will they be able to stand in the last great conflict. Every person will have to decide for themselves if they will obey God or man.

Jesus tried to tell His disciples that he would be killed and then resurrected. But they were so convinced that He would deliver them from the Romans, that His words made no sense to them. When Jesus died as He said would happen, the disciples were devastated. The Bible gives signs and warns of events that will take place in the closing days, but many are completely ignorant of them. When these things take place, they will be completely unprepared and unready.

One of these warnings is the message of the third angel. [Revelation 14:9](#) Then a third angel followed them, shouting, "Anyone who worships the beast and his statue or who accepts his mark on the forehead or on the hand ¹⁰ must drink the wine of God's anger. It has been poured full strength into God's cup of wrath. And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. ¹¹ The smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night, for they have worshiped the beast and his statue and have accepted the mark of his name." [Revelation 14:9-11 NLT](#). People should study and learn what the mark of the beast is and how to avoid getting it. But most will turn away from the truth and choose to believe in false teachings instead. [2 Timothy 4:3](#) For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. [2 Timothy 4:3 NLT](#). Many will turn away from the Bible because it points out their sins and teaches things they don't want to hear.

In the last days, God will have a group of people who will teach that the Bible is the only source of all religious beliefs. The opinions of experts, scientific theories, decisions of church councils, the beliefs of the majority are all worthless if not supported by the Bible. Satan wants people to look to their pastors and theology professors or any human being rather than to study the Scriptures themselves. If he

can do this, then by controlling the leaders, he will also get the followers. When Christ lived on this earth, He spoke words of life and the common people, and even some of the priests and rulers heard Him gladly. But the chief priests and leaders of the nation rejected Him. They were constantly trying to accuse Him of things based on His words and actions, but Jesus saw what they were attempting and avoided their traps. In the end, the leaders succeeded in turning the nation against Christ.

Jesus saw that the authority the religious leaders had over the people was not just a problem for the Jews but would be repeated by the church in the future. The Reformation provided everyone with access to the Bible, but even in some Protestant churches today, members are taught that they should accept the teachings of the Scriptures as interpreted by the church. Many do not dare to believe anything from the Bible unless it is an established teaching of their church. Sadly, even though there are so many warnings in the Bible against false teachers, many are willing to trust their salvation to religious teachers.

Many claim that it doesn't matter what you believe if your life is right with God. But if light and truth are within your reach and you ignore it, you are choosing darkness rather than light. [Proverbs 16:25](#) There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death. [Proverbs 16:25 NLT](#). Ignorance is no excuse for sin when God has given opportunity to know the truth. It is our duty to learn from the Scriptures what truth is, to accept it and then to share it with others. Jesus promised that we can know the truth. [John 7:17](#) Anyone who wants to do the will of God will know whether my teaching is from God or is merely my own. [John 7:17 NLT](#). If people would just take the Bible as it reads, without paying any attention to false and misleading teachers, many would be brought to Christ who are currently wandering in error.

The Scriptures require study to understand the deep things of God. But the method for studying the Bible is not the same as for philosophical or scientific problems. The Bible should be studied with humility, prayer, and a dependence on the Holy Spirit to reveal the true message from God. Without the right attitude, evil angels can blind your mind or harden your heart to the truth. Many theologians do not understand some truths from the Bible because they depend on their own intelligence, and do not have a longing for righteousness. Our prayer when studying the Bible should be: [Psalm 119:18](#) Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions. [Psalm 119:18 NLT](#).

It may be impossible to resist temptation without prayer and knowledge of the promises in God's word. If we have studied the Bible, angels and the Holy Spirit can help us to remember the promises and truths in times of need. [John 14:26](#) But

when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative--that is, the Holy Spirit--he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. [John 14:26 NLT](#). But they are bringing to remembrance, not planting new thoughts in your mind. That is why it is important for us to read and study the Bible. [Psalm 119:11](#) I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. [Psalm 119:11 NLT](#).

Satan adapts his temptations according to the personality of the individual he is tempting. To the uneducated or those who won't read it, he tempts them to joke or make fun of Bible truths. To the educated he uses scientific objections and philosophical reasoning to get them to distrust the Scriptures. Young people with little life experience will sometimes doubt fundamental truths of the Bible and not take the faith of their parents seriously. This can lead them down the path of doubting the existence of God, and trusting human reasoning, which will ultimately entangle them in Satan's trap.

We are living in the last days, and the destiny of earth's people will soon be determined. Every follower of Christ should be praying, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" We should humbly, and with prayer and fasting, study His word. Satan is lying in wait for an opportunity to spring his trap on you and make you his prey.

Many pat themselves on the back for not doing some wrong act but are not doing the good things that God asks of them. God expects them to be like good trees bearing good fruit. They will be held accountable for the good that they could have done with His grace and strength that is freely offered. God wants these to wake up while there is still time. [Ephesians 5:14](#) for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light." ¹⁵ So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. ¹⁶ Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. [Ephesians 5:14-16 NLT](#).

In the summer there is no big difference between evergreens and other trees, but when Fall comes, some trees lose their leaves, but evergreens remain the same. So, it will be when trials come, that those who study God's word will remain firm in their faith.

[Psalm 119:99](#) Yes, I have more insight than my teachers, for I am always thinking of your laws. ... ¹⁰⁴ Your commandments give me understanding; no wonder I hate every false way of life. [Psalm 119:99, 104 NLT](#).

[Jeremiah 17:8](#) They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit. [Jeremiah 17:8 NLT](#).

Chapter 38—The Final Warning

[Revelation 18:1](#) After all this I saw another angel come down from heaven with great authority, and the earth grew bright with his splendor. ² He gave a mighty shout: "Babylon is fallen--that great city is fallen! She has become a home for demons. She is a hideout for every foul spirit, a hideout for every foul vulture and every foul and dreadful animal. ... ⁴ Then I heard another voice calling from heaven, "Come away from her, my people. Do not take part in her sins, or you will be punished with her. [Revelation 18:1-2, 4 NLT](#).

The announcement of the fall of Babylon was given by the second angel. [Revelation 14:8](#) Then another angel followed him through the sky, shouting, "Babylon is fallen--that great city is fallen--because she made all the nations of the world drink the wine of her passionate immorality." [Revelation 14:8 NLT](#). This occurred in the summer of 1844. But since that time, new truths have been rejected, and as a result minds have become darkened and hearts more stubborn. In defiance of God's warnings, they trampled on His law, until they will be led to persecute those who keep it. As the teachings of spiritualism have become more widely accepted in Christian churches today, morality has gone down. The worst sinners will hide behind the outward profession of religion, and since they will be open to communication from spirits, the influence of evil angels will be felt in their churches.

Because the new truths and warnings will be rejected, the second time the announcement is made, the church will be a dwelling place of demons and foul spirits. [Revelation 18:5](#) For her sins are piled as high as heaven, and God remembers her evil deeds. [Revelation 18:5 NLT](#). The church will have filled up her cup of guilt, and destruction is about to fall on her. But before this happens, God's people will be called out of her, so they will not suffer from the plagues she will be punished with. Hence, the warning to "come out of her, my people." [[Revelation 18:4](#)].

The time will come when the line will be drawn, and death will be the penalty for refusing to honor the false sabbath. When this happens, all who comply will receive the mark of the beast. [Revelation 13:16](#) He required everyone--small and great, rich and poor, free and slave--to be given a mark on the right hand or on the forehead. [Revelation 13:16 NLT](#). But in attempting to save their life, they will bring down on themselves the wrath of God. [Revelation 14:9](#) Then a third angel followed them, shouting, "Anyone who worships the beast and his statue or who accepts his mark on the forehead or on the hand ¹⁰ must drink the wine of God's anger. It has been poured full strength into God's cup of wrath. And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. [Revelation 14:9-10 NLT](#).

