

Book
16

40 DAYS



Prayers *and* Devotions on
God's Last Warning *to the Church*

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Day 1

God's Time Table—Part 1

Every student of the Bible knows that the events taking place on earth today indicate that the coming of Christ is soon. Natural disasters, wars, famines, terror attacks, and diseases all indicate that time is running out (Matthew 24:4–33). Sometimes events are so terrible and destructive that one might conclude that things are out of God's control. However, that is not the case. God is sovereign. He reigns in heaven and earth (1 Chronicles 16:31). Nothing happens without His permission. God even sets up kings and rulers and removes them (Daniel 2:21). Man and nature are all under His sovereign rulership.

Some will argue that there have always been these kinds of terrible events. While that is true, today they are different. They are taking place more frequently and with more severity. Paul describes our time with the words: "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thessalonians 5:3).

The episodes of destruction are coming as the birth pains come upon a woman about to give birth. The pains become more frequent and more intense. So it is with the episodes of destruction coming upon the earth today. They are more frequent and more destructive. The earthquake and subsequent tsunami off the coast of Indonesia affected more countries and killed more people than any natural disaster in recorded history. Not long after, Japan was hit with a major earthquake and tsunami. Hurricane Katrina brought more devastation than any hurricane before it in the United States. Then there was Hurricane Sandy, which devastated the northeastern US. Pakistan recently experienced its worst earthquake. The world is still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Concerning these things, Ellen White wrote, "Calamities will come—calamities most awful, most unexpected; and these destructions will follow one after another" (*Evangelism*, p. 27). Then she asked an important question: "Do you believe that the Lord is coming, and that the last great crisis is about to break upon the world?" (*Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 132). Our eternal future depends on how we answer that question.

It seems we are seeing what she described in the following statement:

There will soon be a sudden change in God's dealings. The world in its perversity is being visited by casualties,—by floods, storms, fires, earthquakes, famines, wars, and bloodshed. The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power; yet he will not at all acquit the wicked. "The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet." O that men might understand the patience and long-suffering of God! He is putting under restraint his own attributes. His omnipotent power is under the control of Omnipotence. O that men would understand that God refuses to be wearied out with the world's perversity, and still holds out the hope of forgiveness even to the most undeserving! But his forbearance will not always continue. Who is prepared for the sudden change that will take place in God's dealing with sinful men? Who will be prepared to escape the punishment that will certainly fall upon transgressors? (*Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 133, 134).

I believe we have reached the time Ellen White described in this quote.

We are seeing these things happen before our very eyes today. We are seeing the “sudden change in God’s dealings” with sinful men. It is urgent that we know where we are living in time. We must know what hour God’s prophetic time clock has reached. Our eternal destiny depends on it. We need spiritual leaders who have “understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do” (1 Chronicles 12:32).

The time in which we live is the time of the final and complete fulfillment of God’s new covenant promise to His people:

But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of

them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them (Ezekiel 36:21–27).

Christ is gathering a people to Himself today as the high priest unknowingly prophesied (John 11:49–52). God’s remnant people will experience to the fullest extent the promise found in the new covenant. They will be cleansed of their “filthiness” and worldly “idols.” The “new heart” will control their thoughts, words, and deeds. They will yield to God’s Spirit and walk in God’s statutes, judgments, and commandments.

Personal Reflection and Discussion

There have always been terrible events taking place in this world. What makes these events different today? _____

What did Ellen White say about these destructive events? _____

What is God doing for His people during this time? _____

Prayer Focus

Ask God to

- fill you with the Holy Spirit,
- bring revival in your life and church,
- help you better understand the times in which we live, and
- hear your prayer on behalf of those on your prayer list.

Day 2

God's Time Table—Part 2

God has a timetable, or divine prophetic time clock, for the events of earth's history. God told Abraham that his descendants would be captives in a foreign land (Genesis 15:13, 14). God's word came to pass just as predicted. Israel, Abraham's descendants, became slaves in Egypt. They struggled in Egypt for over four hundred years. Then God's prophetic time clock reached the hour of their deliverance. God's Word tells us: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:40, 41). The phrase "the selfsame day" indicates that Israel's deliverance took place at the exact time God had foretold. God's prophetic clock reached the hour for Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

Israel entered another captivity hundreds of years later. Because of their transgressions against God, He allowed them to be overthrown by the nation of Babylon, and many were led into captivity by their enemy. Again God foretold how long the captivity would last. They were to remain in captivity for seventy years (Jeremiah 25:12). When the seventy years were accomplished and God's purpose fulfilled, God opened the way for His people to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their city and nation.

To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be

accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up (2 Chronicles 36:21–23).

