

The Story of the Spirit of Prophecy

Understanding God's Special Gift 08

Unmasking the Master-mind

The sweeping vision given to Ellen White at Lovett's Grove, Ohio, in 1858 gave her a view of vast ages of time. And it unmasked the mastermind; revealed the working, errors and techniques of Satan himself. Also it opened to view a complete and harmonious understanding of final events on planet earth, as it delineated the final crisis just before us and primary ways Satan plans to deceive millions and bring them into His net.

It was early spring in 1858. Ellen and James were on the road again. On the weekend of March 13 and 14 they attended meetings at Lovett's Grove, in Ohio. On Sunday afternoon, the 14th, a funeral was conducted by James in the schoolhouse, where the earlier meetings of the weekend had been held. After he had spoken, Ellen rose to speak words of comfort, and was taken off in vision. Lasting two hours, during which time everyone remained in the building, she was given a panoramic view of the great controversy between Christ and Satan that has spanned the ages of sin. She had been shown this subject ten years earlier but now she was given more detail

Told to write it out, the next day they started for home. On the train, they discussed the project and she told of her determination to give the writing of that vision top priority. But this was not a topic that the prince of darkness wanted printed, for, during the vision, she had been told:

"I was instructed to write it out. I was shown that while I should have to contend with the powers of darkness, for Satan would make strong efforts to hinder me, yet I must put my trust in God, and angels would not leave me in the conflict" Life Sketches, page 162.

Later in the day, they arrived at Jackson, Michigan, on the way to Battle Creek where their home was. Briefly, they stopped at the home of Daniel Palmer for an overnight stay.

"As I was conversing with Sister Palmer, my tongue refused to utter what I wished to say, and seemed large and numb. A strange, cold sensation struck my heart, passed over my head, and down my right side. For a time I was insensible, but was aroused by the voice of earnest prayer. I tried, to use my left limbs, but they were perfectly useless." Life Sketches, page 162.

In response to the earnest prayers of the others, her strength was partially restored to the point that she and James were able to continue the journey home.

"At first I could write but one page a day, and then rest three days; but as I progressed, my strength increased. The numbness in my head did not seem to becloud my mind, and before I closed that work, the effect of the shock had entirely left me." Life Sketches, page 163.

This book, with its brief overview of the vision, was completed within three months. In later years, she continued to broaden the concepts by providing additional details. The result eventually was five large books, called the "Conflict of the Ages Series" ("Patriarchs and Prophets," "Prophets and Kings," "Desire of Ages," "Acts of the Apostles," and "Great Controversy"), plus messages in a number of other books, as well. As Ellen was completing the preliminary volume, "Spiritual Gifts, Volume 1", in June of 1858, the Palmer-house experience was explained to her:

"I was shown in vision that in the sudden attack at Jackson, Satan intended to take my life, in order to hinder the work I was about to write; but angels of God were sent to my rescue." Life Sketches, 163.

We can be thankful for counsels such as these that reveal Satan's plans and how to resist them. Satan was determined that the messenger be blotted out so that the messages might never be given. Praise the Lord that, in spite of Satan's plans, God is at work and His will shall ultimately be accomplished. This massive vision of the 14th of March, 1858, revealed the history of this world and Satan's plans to destroy those living in it.

"In the annals of human history, the growth of nations; the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the Word of God, the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and 'passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will." Prophets and Kings, pages 499, 500.

"Scores of visions had passed before her; however, this time Ellen was transported into an undefinable dimension of time before and beyond that of recorded history and was made witness to the War in Heaven, the rebellion and fall of Lucifer. Watching the tragedy unfold, she stood appalled and shocked at the infidelity of one, who was once an exalted angel." Rene Noorbergen, Prophet of Destiny, page 142.

Let's consider some of the concepts given to Ellen White in the Lovett's Grove vision. For far more information we recommend reading the books themselves.

IN THE BEGINNING

" 'God is love.' 1 John 4:16. His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be . . . Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings. . . The history of the great conflict between good and evil, from the time it first began in heaven to the final overthrow of rebellion and the total eradication of sin, is also a demonstration of God's unchanging love." Patriarchs and Prophets, 33.

THE FALL OF LUCIFER

"Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself . . . Now the perfect harmony of heaven was broken. . . In heavenly council the angels pleaded with Lucifer. The Son of God presented before him the greatness, the goodness, and the justice of the Creator, and the sacred, unchanging nature of His law. God Himself had established the order of heaven; and in departing from it; Lucifer would dishonor His Maker and bring ruin upon himself. But the warning.. given in infinite love and mercy, only aroused" a spirit of resistance. .