God is just and not one person will be made to suffer His wrath until a conscious choice is made to reject His commandment. Many Christians have never even considered that they are not worshipping on the day commanded by God. He knows the thoughts of every person and will not leave any honest seeker of truth to remain ignorant.

The Sabbath commandment will be the line, the final test, to determine who the true followers of God are and who are not. One side will receive the mark of the beast, and the other the seal of God.

Many do not believe that this land, America, that was founded on religious tolerance, would persecute those who keep the commandments of God. But the question of enforcing Sunday worship has already been a topic of discussion.

In every generation, God has sent people to rebuke sin in the world and the church. But most people want to hear pleasant encouraging things, and do not want to be told they are sinning. God's servants have often started their work, trying to be gentle and not upset people, and to lead by example. But when the Spirit of God directed them to do so, they boldly denounced sin as Elijah did. They spoke the warnings the Lord gave them without fear of the consequences to themselves.

When the time comes, fearless servants of God will proclaim the third angel's message. The Lord will work through humble people, but the message will be given with great power. The sins of Babylon will be clearly identified. The warning will be given of the results of uniting with the government to enforce the church's will, the dangers of spiritualism, and the growing power of the papacy. Many will hear these warnings for the first time and will go to their teachers and preachers and demand an answer. Most of these religious leaders will, like the Pharisees of old, get angry when their authority is questioned, and denounce the message as being from Satan. They will do everything they can to prevent their members from hearing these disruptive truths.

Papists and Protestants will finally unite in getting the government to enforce their will on God's commandment keepers. First, enforcement will be in the form of fines and imprisonment. Then rewards will be offered to try to get these commandment keepers to reject their beliefs. Their answer will be like Luther's, "show us from the word of God our error." This will be the way that many will be confronted with the truth and be forced to make a conscious decision for or against God.

When Satan succeeds at blinding people to the truth, those who obey God will be treated as rebels. Parents will even turn on their children and employers on their employees. [2 Timothy 3:12](#) Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. [2 Timothy 3:12 NLT](#). As these faithful

commandment keepers refuse to honor Sunday as sabbath, some will be thrown in prison, some will be exiled, and some will be forced to labor as slaves. This seems impossible now, but as the Spirit of God is withdrawn from men, they will be left to the control of Satan.

As the storm builds for the persecuted followers of God, many who were not rooted in the truth will abandon ship and join the persecutors. When trials and testing come, they will take the easy and popular path. Powerful and persuasive people who once used their talents on the side of truth will mislead many and become the most bitter enemies of their former believers. When the commandment sabbath keepers are brought to court to stand trial, former believers will be their strongest accusers.

When faithful servants of God are persecuted as they have been warned, they will depend on God and His word alone. They speak as they are moved by the Spirit without worrying about the consequences of their words. They may feel they would be in less trouble if they had not spoken out so boldly. They may also feel overwhelmed and threatened with death, but they won't turn back. In helplessness they turn to God for strength. And when persecution grows even worse as it will, God will give them additional strength to endure it.

Others before them have gone through similar persecution and trials for their beliefs. Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Tyndale, Baxter, and Wesley taught that any doctrine that is not supported by the Bible should be rejected. They were persecuted without mercy but stood firm. God has had servants at different times throughout history, who brought to light new truth, and were hated and opposed for it. Those who receive special light cannot remain silent, or they risk losing their own salvation. They are not responsible for the outcome, but they must share their message and leave the results to God.

While Jesus is still interceding for man in the sanctuary in heaven, the influence of the Holy Spirit will continue to be felt on earth. If not for this influence, things would be much worse under the full control of the agents of Satan, who are always trying to oppose the work of God. God works through a few good people to hold back the tide of evil so that the third angel's message can have its effect. When this warning message is given, some of these good people will accept it and stand with God's people through the time of trouble.

The first angel's message was given during the advent movement of 1840-44. That message made its way around the world, resulting in the greatest religious awakening since the Reformation of the 16th century. But the glory and power of the third angel's message will surpass that of the first.

The Holy Spirit, as the “former rain,” was poured out on the Day of Pentecost to begin the spread of the gospel, and the “latter rain” will lead to the harvest at the close of time. [Hosea 6:3](#) Then shall we know, [if] we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter [and] former rain unto the earth. [Hosea 6:3 KJV](#). [Joel 2:23](#) Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first [month]. [Joel 2:23 KJV](#). [Acts 2:17](#) 'In the last days,' God says, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. ... ²¹ But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.' [Acts 2:17, 21 NLT](#).

The final message of warning will be given by servants of God all over the world. Miracles will accompany the work, with the sick being healed, and other signs and wonders being performed. But Satan will have his counterfeit. [Revelation 13:13](#) He did astounding miracles, even making fire flash down to earth from the sky while everyone was watching. [Revelation 13:13 NLT](#). Everyone on earth will be forced to choose a side. Many seeds will have been sown, and for those who are convicted by the Holy Spirit, their seed will spring up and bear fruit. The Holy Spirit will be like rays of light, making everything clear, and honest children of God will make their choice. After that even family and church relationships will not be able to hold them back.

Chapter 39—The Time of Trouble

[Daniel 12:1](#) "At that time Michael, the archangel who stands guard over your nation, will arise. Then there will be a time of anguish greater than any since nations first came into existence. But at that time every one of your people whose name is written in the book will be rescued. [Daniel 12:1 NLT](#)."

After the third angel's message has been given and the door of mercy has been closed, the people of God will have finished their work. All who have chosen to follow God, will have received His seal, and the work of Christ in the sanctuary above will be finished. Then the announcement will be made in heaven: [Revelation 22:11](#) "Let the one who is doing harm continue to do harm; let the one who is vile continue to be vile; let the one who is righteous continue to live righteously; let the one who is holy continue to be holy." [Revelation 22:11 NLT](#). The sins of those who have chosen God's side have been blotted out. Everyone's decision has been made, and the subjects of the kingdom of God have been determined.

When Christ leaves the sanctuary, no more sins can be forgiven. The restraint mentioned in the last chapter, from the influence of the Holy Spirit will be removed, and Satan will have complete control of those who are his. Angels of God will no longer hold back evil, and the world will fall into ruin, more terrible than what happened to Jerusalem when it was destroyed by Rome.

In the Bible, there are instances of a single angel having incredible destructive power, such as when the first born of Egypt were killed, or the plague when David took a census of the Israelites. This same destructive power will be exercised by all the evil angels when God allows it. At that time, God's commandment keeping people will be accused of bringing this trouble on the world.

When God's presence was withdrawn from the Jewish nation, they did not know it. They were fully under the control of Satan, and were doing terrible things, but still considered themselves the chosen people of God. In the same way, religion will still be practiced by those under the control of Satan, and they will carry out his evil plans under the banner of religion.

Since the Christian world will unite with governments to enforce Sunday worship, the refusal of a few to go along will bring universal hatred on them. They will be accused of being the cause of all the trouble in the land. It will be said of them that it would be better for them to suffer than for the whole nation to be thrown into confusion and lawlessness, even as the Jewish High Priest said about Jesus. [John 11:50](#) "You don't realize that it's better for you that one man should die for the people than for the whole nation to be destroyed." [John 11:50 NLT](#).

Protestantism in the New World will follow the path of Romanism in the Old World and persecute those who keep the commandments of God. This will result in what the Bible describes as the time of Jacob's trouble. [Jeremiah 30:5](#) This is what the LORD says: "I hear cries of fear; there is terror and no peace. ⁶ Now let me ask you a question: Do men give birth to babies? Then why do they stand there, ashenfaced, hands pressed against their sides like a woman in labor? ⁷ In all history there has never been such a time of terror. It will be a time of trouble for my people Israel. Yet in the end they will be saved! [Jeremiah 30:5-7 NLT](#).