Hundreds of years passed, and Israel longed to see the fulfillment of God's promise of a coming Messiah. Many Old Testament prophecies gave very specific descriptions of his coming and mission.

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

The apostle Paul writes of the first advent of Christ with the words, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman" (Galatians 4:4).

God's Word is clear. Jesus came right on time, at the "fulness of time." Jesus came when God's prophetic clock reached the hour of His coming. In Daniel 9 God even foretold the date of Christ's baptism and death. Again we see that God has a very specific timetable for the events of earth's history.

Nothing happens on this earth haphazardly. Everything is directed by God. Nothing is out of His control. That is why God's promise is true: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). If all things were not under God's direction, Satan would see to it that all things did not work out for the good of those who love God. God has a purpose in everything He allows, even the things that seem so terrible from our perspective. Remember, God tells us, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8, 9).

The same holds true concerning Christ's second coming. From eternity past, the Father has known and foreseen the time of that great climactic event of Christ's return (Matthew 24:36). Christ will return on the exact "day and hour" the Father has foreknown He will return. My personal conviction is that the "day and hour" of Christ's return is very near. However, I believe something has to happen in the lives of God's people before that event takes place—something that will prepare them to "stand" on that day (Revelation 6:17). The generation

of Christians living when Christ comes will be able to stand in His presence in all His glory and not be consumed. On the other hand the antichrist is destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8). By implication those deceived by the antichrist will also be destroyed (2 Thessalonians 2:10–12). Ellen White wrote, "The glory of His countenance, which to the righteous is life, will be to the wicked a consuming fire. Because of love rejected, grace despised, the sinner will be destroyed" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 600).

Those living when Christ returns will be like no other generation of Christians who have walked this earth. In those Christians' lives God will fulfill the prayer found in Psalm 19:12–14; "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer." Their sins of ignorance (secret faults) will be forgiven and covered with Christ's righteousness, and they will have learned how to let Jesus give them His victory over willful, known sin (presumptuous sins).

Personal Reflection and Discussion

What events in today's devotional indicate that God has a prophetic time clock of events?

What promise does God give concerning the effect all events will have in the lives of His people?

What personal experience in Christ must those have who are living when Jesus returns?

Prayer Focus

Ask God to

- fill you with the Holy Spirit,
- bring revival in your life and church,
- help you better understand the experience you must have in Christ in order to be ready for His return, and
- hear your prayer on behalf of those on your prayer list.

Day 3

God's Time Table—Part 3

Today God's prophetic clock has reached the hour when He is calling the last generation of Christians into existence—His remnant people. He is calling them to come out of their Laodicean condition, prepare for the latter rain of the Spirit, and be ready for Christ's second coming.

Today God is calling His people to become just like His son Jesus. Why is this call so important? We will not be ready for Christ's return if we do not heed this call. The apostle John tells us: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

The Greek word translated as "like" in this verse is *homoios*, which means one and the same. It means those ready to meet Jesus will be yielding to Jesus' divine nature that lives in them (2 Peter 1:4). They will have the same conduct, character, authority, dignity, and power as Jesus (John 14:12; Luke 10:19). It is urgent we realize this truth. Only by knowing where the Lord wants to lead us can we cooperate with Him in our journey. First John 3:2 tells us that God wants to make us just "like him [Jesus]." We are not to be "kind of like" Jesus or merely similar to Jesus. We are to become just like Him! Those ready to meet Jesus are just like Jesus because they have learned how to let Jesus live out His life and ministry in and through them. They are just like Jesus because it is Jesus who is seen 100 percent in their lives. That is why John wrote the next verse, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (verse 3).

I believe such people are the remnant God is calling into existence today, a generation of Christians who

will become just like Jesus. They are the ones who will give the three angels' messages in latter rain power. They will be the true remnant people of God, just like the early church described in the book of Acts. They will victoriously make it through the final crisis (time of trouble) and stand in the flesh in the presence of Jesus in all His glory when He comes and not be consumed. However, for this to happen, they must understand God's message to Laodicea (Revelation 3:14–22) and allow God to bring about the necessary change described in that counsel. We will study God's counsel to Laodicea in great detail later in this devotional.

Satan knows all these things. Therefore, as always, he has devised a plan to hinder the work God wants to perform in the lives of His people today, and he is carrying out that plan. We see this clearly in our denominational history. In Ellen White's day, Satan worked through John Harvey Kellogg and the teachings brought out in his book *The Living Temple* to try to lead God's people away from the foundational beliefs of this denomination. Ellen White called this the "alpha" of Satan's efforts to bring apostasy into the denomination. She also warned that an "omega" apostasy would come in the future just before Christ's return. God brought this denomination safely through that alpha apostasy. He will also safely lead His remnant people through Satan's last terrible apostasy.