"To dispute the supremacy of the Son of God, thus impeaching the wisdom and love of the Creator, had become the purpose of this prince of angels. To this object he was about to bend the energies of that master mind." Patriarchs and Prophets, 35, 36.

Lucifer recognized that which many men today do not: that the character of God is mirrored in the laws He gives His creatures; to attack the one is to attack the other. Therefore in heaven, as well as on this earth, Satan, has sought to lead men to transgress God's Moral Law and thus sin against their Maker and bring unhappiness on them-selves. The leader-of-the-devils well knows that men have no defense against sin if they can be led into one of two errors: (1) To reject Christ, the only One who can forgive and enable men to obey God's will. (2) To reject the Law of God, the expression of God's will, as something that they are no longer required to obey. Understanding this key, helps us understand the entire great controversy between Christ and Satan.

"Leaving his place in the immediate presence of God, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels: Working with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealing his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God, he endeavored to excite dissatisfaction concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that they imposed an unnecessary restraint Since their natures were holy, he urged that the angels should obey the dictates of their own will . . . He claimed that in aspiring to greater power and honor he was not aiming at self-exaltation, but was seeking to secure liberty for all the inhabitants of heaven, that by this means they might attain to a higher state of existence." Great Controversy, 495. (Chapter 29 of this book parallels chapter 1 of Patriarchs and Prophets. Both explain the fall of Lucifer in heaven.)

"The discord which his own course had caused in heaven, Satan charged upon the law and government of God. All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration. He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah. Therefore it was necessary that he should demonstrate the nature of his claims, and show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. His own work must condemn him. Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked." Great Controversy, 498.

"Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages—a perpetual testimony to the nature of sin and its terrible results. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government and His law is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings." Patriarchs and Prophets, 42-43.

THE CONTROVERSY REPEATED ON EARTH

"The same spirit that prompted rebellion in heaven, still inspires rebellion on earth. Satan has continued with men the same policy, which he pursued with the angels. His spirit now reigns in the children of disobedience. Like him they seek to break down the restraints of the law of God, and promise men liberty through, transgression of its precepts. .

"When man had sinned through yielding to the deceptions of this apostate spirit, God gave an evidence of His love by yielding up His only begotten Son to die for the fallen-race. In the atonement the character of God is revealed. The mighty argument of the cross demonstrates to the whole universe that the course of sin which Lucifer had chosen was in no wise chargeable upon the government of God." Great Controversy, 500-501.

THE WARFARE AT CALVARY

“It was Satan that prompted the world’s rejection of Christ. The prince of evil exerted all his power and cunning to destroy Jesus; for he saw that the Saviour’s mercy and love, His compassion and pitying tenderness, were representing to the world the character of God. . The pent-up fires of envy and malice, hatred and revenge, burst forth on Calvary against, the Son of God, while all heaven gazed upon the scene in silent horror.” Great Controversy 501.

THE RESULTS OF CALVARY

“Now it was seen that for the salvation of a fallen and sinful race, the Ruler of the universe had made, the greatest sacrifice which love could make; for ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself’. . God had manifested His abhorrence of the principles of rebellion. All heaven saw His justice revealed, both in the condemnation of Satan and in the redemption of man. Lucifer had declared that if the law of God was changeless, and its penalty could not be remitted, every transgressor must be forever debarred from the Creator’s favor. He had claimed that the sinful race were placed beyond redemption, and were therefore his rightful prey. But the death of Christ was an argument in man’s behalf that could not be overthrown. . It was to demonstrate to all the worlds of the universe that God’s law is unchangeable. Could its claims have been set aside, then the Son of God need not have yielded up His life to atone for its transgression. The death of Christ proves it immutable.” Great Controversy, 502, 503.

“In the final execution of the judgment it will be seen that no cause for sin exists .. The cross of Calvary, while it declares the law immutable, proclaims to the universe that the wages of sin is death. In the Saviour’s expiring cry, ‘It is finished,’ the death-knell of Satan was rung. The great controversy which had been so long in progress was then decided, and the final eradication of evil was made certain. The Son of God passed through the portals of the tomb, that ‘through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.’ Hebrews 2:14. Lucifer’s desire for self-exaltation had led him to say, ‘I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: . . I will be like the Most High.’ Isaiah 14:13-14. God declares, ‘I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth, . . and never shalt thou be any more.’ Ezekiel 28: 18-19. When ‘the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven, . . all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.’ Malachi 4:1.