This time of Jacob's life is recorded in [Genesis 32:22-32](#). In summary, this is what led to this event in Jacob's life. 20 years before, Jacob had deceived his father into giving him the birthright blessing which belonged to his older brother Esau. When Esau threatened to kill him, Jacob fled for his life and went to live with his uncle Laban. When God told him to return home, he did so with his wives, children, and flocks and herds of livestock. When Esau heard that his brother was returning, he renewed his threat of vengeance and set out to meet Jacob. Jacob's household was defenseless against his brother's army, so he took his burden to God, hoping for salvation from his brother. In addition to the fear for his family's safety, was added the knowledge that his own sin had put them in danger. His only hope was to pray for God's mercy. Jacob did everything he could to get Esau's forgiveness for the wrong committed against him. The lesson for followers of Christ, is to not give people reason to personally hate you, and if you have wronged anyone, make it right.

Having separated himself from his family to be alone, Jacob poured out his heart to God, confessed his sin and in humility reminded God of the covenant made with him and Isaac and Abraham. Suddenly a hand was laid on him and instantly he thought an enemy was attacking him, and he fought back with all his strength. As daybreak approached, the stranger touched him in a supernatural way, causing him injury, but instantly, Jacob knew who he had been wrestling with. Then instead of fighting, Jacob grabbed hold of the Angel of the covenant and refused to let go. To Jacob this was an opportunity to know if his sin has been forgiven, and he said to the Angel, I will not let you go unless you bless me.

[Hosea 12:4](#) Yes, he wrestled with the angel and won. He wept and pleaded for a blessing from him. ... [Hosea 12:4 NLT](#). With humility, repentance and surrender, Jacob won God's mercy and forgiveness. God's heart of infinite love will never turn away a sinner's earnest request for forgiveness. At this time God changed Jacob's name to Israel, to signify that he was forgiven, and that he should no longer fear his brother.

The time of Jacob's trouble was not just about physical danger. Satan did his best to make Jacob feel guilty so he would be discouraged and lose faith in God. Jacob was at the point of despair, but he realized that without help from God, he and his family would be killed. He had already repented of his sin, and now he appealed to the mercy of God. He clung to the Angel and would not let go until he received God's blessing.

Just as Satan had stirred up Esau to march against Jacob, so he will stir up his agents to try to destroy God's people in the time of trouble. Satan sees that this small group of people who persist in keeping the commandments of God are the only ones resisting him. Without them his victory over the world would be complete. He does not know that their cases in the sanctuary in heaven have already been decided. He accuses them in the most exaggerated light of sins they have already repented of. He claims they cannot be forgiven if God will not forgive him and his angels. He claims they are his to destroy as he wishes. Like Jacob, their confidence in the forgiveness of God, and their faith in Him will be tested. They realize their weakness and unworthiness, and Satan tries to get them to lose hope, so they will let go of God and give in to his temptations.

Even though God's people are surrounded by enemies who are trying to destroy them, they are not afraid of persecution. What they fear is that they may not have repented of every sin, and that they would lose their lives because of their own sin, and God would be dishonored. If they felt sure of the forgiveness of all their sins, they would not fear torture or death. They examine their past repentance of their many sins, and claim the promise: [Isaiah 27:5](#) unless they turn to me for help. Let them make peace with me; yes, let them make peace with me." [Isaiah 27:5 NLT](#). They do not lose faith just because they do not feel an assurance that their prayers are answered. They trust in God as Jacob did, and do not let go until they receive God's blessing.

Satan convinces many people to believe that God will ignore small sins. But whoever believes that and leaves sins unconfessed on the books in heaven, will be unforgiven and will be overcome by Satan. From whom much is given, much is expected. Those who have more knowledge, education, and authority, are more guilty if they fall into this trap of Satan. There are also some who will acknowledge their wrongdoing but if the punishment or consequences were removed, would go back to sinning. These are like Esau, Judas, or Pharaoh from the Bible. And those who delay getting ready for the coming of Jesus until the sanctuary is closed, will have waited too long.

Jacob's time of trouble for God's people in the end times is like a fire that is used to purify gold. Through the trials, the earthliness is consumed, and what remains

reflects the image of Christ perfectly. We should be preparing ourselves now for the trials to come and not allow our minds to be absorbed by worldly interests. We should earnestly pray, like Jacob did, and become familiar with the promises of God from the Bible.

Often the trouble is not as bad as we expect if we have some warning. But in this case, we cannot even imagine how bad it will be. Everyone will stand up for themselves at that time and will not be able to save anyone else by their righteousness, just as was the case for Noah, Daniel and Job. [Ezekiel 14:20](#) As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were there, they wouldn't be able to save their own sons or daughters. They alone would be saved by their righteousness. [Ezekiel 14:20 NLT](#).

We should be separating ourselves from sin while we still have our intercessor in heaven. Jesus was tempted greatly by Satan, but not even by a thought did He yield to sin. [John 14:30](#) "... the ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over me, [John 14:30 NLT](#).

As Satan ramps up his deception, demons will perform miraculous signs. They will go to the rulers of the earth and lead them to unite with Satan in his last great struggle against the kingdom of heaven. Finally, Satan will pretend to be Christ, appearing in dazzling brightness like the description of Jesus in [Revelation 1:13-15](#). People will bow down to him and worship him and he will bless them as Jesus blessed His disciples. He will not appear and speak like a demon but will be gentle and compassionate. He will appear to perform miracles, including healing diseases. Then speaking as if he were Christ, will say that he has changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and that all should worship on the day he has blessed. He will say that whoever continues keeping to old 7th day Sabbath will be disobeying him. Many who are not prepared, will be deceived, thinking he is God, like the Samaritans were deceived by Simon Magus. [Acts 8:10](#) Everyone, from the least to the greatest, often spoke of him as "the Great One--the Power of God." [Acts 8:10 NLT](#). But God's true followers will not be deceived.

Satan will not be allowed to copy the return of Christ as described in the Bible. [Revelation 1:7](#) Look! He comes with the clouds of heaven. And everyone will see him--even those who pierced him. And all the nations of the world will mourn for him. Yes! Amen! [Revelation 1:7 NLT](#). [1 Thessalonians 4:16](#) For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. ¹⁷ Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 NLT](#). Jesus gave us warnings about

false Christs, and false prophets, who would perform great signs and wonders. [Matthew 24:24](#) For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones. ²⁵ See, I have warned you about this ahead of time. ²⁶ "So if someone tells you, 'Look, the Messiah is out in the desert,' don't bother to go and look. Or, 'Look, he is hiding here,' don't believe it! ²⁷ For as the lightning flashes in the east and shines to the west, so it will be when the Son of Man comes. [Matthew 24:24-27 NLT](#).

Only those who have been earnest students of the Bible and who have received the truth will be able to detect the powerful deception that the rest of the world falls for. Satan's only hope against them will be to prevent them from gaining the preparation by distracting them from studying the Bible.

When the law is passed against commandment keepers, the government will not protect them from people who want to destroy them. At that time people of God should flee from the cities and gather in small groups in unpopulated areas like the desert, caves, or mountains. [Isaiah 33:16](#) these are the ones who will dwell on high. The rocks of the mountains will be their fortress. Food will be supplied to them, and they will have water in abundance. [Isaiah 33:16 NLT](#).

Many in all nations will be captured, bound with chains, thrown into horrible prisons, left to starve, or sentenced to die. But God will not forget His people. [Isaiah 49:14](#) Yet Jerusalem says, "The LORD has deserted us; the Lord has forgotten us." ¹⁵ "Never! Can a mother forget her nursing child? Can she feel no love for the child she has borne? But even if that were possible, I would not forget you! ¹⁶ See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands. Always in my mind is a picture of Jerusalem's walls in ruins. [Isaiah 49:14-16 NLT](#). [Zechariah 2:8](#) After a period of glory, the LORD of Heaven's Armies sent me against the nations who plundered you. For he said, "Anyone who harms you harms my most precious possession. [Zechariah 2:8 NLT](#).