God brought an important truth to this denomination through A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner at the 1888 General Conference Session in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Again Satan worked to hinder the church from receiving the truths they presented. Ellen White pointed out that if these truths on righteousness by faith had been received and experienced to the fullest, the "loud cry" would

have taken place, the latter rain of the Spirit would have fallen, and Christ would have returned. However, because of Satan's successful countermeasures, Ellen White wrote in 1901: "We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years" (*Evangelism*, p. 696).

Satan is no less busy in his efforts today to hinder the working of the Spirit of God in the lives of God's people. I believe these efforts by Satan to keep God's people in Laodicea are the apostasy Ellen White warned about many years ago. The alpha apostasy came near the beginning of the denomination's development and attacked the nature of God, presenting Him as a pantheistic

God. Satan's last apostasy will come near the conclusion of the mission God has called this denomination to complete. I believe it attacks the work of the Holy Spirit to transform the character of God's people into a faithful, loving, obedient, commandment-keeping people who are described in Revelation 14:12: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

I write this devotional to clarify God's warning to those in Laodicea. We will study God's plan to lead His people out of their Laodicean condition. We will also study Satan's efforts to hinder God's plan by means of his attacks on the Laodicean message.

Personal Reflection and Discussion

Who will God's people be like when Jesus returns? _____

How will God's people respond when they understand that they must be just like Jesus when He returns? _____

What did Ellen White call Satan's last-day deception to hinder God's people being ready for Christ's return? _____

Prayer Focus

Ask God to

- fill you with the Holy Spirit,
- bring revival in your life and church,
- help you better understand God's Laodicean message and Satan's attack on the Laodicean message, and
- hear your prayer on behalf of those on your prayer list.

Day 4

New Covenant Promise Fulfilled

The prophet Ezekiel recorded God's new covenant promise to His people:

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses (Ezekiel 36:25–29).

This promise was given to Israel during the time of their Babylonian captivity. They had lost hope. So God gave them this wonderful promise that Israel would be gathered from all the nations back to their own land (verse 24). He also guaranteed that Israel would become the saved, victorious, obedient people God intended them to become. This promise met a partial fulfillment when God brought Israel out of Babylonian captivity. God called John the Baptist to prepare the way through his call to repent. However, God's Word reveals that when the Messiah, Jesus Christ, appeared, the nation of Israel rejected Him. Jesus foresaw this when He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate"

(Matthew 23:37, 38). Speaking to the Jewish leaders, Jesus declared, "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matthew 21:43).

A remnant out of Israel accepted Christ and became the Christian church. As a result the church has inherited all the promises, prophecies, and the covenant originally given to Abraham and his seed (Israel). The believers in Jesus Christ are now today the "seed of Abraham." "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).

Hence the new covenant promise will reach its final and complete fulfillment through the church. This is why the Old Testament symbolism is applied to the church in the New Testament. For example, when an individual accepts Christ, they are depicted as coming to Mount Zion and Jerusalem:

"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant" (Hebrews 12:22–24).

This is the fulfillment of the high priest's prophecy about Christ:

"And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also

he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad” (John 11:49–52).

Just as God called literal Israel out of literal Babylon in order to fulfill the new covenant promise, today He is calling spiritual Israel out of spiritual Babylon to bring the new covenant promise to its final and complete fulfillment in preparation for Christ’s second coming in glory:

“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. . . . And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Revelation 18:1–4).

I believe that when God fulfills the new covenant promise, the followers of Jesus Christ will experience justifying cleansing (“then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean” [Ezekiel 36:25]) and

sanctifying cleansing (“I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” [verses 26, 27]). They will be a victorious church cleansed from all unrighteousness and sin through Christ’s righteousness. These followers will be able to stand in the presence of Christ in all His glory when He returns and not be consumed.

John described those ready for Christ’s second coming and their response to that hope in 1 John 3:2, 3:

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

In this devotional study we will consider the victory God’s remnant people must have through Jesus Christ (“purifieth himself”) and Satan’s efforts to hinder God’s last work in the lives of His people and the message they are to give to the world.

Personal Reflection and Discussion

Describe the new covenant promise in your own words. _____

What did the high priest, Caiaphas, unknowingly prophesy about Christ? _____

How will God fulfill the new covenant promise through the church? _____

Prayer Focus

Ask God to

- fill you with the Holy Spirit,
- bring revival in your life and church,
- help you experience the new covenant promise in your life, and
- hear your prayer on behalf of those on your prayer list.