“The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest. Says the Word of God, ‘Affliction shall not rise up the second time.’ Nahum 1:9. The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honored as the law of liberty. A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom.” Great Controversy, 503-504.

But as we shall soon see, there were still more of Satan’s plans revealed in that important Lovett’s Grove vision.

“In the future the condition of things in the cities will grow more and more objectionable. . From the standpoint of health the smoke and dust of the cities are very objectionable.” 7 Testimonies, 82 (1902)

“Satan is working in the atmosphere; he is poisoning the atmosphere, and here we are dependent upon God for our lives—our present and eternal life.” 2 Selected Messages, 52. (1890)

“Wickedness and corruption will increase to such a degree that the very atmosphere of the cities will seem polluted.” Country Living, 29 (1907)

In 1909 she announced that immense conflicts would come all over the world, and “terrible scenes of strife and oppression beyond anything they had conceived of among the nations of the earth. . The strife. . will break forth with an intensity that you do not now anticipate.” Life Sketches, 421

“O that God’s people had a sense of the impending destruction of thousands of cities, now almost given to idolatry.” Review and Herald, September 10, 1903.

“Satan is working with all his art and enchantments to keep men marching blindly onward until the Lord arises out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquities, when the earth shall disclose her blood and no more cover her slain. The whole world appears to be in the march to death.” Manuscript 139, 1903.

“The tempest is coming, and we must get ready for its fury, by having repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord will arise to shake terribly the earth. We shall see troubles on all sides. Thousands of ships will be hurled into the depths of the sea. Navies will go down, and human lives will be sacrificed by millions.” Signs of the Times, April 21, 1890. (WW1 and WW2 and beyond!)

“Many continue in the careless gratification of self—until they become so disgusted with life that they kill themselves. Dancing and carousing, drinking and smoking, indulging their animal passions, they go as an ox to the slaughter.” Manuscript 139, 1903.

“I am bidden to declare the message that cities full of transgression, and sinful in the extreme, will be destroyed by earthquakes, by fire, by flood. All the world will be warned that there is a God who will display His authority as God. His unseen agencies will cause destruction, devastation, and death. All the accumulated riches will be as nothing.” Manuscript 35, 1906.

“Fires will break out unexpectedly, and no human effort will be able to quench them.. Disasters by rail will become more and more frequent; confusion, collision, and death without a moment’s warning will occur on the great lines of travel. The end is near; probation is closing. Oh, let us seek God while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near!” Signs of the Times, April 21, 1890.

“Soon great trouble will arise among the nations, trouble that will not cease until Jesus comes.” Review and Herald, February 11, 1904.

“Calamities, earthquakes, floods, disasters by land and by sea will increase. God is looking upon the world today as He looked upon it in Noah’s time. He is sending His message to people today as He did in the days of Noah.” Review and Herald, December 11, 1900.

“Anarchy is seeking to sweep away all law, not only divine, but human. The centralizing of wealth and power; the vast combinations for the enriching of the few at the expense of the many; the combinations of the poorer classes for the defense of their interests and claims; the spirit of unrest, of riot and bloodshed; the worldwide dissemination of the same teachings that led to the French

Revolution [of 1789]—all are tending to involve the whole world in a struggle similar to that which convulsed France.” Education, 228.

“The time is near, when large cities will be swept away.” Manuscript 53, 1910.

“The agencies of evil are combining their forces, and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final events will be rapid ones.” 9 Testimonies, 11 (1909).

“The spiritual darkness that covers the whole earth today, is intensified in the crowded centers of population.” Review and Herald, April 7, 1910.

“Satan is busily at work in our crowded cities. His work is to be seen in the confusion, the strife and discord between labor and capital, and the hypocrisy that has come into the churches. . Step by step, the world is reaching the conditions that existed in the days of Noah. Every conceivable crime is committed. . the force used to cause men to unite with confederacies and unions—binding themselves up in bundles for the burning of the great fires of the last days—all these are the working of Satanic agencies. This round of crime and folly men call ‘life’ “ Manuscript 139, 1903.