But God will punish the wicked who are trying to destroy His people. He has been patient, longing for them to repent and turn to Him, but if they do not, their punishment is certain. [Isaiah 28:21](#) The LORD will come as he did against the Philistines at Mount Perazim and against the Amorites at Gibeon. He will come to do a strange thing; he will come to do an unusual deed: [Isaiah 28:21 NLT](#). [Ezekiel 33:11](#) As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of wicked people. I only want them to turn from their wicked ways so they can live. Turn! Turn from your wickedness, O people of Israel! Why should you die? [Ezekiel 33:11 NLT](#). [Exodus 34:6](#) The LORD passed in front of Moses, calling out, "Yahweh! The LORD! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. ⁷ I lavish unfailing love to a thousand

generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected--even children in the third and fourth generations." [Exodus 34:6-7 NLT](#). [Nahum 1:3](#) The LORD is slow to get angry, but his power is great, and he never lets the guilty go unpunished. He displays his power in the whirlwind and the storm. The billowing clouds are the dust beneath his feet. [Nahum 1:3 NLT](#).

When the work of Christ in the sanctuary in heaven is done, everyone will have made their final decision, and the wrath of God will be poured out, full strength, on the beast and those who have his mark. [[Revelation 14:9-10](#)]. The plagues in Egypt were similar but they were not as terrible or widespread as what will happen next. [Revelation 16:2](#) So the first angel left the Temple and poured out his bowl on the earth, and horrible, malignant sores broke out on everyone who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his statue. ³ Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse. And everything in the sea died. ⁴ Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs, and they became blood. ⁵ And I heard the angel who had authority over all water saying, "You are just, O Holy One, who is and who always was, because you have sent these judgments. ⁶ Since they shed the blood of your holy people and your prophets, you have given them blood to drink. It is their just reward." [Revelation 16:2-6 NLT](#). By condemning God's faithful people to death, those with the mark of the beast will be guilty, as if they had killed them with their own hands. Jesus said the people who condemned Him to death were guilty of all the blood of holy men since the days of Abel. That is because they had the same spirit and intent as those who literally killed the holy men and prophets of old.

[Revelation 16:8](#) Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, causing it to scorch everyone with its fire. ⁹ Everyone was burned by this blast of heat, and they cursed the name of God, who had control over all these plagues. They did not repent of their sins and turn to God and give him glory. [Revelation 16:8-9 NLT](#). [Joel 1:10](#) The fields are ruined, the land is stripped bare. The grain is destroyed, the grapes have shriveled, and the olive oil is gone. ¹¹ Despair, all you farmers! Wail, all you vine growers! Weep, because the wheat and barley--all the crops of the field--are ruined. ¹² The grapevines have dried up, and the fig trees have withered. The pomegranate trees, palm trees, and apple trees--all the fruit trees--have dried up. And the people's joy has dried up with them. [Joel 1:10-12 NLT](#). [Amos 8:3](#) In that day the singing in the Temple will turn to wailing. Dead bodies will be scattered everywhere. They will be carried out of the city in silence. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!" [Amos 8:3 NLT](#).

The plagues will not destroy everyone, but they will be the worst disasters known to man. Judgements before the close of probation have been mingled with mercy,

but the final judgement will be poured out full strength, without mercy. Some will then try to seek God for protection from the plagues but they will not find it. [Amos 8:11](#) "The time is surely coming," says the Sovereign LORD, "when I will send a famine on the land--not a famine of bread or water but of hearing the words of the LORD. ¹² People will stagger from sea to sea and wander from border to border searching for the word of the LORD, but they will not find it. [Amos 8:11-12 NLT](#)."

God's people will not be free from suffering, but they will not die after the close of probation. While the wicked are dying from the plagues, angels will protect the righteous and supply their needs. [Isaiah 33:15](#) Those who are honest and fair, who refuse to profit by fraud, who stay far away from bribes, who refuse to listen to those who plot murder, who shut their eyes to all enticement to do wrong – ¹⁶ these are the ones who will dwell on high. The rocks of the mountains will be their fortress. Food will be supplied to them, and they will have water in abundance. [Isaiah 33:15-16 NLT](#). [Isaiah 41:17](#) "When the poor and needy search for water and there is none, and their tongues are parched from thirst, then I, the LORD, will answer them. I, the God of Israel, will never abandon them. [Isaiah 41:17 NLT](#)."

It will seem hopeless for God's people against the great forces who wish them dead. But human eyes are unable to see the great company of angels that surround them. The angels are simply waiting for the command from God to snatch His people from their danger, but they must wait a little longer. It is because of these faithful ones that the time of trouble will be shortened. [Luke 18:7](#) Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So don't you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! But when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?" [Luke 18:7-8 NLT](#)."

A time will be set when these commandment keepers will be put to death. In some cases, enemies impatient with the wait will try kill some before the appointed time. But none can get past the mighty angels guarding each faithful one. Weapons used against them will fail, and some will be defended by angels in the form of strong soldiers.

Throughout the entire history of earth, angels have played a role in protecting and delivering God's people from danger or death. Some have appeared as shining bright angels, but other have appeared as men. Angels have accepted the hospitality of humans or guided and assisted lost travelers. Unseen, some have lit fires on altars to God. Others have opened prison doors to set servants of God free. Angels have been present in physical form among gatherings of the righteous, but they have also appeared among the wicked as they did in Sodom. Angels with great knowledge of human history have been present in halls of justice, pleading

the cause of the oppressed. They have defeated the plans of evil that would hinder the work of God or cause great harm to His people. God loves to protect His people, and sinners have no idea how often their lives have been protected because of the presence of the faithful whom they ridicule and oppress. [Psalm 34:7](#) For the angel of the LORD is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him. [Psalm 34:7 NLT](#).

If the blood of Christ's faithful people were shed at this time, it would not be as seed for the spread of the gospel. Intercession in the sanctuary in heaven is finished, and the pleading of the Holy Spirit on earth has ended. Stubborn hearts have beat back the waves of mercy until they return no more. [Isaiah 26:20](#) Go home, my people, and lock your doors! Hide yourselves for a little while until the LORD's anger has passed. ²¹ Look! The LORD is coming from heaven to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will no longer hide those who have been killed. They will be brought out for all to see. [Isaiah 26:20-21 NLT](#). The deliverance of those whose names are written in the book of life is at hand.

Chapter 40—God’s People Delivered

There will come a time when earthly laws will no longer protect God’s people, and different countries will coordinate a time for their destruction. Some will be in prisons, some hiding in the forests or mountains, but all will be praying for protection. Men urged on by evil angels are preparing the final coordinated strike that will once and for all rid the earth of these rebels, but God will protect them.

[Isaiah 30:29](#) But the people of God will sing a song of joy, like the songs at the holy festivals. You will be filled with joy, as when a flutist leads a group of pilgrims to Jerusalem, the mountain of the LORD--to the Rock of Israel.³⁰ And the LORD will make his majestic voice heard. He will display the strength of his mighty arm. It will descend with devouring flames, with cloudbursts, thunderstorms, and huge hailstones. [Isaiah 30:29-30 NLT](#).

Just as evil men are about to attack, a darkness, denser than night falls on them. Then they will see a rainbow with glory from God surrounding each group they are targeting. Suddenly they become silent, and their murderous rage is forgotten, as they look at the sign of God’s protection over His people. The people of God will hear a voice telling them to look up, and like the martyr Stephen, they see the glory of God and the Son of man seated upon His throne. And He will say: [John 17:24](#) Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began! [John 17:24 NLT](#).

It is dark as midnight, but when the power of God goes forth to rescue His children, it will become bright as day, then signs and wonders will quickly follow. The wicked will be terrified as these things begin to happen. Dark heavy clouds will appear, but there will be one clear space in the sky where the glory of God shines, and from there a voice will be heard that says: “It is done!” [[Revelation 16:17](#)]. [Revelation 16:18](#) Then the thunder crashed and rolled, and lightning flashed. And a great earthquake struck--the worst since people were placed on the earth. [Revelation 16:18 NLT](#). The whole earth moves like waves on the sea, and the surface is breaking up. Mountains sink and islands disappear. [Revelation 16:21](#) There was a terrible hailstorm, and hailstones weighing as much as seventy-five pounds fell from the sky onto the people below. They cursed God because of the terrible plague of the hailstorm. [Revelation 16:21 NLT](#). Great buildings crumble, prison walls fall, and God’s people will be set free.

Then the graves open. [Daniel 12:2](#) Many of those whose bodies lie dead and buried will rise up, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting disgrace. [Daniel 12:2 NLT](#). In this special resurrection, all who had died in the faith of the third angel’s message arise, glorified, and hear God’s covenant of peace with those

who have kept His law. But another class will be resurrected, in time to see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, those responsible for crucifying Him [[Revelation 1:7](#)]. [Matthew 26:64](#) Jesus replied, "You have said it. And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven." [Matthew 26:64 NLT](#). Also, the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, will be raised to see Him come in His glory, and honor His faithful servants.

As lightning from the sky is striking the earth, virtually covering it in a sheet of flames, a voice is heard above the thunder. Words are not heard by everyone, but false teachers, and people who just recently were so defiant and cruel to God's commandment keepers, hear words of doom for the wicked. Now they are terrified, as even demons acknowledge that Christ is God. [Isaiah 13:6](#) Scream in terror, for the day of the LORD has arrived--the time for the Almighty to destroy. [Isaiah 13:6 NLT](#). [Isaiah 2:10](#) Crawl into caves in the rocks. Hide in the dust from the terror of the LORD and the glory of his majesty. ¹¹ Human pride will be brought down, and human arrogance will be humbled. Only the LORD will be exalted on that day of judgment. ¹² For the LORD of Heaven's Armies has a day of reckoning. He will punish the proud and mighty and bring down everything that is exalted. [Isaiah 2:10-12 NLT](#). [Isaiah 2:20](#) On that day of judgment they will abandon the gold and silver idols they made for themselves to worship. They will leave their gods to the rodents and bats, ²¹ while they crawl away into caverns and hide among the jagged rocks in the cliffs. They will try to escape the terror of the LORD and the glory of his majesty as he rises to shake the earth. [Isaiah 2:20-21 NLT](#).

A bright light shines through the hole in the clouds, which brings hope to the faithful, but fear of punishment for those who break the commandments of God. Those who were willing to sacrifice their lives to stay faithful to God, are now safe, they have been delivered from those who so recently wished them dead. Their faces which had been pale, showing signs of starvation and mistreatment, are transformed as they now glow with wonder, faith, and love. They can now sing the words of the Psalmist. [Psalm 46:1](#) ... God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. ² So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea. ³ Let the oceans roar and foam. Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge! ... [Psalm 46:1-3 NLT](#).

The clouds clear from the sky and a hand can be seen in the sky holding two tables of stone. [Psalm 50:6](#) Then let the heavens proclaim his justice, for God himself will be the judge. ... [Psalm 50:6 NLT](#). The holy law that was spoken on Mt. Sinai is revealed to be the guide of life and the rule of judgment. The Ten Commandments are traced as with a pen of fire, and the words are plain and clear for all to read. Those who have trampled and ignored God's commandments are filled with horror

and despair. They had access to God's requirements, but they had set them aside, and taught others to break them, to gain the favor of the world. They can see that they are without excuse. [Malachi 3:18](#) Then you will again see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not." [Malachi 3:18 NLT](#).

Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, half the size of a man's hand. God's people recognize this to be the coming of the Son of Man. As it comes closer, it becomes brighter and more glorious until it is a great white cloud. Jesus comes now, not as a Man of Sorrows with a crown of thorns, but as a mighty conqueror with a crown of glory. [Revelation 19:11](#) Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war. ... ¹⁴ The armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of pure white linen, followed him on white horses. [Revelation 19:11, 14 NLT](#). The sky is filled with ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands and thousands of angels. [Habakkuk 3:3](#) I see God moving across the deserts from Edom, the Holy One coming from Mount Paran. His brilliant splendor fills the heavens, and the earth is filled with his praise. ⁴ His coming is as brilliant as the sunrise. Rays of light flash from his hands, where his awesome power is hidden. [Habakkuk 3:3-4 NLT](#). [Revelation 19:16](#) On his robe at his thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords. [Revelation 19:16 NLT](#).

[Psalm 50:3](#) Our God approaches, and he is not silent. Fire devours everything in his way, and a great storm rages around him. ⁴ He calls on the heavens above and earth below to witness the judgment of his people. [Psalm 50:3-4 NLT](#). [Revelation 6:15](#) Then everyone--the kings of the earth, the rulers, the generals, the wealthy, the powerful, and every slave and free person--all hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶ And they cried to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. [Revelation 6:15-16 NLT](#).

Those who mocked Him, that rose in the special resurrection, are now speechless. Those who hit and spit on Him now try to flee from the glory of His presence. The priests and rulers remember the words they mocked Jesus with as He hung on the cross. [Matthew 27:42](#) "He saved others," they scoffed, "but he can't save himself! So he is the King of Israel, is he? Let him come down from the cross right now, and we will believe in him!" ⁴³ He trusted God, so let God rescue him now if he wants him! For he said, "I am the Son of God." [Matthew 27:42-43 NLT](#). They also remember the words they led the crowd in shouting: [John 19:15](#) "Away with him," they yelled. "Away with him! Crucify him!" "What? Crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the leading priests shouted back. [John 19:15 NLT](#). They also remember parable of the servants who killed the son, and the sentence, "He

will put the wicked me to a horrible death," [[Matthew 21:41](#)] they pronounced on themselves. Now all they want is to hide themselves from the presence of the King of kings.

At that time, all who rejected truth will realize that there was a time when their conscience told them what was right, but instead they chose the easy or more desirable way. Those who wished to destroy Christ and His faithful people, are now filled with terror as they hear the voices of the saints saying: [Isaiah 25:9](#) ... "This is our God! We trusted in him, and he saved us! This is the LORD, in whom we trusted. Let us rejoice in the salvation he brings!" [Isaiah 25:9 NLT](#).

In addition to everything that is already happening on the earth and in the sky, the voice of the Son of God now calls the sleeping saints from the grave. The righteous dead are resurrected throughout the whole earth, and their voices can be heard saying: [1 Corinthians 15:55](#) O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" [1 Corinthians 15:55 NLT](#). They come from the grave, refreshed with eternal youth, but the size of their bodies are the same as when they lived. Adam will tower over most of those resurrected, but he will be a little shorter than the Son of God. His size is in great contrast to the people of later generations. Christ will restore the image and likeness of God to His people, that sin had nearly destroyed. Our broken-down bodies will be transformed into perfect, beautiful, immortal bodies. Eating from the tree of life, the redeemed will all grow up to the size their bodies would have been without sin, eliminating one of the last lingering traces of sin.

The living righteous will be changed, [1 Corinthians 15:52](#) It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. [1 Corinthians 15:52 NLT](#). [1 Thessalonians 4:17](#) Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. [1 Thessalonians 4:17 NLT](#).

Each of the redeemed will receive a new name [[Revelation 2:17](#)] and a crown [[2 Timothy 4:8](#)]. They will all sing praises unto Jesus who loved us and washed away our sins with His blood. And they will be made kings and priests to God the Father, Who has glory and dominion forever and ever [[Revelation 1:5-6](#)]. [Matthew 25:34](#) "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. [Matthew 25:34 NLT](#). This fulfills the prayer Jesus prayed for His disciples: [John 17:24](#) Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the

world began! [John 17:24 NLT](#). And all will lay their crowns at the feet of Jesus and will praise Him for the rest of eternity.