“ ‘Out of the cities’ is my message. . The time is near when large cities will be visited by the judgments of God. In a little while, these cities will be terribly shaken. No matter how large or how strong their buildings, no matter how many safeguards against fire may have been provided; let God touch these buildings and in a few minutes or a few hours they are in ruins. The ungodly cities of our world are to be swept away by the besom of destruction.” 7 Testimonies, 83 (1902)

“The time is fast coming when the controlling power of the labor unions will be very oppressive. Again and again the lord has instructed me that the people are to take their families away from the cities into the country, where they can raise their own provisions; for in the future the problem of buying and selling will be a very serious one. . Get out of the cities into rural districts, where, the houses are not crowded closely together, and where you will be free from the interference of enemies.” Letter 5, 1904.

“The line of distinction between professed Christians and the ungodly is now hardly distinguishable. Many church members love what the world loves and are ready to join with them, and Satan determines to unite them in one body and thus strengthen his cause by sweeping all into the ranks of spiritualism. Papists, who boast of miracles as a certain sign of the true church, will be readily deceived by this wonder-working power; and Protestants, having cast away the shield of truth, will also be deluded. Papists, Protestants, and worldlings will alike accept the form of godliness without the power, and they will see in this union a grand movement for the conversion of the world and the ushering in of the long-expected millennium.” Great Controversy; 588-589.

“There are not many, even among educators and statesmen, who comprehend the causes that underlie the present state of society. Those who hold the reins of government are not able to solve the problem of moral corruption, poverty, pauperism, and increasing crime. They are struggling in vain to place business operations on a more secure basis; If men would give more heed to the teachings of God’s Word, they would find a solution.” 9 Testimonies, 13.

“Many ministers are teaching their people, and many professors and teachers are instructing their students, that the law of God [the Ten Commandments]—has been changed or abrogated [set aside];

and those who regard its requirements as still valid, to be literally obeyed, are thought to be deserving only of ridicule or contempt. In rejecting the truth, men reject its Author. In trampling upon the law of God, they deny the authority of the lawgiver. . Though in a different form, idolatry exists in the Christian world today as verily as if existed among ancient Israel in the days of Elijah. The god of many professedly wise men, of philosophers, poets, politicians, journalists, —the god of polished fashionable circles, of many colleges and universities, even of some theological institutions, is little better than Baal, the sun-god of Phoenicia.

“No error accepted by the Christian world strikes more boldly against the authority of Heaven, none is more pernicious in its results, than the modern doctrine, so rapidly gaining ground, that God’s law is no longer binding upon men. Every nation has its laws, which command respect and Obedience; no government could exist without them; and can it be conceived that the Creator of the heavens and the earth has no law to govern the beings He has made?” Great Controversy, 583-584.

“It is Satan’s Purpose to attract men and women to the cities, and to gain his object he invents every kind of novelty, and amusement, every kind of excitement. And the cities of the earth today, are becoming as were the cities before the Flood. . In the days before the Flood, every kind of amusement was invented to lead men and women to forgetfulness of God and sin. Today. . Satan is working with intensity, that the same conditions of evil shall prevail. And the earth is becoming corrupt. . At such a time as this, the people who are seeking to keep the commandments of God should look for retired places away from the cities.” Manuscript 85, 1908.

“Ere long there will be such strife and confusion in the cities, that those who wish to leave them will not be able.” Statement, April 6, 1903.

These predictions given over half a century ago are now coming to pass. We are living in the time of the end. God has promised in the Bible to give us information through His prophets; we have a wealth of material in the Bible. But in mercy to those living in these last days, facing as they do such a complexity of problems and crises, God has given additional light that we need today.

There is a pattern to history that repeats. When crises come, God sends warnings. And Satan sends counterfeits to turn eyes away from the warnings. Less than fifteen hundred years after the time of Adam and Eve, God saw that the world was so corrupt that destruction was ahead. He sent a warning through a prophet, Noah. We can well expect that the religionists and scientists of that day did everything they could to block the message. They succeeded remarkably well. Only eight people were saved when the Flood came.

The First Advent of Christ was another crisis for everyone. Their acceptance or rejection of Him would decide their eternal destiny. Jesus said that John was “Elijah which was to come” (Matthew 11:14), reminding His hearers of the important prophecy in the last two verses of the Old Testament: Malachi 4: 5-6. But it is well-known by serious Bible students that that prophecy also refers to a time just before the Second Advent of Jesus. Just as Christ sent a messenger to prepare the way before His First Advent, so a messenger would be sent before His Second.

In the early nineteenth century, men discovered clear cut prophecies in the books of Daniel and Revelation that pointed to the year 1844 as a time when God would begin a work of judgment of this world. Through other Bible prophecies, they discovered the great truth that the Second Coming of Christ to this earth was near.