As the saved are entering the City of God, a momentous event is about to happen. The Son of God stands with outstretched arms to receive the father of our race. When Adam reaches the Savior, he does not embrace Him standing up, but in humiliation bows down at His feet, saying worthy is the lamb that was slain. The Savior lifts him up and presents his Eden home from which he was kicked out so long ago. The life of Adam after sin was filled with great sorrow. He knew what it was like to live in a perfect paradise, and he realized that every death, every sacrifice, every hardship, every imperfection, were all because of his sin. He had to suffer this knowledge in patient humility for 930 years. But now the human race has been redeemed and the dominion Adam was originally given is restored to him.

Then another group is recognized, those who won the victory over the beast and his image and received the seal of God instead of the mark of the beast. [Revelation 14:1](#) Then I saw the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him were 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ² And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of mighty ocean waves or the rolling of loud thunder. It was like the sound of many harpists playing together. ³ This great choir sang a wonderful new song in front of the throne of God and before the four living beings and the twenty-four elders. No one could learn this song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴ They have kept themselves as pure as virgins, following the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been purchased from among the people on the earth as a special offering to God and to the Lamb. ⁵ They have told no lies; they are without blame. [Revelation 14:1-5 NLT](#). They sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, that only they can sing, because it is the song of their experience. They experienced what no other generation on earth did, which was to be alive at the end of time, and to be taken to heaven without having died, as the first fruits of the harvest [[Revelation 15:2-3](#)]. They lived through the time of Jacob's trouble, and they among all the redeemed were the ones to live without an intercessor during the final pouring out of the judgements of God. They have been delivered and their robes have been washed white in the blood of the Lamb. They will serve Him day and night, and they will not suffer hunger or thirst anymore, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes [[Revelation 7:14-17](#)].

Throughout earth's history, those chosen by the Savior have been taught and disciplined through trials. For the sake of Christ, they endured hardship, suffered hatred, practiced self-denial, experienced disappointment. They learned by experience how evil sin is, the guilt it can cause, and the power it can have, so they learned to hate it. They are humbled and grateful for the infinite sacrifice made to

save them from sin. Their love for Christ is so great because they have been forgiven of so much. Many suffered poverty, pain, and torture. Millions were treated as criminals and died with bad reputations. But now their names can be cleared because God is their Judge [[Psalm 50:6](#)]. God will take away their bad reputation [[Isaiah 25:8](#)]. They have shared in Christ's sufferings, and they will share with Him in His glory. They will then say, [Revelation 7:10](#) ... "Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!" [Revelation 7:10 NLT](#). And all in heaven will say, [Revelation 7:12](#) ... "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and strength belong to our God forever and ever! Amen." [Revelation 7:12 NLT](#).

In this life we can only begin to understand how we could be saved. When we are given immortality, we will start to understand a little more about the cost of our salvation. But through the ages of eternity, we will continue to learn and understand more and more, what God sacrificed to save us.

With God's infinite power and wisdom, if there was another way to save humanity, other than to sacrifice His Son, surely, He would have used it. The fact that God sacrificed Himself on the cross to save human beings should settle once and for all the question of whether He is a God of love and mercy, but also of justice. The Father and the Son are both satisfied with the price they paid for our salvation, because They value us so much that it was worth it to Them.

Chapter 41—Desolation of the Earth

[Revelation 18:5](#) For her sins are piled as high as heaven, and God remembers her evil deeds. ⁶ Do to her as she has done to others. Double her penalty for all her evil deeds. She brewed a cup of terror for others, so brew twice as much for her. ⁷ She glorified herself and lived in luxury, so match it now with torment and sorrow. She boasted in her heart, 'I am queen on my throne. I am no helpless widow, and I have no reason to mourn.' ⁸ Therefore, these plagues will overtake her in a single day-- death and mourning and famine. She will be completely consumed by fire, for the Lord God who judges her is mighty." ⁹ And the kings of the world who committed adultery with her and enjoyed her great luxury will mourn for her as they see the smoke rising from her charred remains. ¹⁰ They will stand at a distance, terrified by her great torment. They will cry out, "How terrible, how terrible for you, O Babylon, you great city! In a single moment God's judgment came on you." [Revelation 18:5-10 NLT](#).

[Revelation 18:11](#) The merchants of the world will weep and mourn for her, for there is no one left to buy their goods. [Revelation 18:11 NLT](#). [Revelation 18:3](#) For all the nations have fallen because of the wine of her passionate immorality. The kings of the world have committed adultery with her. Because of her desires for extravagant luxury, the merchants of the world have grown rich." [Revelation 18:3 NLT](#). [Revelation 18:15](#) The merchants who became wealthy by selling her these things will stand at a distance, terrified by her great torment. They will weep and cry out, ¹⁶ "How terrible, how terrible for that great city! She was clothed in finest purple and scarlet linens, decked out with gold and precious stones and pearls! ¹⁷ In a single moment all the wealth of the city is gone!" And all the captains of the merchant ships and their passengers and sailors and crews will stand at a distance. [Revelation 18:15-17 NLT](#).

The rich were proud of what they had achieved, but many of them had accumulated their wealth selfishly, and thought themselves superior to those who had less. They didn't care about the needy and the hungry and used their wealth to buy justice for themselves. They enjoyed the praise and adoration of others. But now they see that they were failures in life, as their wealth is gone in a moment, and they see that they will die with their idols. They are now filled with regret, not for their wrongdoing, but because they have lost everything.

The world sees the commandment keepers that they have so recently persecuted, now being shielded from the plagues. The same supernatural power that brings the plagues of punishment protects the people of God.

Pastors who had ignored the light of truth to remain popular now understand what they have done. [Jeremiah 8:11](#) They offer superficial treatments for my people's mortal wound. They give assurances of peace when there is no peace. [Jeremiah 8:11 NLT](#). [Ezekiel 13:22](#) You have discouraged the righteous with your lies, but I didn't want them to be sad. And you have encouraged the wicked by promising them life, even though they continue in their sins. [Ezekiel 13:22 NLT](#). Setting aside the commands of God has led to all kinds of evil, conflict, hatred, and sin. They can clearly see then how their choices have cost them their chance for eternal life. Those who have been led astray by their pastors because they didn't study for themselves, are now angry and blame their former leaders. The swords which were ready to use against God's people are now used against everyone else, and there is fighting and killing everywhere.

At this point everyone has been marked either with the seal of God or the mark of the beast. The angel of death now goes forth as described in Ezekiel's vision, killing young, old, women, and children, but not touching anyone who has the mark or seal of God. The destruction begins at the sanctuary, which can be interpreted to mean it starts in the church, where the false preachers are the first to go [[Ezekiel 9:1-6](#)]. Then all the remaining wicked are killed by each other, or plagues, or the brightness and glory of Christ. [Isaiah 26:21](#) Look! The LORD is coming from heaven to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will no longer hide those who have been killed. They will be brought out for all to see. [Isaiah 26:21 NLT](#). [Zechariah 14:12](#) And the LORD will send a plague on all the nations that fought against Jerusalem. Their people will become like walking corpses, their flesh rotting away. Their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. ¹³ On that day they will be terrified, stricken by the LORD with great panic. They will fight their neighbors hand to hand. [Zechariah 14:12-13 NLT](#). [Jeremiah 25:33](#) In that day those the LORD has slaughtered will fill the earth from one end to the other. No one will mourn for them or gather up their bodies to bury them. They will be scattered on the ground like manure. [Jeremiah 25:33 NLT](#).

The people of God will be taken up to the City of God, and there will not be a single person alive left on the earth. [Isaiah 24:1](#) Look! The LORD is about to destroy the earth and make it a vast wasteland. He devastates the surface of the earth and scatters the people. ... ³ The earth will be completely emptied and looted. The LORD has spoken! ... ⁵ The earth suffers for the sins of its people, for they have twisted God's instructions, violated his laws, and broken his everlasting covenant. ⁶ Therefore, a curse consumes the earth. Its people must pay the price for their sin. They are destroyed by fire, and only a few are left alive. [Isaiah 24:1, 3, 5-6 NLT](#). The earth will be like a desolate wilderness, destroyed by earthquakes, and water, with even mountains ripped out of their place.

The last part of the Day of Atonement service, after the sins have been removed from the sanctuary, is for the sins to be placed on the scapegoat and for it to be banished to the wilderness. [Leviticus 16:21](#) He will lay both of his hands on the goat's head and confess over it all the wickedness, rebellion, and sins of the people of Israel. In this way, he will transfer the people's sins to the head of the goat. Then a man specially chosen for the task will drive the goat into the wilderness. [Leviticus 16:21 NLT](#). That was a symbol of what happens next to Satan as the scapegoat. All the sins of the people that God has saved will be placed on Satan, and he will be banished to the desolate, uninhabited earth for 1000 years. [Revelation 20:1](#) Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven with the key to the bottomless pit and a heavy chain in his hand. ² He seized the dragon--that old serpent, who is the devil, Satan--and bound him in chains for a thousand years. ³ The angel threw him into the bottomless pit, which he then shut and locked so Satan could not deceive the nations anymore until the thousand years were finished. Afterward he must be released for a little while. [Revelation 20:1-3 NLT](#).

In many ways, the earth will be taken back almost to the state it was in before creation, when it was formless and empty [[Genesis 1:2](#)]. [Jeremiah 4:23](#) I looked at the earth, and it was empty and formless. I looked at the heavens, and there was no light. ²⁴ I looked at the mountains and hills, and they trembled and shook. ²⁵ I looked, and all the people were gone. All the birds of the sky had flown away. ²⁶ I looked, and the fertile fields had become a wilderness. The towns lay in ruins, crushed by the LORD's fierce anger. [Jeremiah 4:23-26 NLT](#). This is where Satan and his evil angels will be "bound," for 1000 years. Even the wicked are beyond Satan's reach, because they are all dead.

During the 1000 years between the first and second resurrection, the life records of the wicked will be examined. [1 Corinthians 4:5](#) So don't make judgments about anyone ahead of time--before the Lord returns. For he will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due. [1 Corinthians 4:5 NLT](#). [Daniel 7:22](#) until the Ancient One--the Most High--came and judged in favor of his holy people. Then the time arrived for the holy people to take over the kingdom. [Daniel 7:22 NLT](#). [Revelation 20:4](#) Then I saw thrones, and the people sitting on them had been given the authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony about Jesus and for proclaiming the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his statue, nor accepted his mark on their forehead or their hands. They all came to life again, and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ This is the first resurrection. (The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the thousand years had ended.) ⁶ Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. For them the second death holds no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will

reign with him a thousand years. [Revelation 20:4-6 NLT](#). [1 Corinthians 6:2](#) Don't you realize that someday we believers will judge the world? And since you are going to judge the world, can't you decide even these little things among yourselves? ³ Don't you realize that we will judge angels? So you should surely be able to resolve ordinary disputes in this life. [1 Corinthians 6:2-3 NLT](#).

At the end of the 1000 years the second resurrection will take place, when the wicked will be raised to appear before the Judge to hear their sentence. [Revelation 20:5](#) This is the first resurrection. (The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the thousand years had ended.) [Revelation 20:5 NLT](#). [Isaiah 24:22](#) They will be rounded up and put in prison. They will be shut up in prison and will finally be punished. [Isaiah 24:22 NLT](#).

Chapter 42—The Controversy Ended

At the end of the 1000 years, Christ returns to the earth, along with all who were taken to heaven. The wicked from all of earth's history are resurrected, but unlike the resurrection of the righteous 1000 years before, they still show the effects of sin, which includes diseases, and injuries that caused their deaths. Every eye is fixed on the Son of God, and even the wicked exclaim: "Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!" They say this not out of love for God or a changed heart, but because they realize it is the truth. Another opportunity to change their life and their choices would be useless because they would simply continue doing what they had been doing throughout their lives, which was disobeying and rebelling against God.

The prophet Zechariah tells us that when Christ returns, He will descend on the Mount of Olives, and it will split apart. [Zechariah 14:4](#) On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. And the Mount of Olives will split apart, making a wide valley running from east to west. Half the mountain will move toward the north and half toward the south. [Zechariah 14:4 NLT](#). [Zechariah 14:9](#) And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day there will be one LORD--his name alone will be worshiped. [Zechariah 14:9 NLT](#). This is where the New Jerusalem will come to rest, and Christ, the angels and all His people will go into the city.

When Satan was bound to the desolate earth, he was miserable, but as he sees the wicked resurrected, his hopes revive. He is not ready to give up yet, and he organizes the armies of the wicked. But true to his nature, he doesn't tell them the truth. He tells them that he is the rightful ruler of the earth, and that he has brought them all back to life, so that they can take back what is theirs. Satan has power to perform signs and wonders to support his claims and inspires everyone to believe him. He points out that they outnumber those in the city and are well able to conquer it and take back his throne and his kingdom.

Among the multitudes are people, who lived before the flood, taller than everyone else, and with great intelligence. People who had great skill and knowledge, but who had devoted themselves to evil continually. It was they who defiled the earth, and the image of God to the point where they all had to be destroyed by the flood. Among them are also great kings and generals who conquered nations and strong men who had never lost a battle.

Satan has a meeting with his angels and these kings and generals, and they see that they far outnumber those within the city. They decide that they are well able to conquer the city and make their plans. When they are finally ready to begin their

attack on the city, Satan leads the march, with kings and armies following with military precision. The gates are closed, and Satan and his army surround the city. The Son of God on His throne appears above the city, and no words can describe His power, majesty and glory, and the brightness shining from Him fills the whole earth. Those standing closest to the throne were once the most enthusiastic and devoted soldiers for the cause of Satan. When they were converted, they followed their Savior with great devotion. Next to them are those who received the seal of God for keeping the commandments of God, when the rest of the Christian world declared them no longer important. And beside them, the millions, who were martyred for their faith throughout earth's history. After that were the great multitude, which no man could number [[Revelation 7:9](#)].

All the redeemed then sing out, [Revelation 7:10](#) ... "Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!" [Revelation 7:10 NLT](#). They are joined by angels in their song of adoration to Lamb. In the presence of all the people throughout earth's history, the Son of God is crowned as King of kings. He then pronounces the sentence on the wicked, who broke the law and oppressed His people. [Revelation 20:11](#) And I saw a great white throne and the one sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. ¹² I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books. [Revelation 20:11-12 NLT](#).

When the books are opened, and every eye is on Jesus, the wicked will be able to remember the sins they committed. They will see the decisions they made that led them down the wrong path. They will see when they rejected the warnings, and hated the messengers sent by God.

Then above the throne will appear in vivid detail, scenes showing the origin of sin on earth, when Adam was tempted and sinned, followed by other critical events in the great plan of redemption. The birth of Jesus, and His life, His obedience, His baptism, His temptation, and His ministry including His tireless deeds of love and mercy are seen. Also shown are the evil plotting, the envy, and the hatred He suffered from those who opposed Him. In great detail are shown the unjust trial, the mocking, torture, and the sentence of death. Jesus is then shown patiently suffering on the cross, as He continues to be mocked by priests, and the mob assembled to watch His crucifixion and death. Each participant will recall their part in the scenes they are watching. They will remember the words they shouted, "His blood be on us and our children." The wicked will try in vain to hide from the brightness of the glory of Jesus, that is brighter than the sun.

The books of record continue to play out showing the apostles being martyred. The emperor Nero will see his part, in the persecution of Christ's followers, his satanic cruelty, and his delight in their suffering and death. Even Nero's mother will see the terrible results of the training she gave him, which formed the evil character that he developed. Then popes, priests, and other church leaders, will see the most terrible means of torture they used to control the consciences of God's people. These will all learn the meaning of the words of Jesus, [Matthew 25:40](#) "And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!' [Matthew 25:40 NLT](#)."

When all the records have been played out, the wicked will realize that they are without excuse, and the sentence of eternal death pronounced on them is fair. At this time, everyone will see that Satan is a liar, and that the result of disobeying God is death, not enlightenment and becoming like God.