Revelation 12, 13 and 14 foresaw a great final judgment-hour message before the end over the issue of the Mark of the Beast. And Daniel 7 clarified still more the issues involved, while Daniel 8 and 9 dovetailed together to predict 1844 as the time when this judgment would begin.

As a result, from 1830 through 1844, dedicated Bible students around the world, often with no contact with one another, stood up and warned men of the nearness of the Second Coming of Christ. It was generally thought that Jesus would come in or near 1844, when in reality it was the special work of judgment in heaven, just prior to His Second Advent, that began in that year.

A Look at the Sanctuary: The earthly sanctuary, built by special direction of God in the time of Moses, explained Heaven's plan to remove our sins through the atonement of Christ. This earthly tabernacle was patterned after the original in heaven. The earthly sanctuary was the "type," model, or prediction, of the Heavenly Sanctuary. The earthly sanctuary had a first and a second apartment.

When Jesus died on Calvary in 31 A.D., the earthly, typical sanctuary, with its sacrifices, no longer had significance in the eyes of God. Soon after His ascension to heaven, the mediation of Jesus, our great High Priest, began in the heavenly Sanctuary. The book of Hebrews helps us to better understand the work of Christ in the heavenly Sanctuary. We understand the true Sanctuary in heaven through the model, the earthly tabernacle that preceded it.

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the Sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Hebrews 8:1-2.

In the earthly sanctuary, the priest ministered in the first apartment all year long. At the end of the year, on the Day of Atonement, there was a work of judgment and putting away of sin from the Sanctuary and the people. Christ is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29). On Calvary, Christ died for the sins of all the world. After His ascension in 31 A.D., He began His intercession, on behalf of those who would accept His sacrifice, in the great Sanctuary in heaven. As in the earthly, His work began in the first apartment, but the time must eventually come when He would enter upon His final work of atonement, foreshadowed in Leviticus 16, when He would cleanse the Sanctuary of sin, preparatory to returning to earth the second time.

This special work must be done before His Second Advent and involved a work of judgment, an investigation of the books of heaven, so all the intelligences of the universe might know that all who had genuinely accepted Christ as their Saviour and had obeyed His Written Word would have a place in His Kingdom.

The prophecy of Daniel 8:14 identified the time when this special work of judgment and cleansing of the Sanctuary would begin. "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed." (Daniel 8:14) Here is a brief summary of this prophecy:

"The 2300 days had been found to begin when the commandment of Artaxerxes for the restoration and building of Jerusalem, went into effect, in the autumn of 457 B.C. Taking this as the starting-point, there was perfect harmony in the application of all the events foretold in the explanation of that period in Daniel 9: 25-27. Sixty-nine weeks, the first 483 of the 2300 years, were to reach to the Messiah, the Anointed One; and Christ's baptism and anointing by the Holy Spirit, A.D. 27, exactly fulfilled the specification. In the midst of the seventieth week, Messiah was to be cut off. Three and a

half years after His baptism, Christ was crucified, in the spring of A.D. 31. The seventy weeks, or 490 years [as given in Daniel 9:24-27], were to pertain especially to the Jews. At the expiration of this period, the nation sealed its rejection of Christ by the persecution of His disciples, and the apostles turned to the Gentiles, A.D. 34. The first 490 years of the 2300 having then ended, 1810 years would remain. From A.D. 34, 1810 years extend to 1844. 'Then,' said the angel, 'shall the Sanctuary be cleansed.' " Great Controversy, 410.

It is truly marvelous how God predicted the exact year in which Christ would be baptized, and the very year in which He would die, almost 500 years before the events took place! Just so surely, the exact year in which the antitypical Day of Atonement experience would begin was also foretold: 1844, when Jesus entered the second apartment of the heavenly Sanctuary to begin His final work, to cleanse the Sanctuary of the records of sin.

This work of judgment in heaven above is called the Investigative Judgment, and it immediately precedes the return of Christ to this earth for His own. According to Bible prophecy, we today are living at the end of time.

A special threefold message is given in Revelation 14 for those living in this final hour of earth's history—the hour of judgment: "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come, and worship Him that made heaven and earth." (Revelation 14:7) In view of such an end-time crisis as this, it is very understandable that the God of heaven would send special counsels in these last days, to us, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Truly, this is a solemn hour in earth's history. It is a time when men never needed God more—and yet a time when they are living in rebellion against Him.

God sent a prophet. . just when the prophet was needed, before time ended and as the investigative judgment began in heaven.