Satan and all the lost seem to be in a trance as they see the Son of God crowned in glory and majesty. He holds in His hands the law of God, which they have broken and despised. Satan sees another in the position he once held, veiling the Glory of the Father. He remembers heaven before he became unhappy and started down the road of rebellion and deception. He clearly sees the results of his work on earth, and though he has convinced the multitudes outside the City of God that they can take it, he knows it is a lie as well. He perhaps better than anyone else knows the power of God.

One of Satan's primary goals was to show that he was right, and to prove that his rebellion was God's fault. For thousands of years, he has successfully deceived angels and human beings that his lies are truth. He convinced people that good is evil and evil is good. But now everyone knows the truth, and even Satan will bow down and confess that his sentence for his actions is fair.

Every doubt about the goodness and justice of God has now been answered. The result of disobedience against the law of God can be clearly seen by all. Even during the controversy with Satan, God has been respectful and fair and has done everything with the best interests of all created beings. With all the facts known, the whole universe, both the saved and the lost will say, like the 144,000: [Revelation 15:3](#) ... "Great and marvelous are your works, O Lord God, the Almighty. Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations. [Revelation 15:3 NLT](#)."

In a voice heard by all, Christ says, look at what I bought with My blood. I suffered and died so that they can live in My presence forever. And their response is, [Revelation 5:12](#) And they sang in a mighty chorus: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered--to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing." [Revelation 5:12 NLT](#).

Even though Satan has acknowledged the fairness of God, he has not repented, and his character has not changed. He is determined not to go down without a fight and tries to inspire people he has deceived into rebellion that they can still take the city. But even though they hate God, they can see that they have no chance against Him, and they turn in rage against Satan. [Ezekiel 28:6](#) "Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because you think you are as wise as a god, ⁷ I will now bring against you a foreign army, the terror of the nations. They will draw their swords against your marvelous wisdom and defile your splendor! ⁸ They will bring you down to the pit, and you will die in the heart of the sea, pierced with many wounds. [Ezekiel 28:6-8 NLT](#). [Ezekiel 28:16](#) Your rich commerce led you to violence, and you sinned. So I banished you in disgrace from the mountain of God. I expelled you, O mighty guardian, from your place among the stones of fire. ¹⁷ Your heart was filled with pride because of all your beauty. Your wisdom was corrupted by your love of splendor. So I threw you to the ground and exposed you to the curious gaze of kings. ¹⁸ You defiled your sanctuaries with your many sins and your dishonest trade. So I brought fire out from within you, and it consumed you. I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. ¹⁹ All who knew you are appalled at your fate. You have come to a terrible end, and you will exist no more." [Ezekiel 28:16-19 NLT](#).

The brightness and glory of God is now like a fire going out to destroy the wicked. The earth breaks open and heat from deep under in the ground comes up. The earth is like an oven. [Malachi 4:1](#) The LORD of Heaven's Armies says, "The day of judgment is coming, burning like a furnace. On that day the arrogant and the wicked will be burned up like straw. They will be consumed--roots, branches, and all. [Malachi 4:1 NLT](#). [2 Peter 3:10](#) But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. [2 Peter 3:10 NLT](#). [Isaiah 34:8](#) For it is the day of the LORD's revenge, the year when Edom will be paid back for all it did to Israel. [Isaiah 34:8 NLT](#).

Some of the wicked will be destroyed instantly, but others will suffer for days. All will be punished according to their deeds. The forgiven sins of the righteous have been transferred to Satan, and he will suffer for them in addition to his own. His punishment will be greater than those whom he deceived, and he will still be suffering when everyone else is gone. But finally, even Satan will be destroyed by the cleansing fire. God's law will be satisfied, and justice served, and everyone watching will declare the righteousness of God.

For 6000 years God's creation groaned in pain under Satan's work of ruin. But God's creatures are forever delivered from his presence and temptations. [Isaiah](#)

[14:7](#) But finally the earth is at rest and quiet. Now it can sing again! [Isaiah 14:7 NLT](#). [Revelation 19:6](#) Then I heard again what sounded like the shout of a vast crowd or the roar of mighty ocean waves or the crash of loud thunder: "Praise the LORD! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. [Revelation 19:6 NLT](#)."

While the earth was covered with the purifying fire from God, the saved were safely in the Holy City. When every trace of sin is gone, the fire will go out. There is no eternally burning hell to continually remind the saved of the fearful consequences of sin. [Revelation 21:1](#) Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. [Revelation 21:1 NLT](#). The only reminder of sin will be the scars on our Redeemer from the crown of thorns, the nails in His hands and feet, and the spear piercing in His side. [Habakkuk 3:4](#) His coming is as brilliant as the sunrise. Rays of light flash from his hands, where his awesome power is hidden. [Habakkuk 3:4 NLT](#).

The time will come, that holy men have looked forward to, ever since Adam and Eve sinned, that we will be returned to our Eden home. The earth was given to man, but fell into the hands of Satan, and will be bought back through the plan of redemption. [Psalm 37:29](#) The godly will possess the land and will live there forever. [Psalm 37:29 NLT](#). [1 Corinthians 2:9](#) That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him." [1 Corinthians 2:9 NLT](#). It is impossible for our current minds to comprehend the glory of the Paradise that God will give us. The tree of life, once in the Garden of Eden, will be there. [Revelation 22:2](#) It flowed down the center of the main street. On each side of the river grew a tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month. The leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations. [Revelation 22:2 NLT](#). There will be crystal clear streams of water, beautiful hills, and majestic mountains. [Isaiah 32:18](#) My people will live in safety, quietly at home. They will be at rest. [Isaiah 32:18 NLT](#). [Isaiah 60:18](#) Violence will disappear from your land; the desolation and destruction of war will end. Salvation will surround you like city walls, and praise will be on the lips of all who enter there. [Isaiah 60:18 NLT](#). [Isaiah 65:21](#) In those days people will live in the houses they build and eat the fruit of their own vineyards.²² Unlike the past, invaders will not take their houses and confiscate their vineyards. For my people will live as long as trees, and my chosen ones will have time to enjoy their hard-won gains. [Isaiah 65:21-22 NLT](#).

Pain will no longer exist. [Revelation 21:4](#) He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever." [Revelation 21:4 NLT](#). [Isaiah 33:24](#) The people of Israel will no longer say, "We are sick and helpless," for the LORD will forgive their sins. [Isaiah 33:24 NLT](#).

There will be a New Jerusalem on the new earth [[Revelation 21:10](#)]. [Isaiah 65:19](#) I will rejoice over Jerusalem and delight in my people. And the sound of weeping and crying will be heard in it no more. [Isaiah 65:19 NLT](#). [Revelation 21:3](#) I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. [Revelation 21:3 NLT](#). [Revelation 22:5](#) And there will be no night there--no need for lamps or sun--for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever. [Revelation 22:5 NLT](#).

[Revelation 21:22](#) I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. [Revelation 21:22 NLT](#). At that time, we will be able to talk directly with God. [1 Corinthians 13:12](#) Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. [1 Corinthians 13:12 NLT](#). We will be able to stand in God's presence and see His glory. The redeemed will know what true love, harmony, and contentment is, when they socialize with each other and the angels. Their immortal minds will delight in studying and learning about the wonders of God's creative power and the mystery of His love. The capacity to learn will be increased and they will never get tired of gaining new knowledge. They will be able to travel throughout the universe, studying its wonders, but also visiting other worlds and communicating with other beings God created. As the years of eternity roll on, the redeemed will continue to gain a richer, deeper understanding of God, which will make their love, reverence, and happiness grow.

[Revelation 5:13](#) And then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea. They sang: "Blessing and honor and glory and power belong to the one sitting on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever." [Revelation 5:13 NLT](#). With the great controversy ended, the entire universe will be happy and harmonious, and will all acknowledge that God is love.