

The Adventist Dilemma, I

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1. The following EGW quote is specially problematic and worrisome for serious-minded Adventists because of the predicament it creates for them:

I also saw that many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble. Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully. **EW 71.**

- a. **Time of trouble** ---The statement above is worrisome because a time of trouble such as the one described in **Dan 12:1** is said to be coming;
- b. **No high priest in the heavenly sanctuary**---if that isn't enough, the statement also speaks of the time of trouble as a time when there is no intercession going on in heaven.
--times of trouble in previous history were not so terrible compared to the trouble envisioned in **Dan 12:1** because there was always an Intercessor during those times;
- c. Notice another parallel statement:

“. . .In that fearful time, after the close of Jesus' mediation, the saints were living in the sight of a holy God **without an intercessor**. Every case was decided, every jewel numbered.” **EW 280.** (See also **GC 425**).

- c. **Reflect the image of Jesus fully now required**--Most of all, **EW 71** is bothersome because it states that in order to be sealed and protected in the time of trouble, one must reflect the image of Jesus fully;
- d. **Many do not realize** --It is also very unsettling to know that many (Adventists) "do not realize what they must be," as the quote said, "in order to "be sealed and protected" in such time of trouble;
 - i. it seems that for many, the worst fear in the time of trouble is simply the fear of hunger because they cannot buy or sell and the fear of persecution as they stand before wicked men;
 - ii. it is not so much about the fear of facing the wrath of God mixed without mercy as the fear of facing the wrath of men;
 - iii. the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation is when the wrath of God is poured out for the first time without mixture of mercy into the cup of His indignation (**Rev 14:10**) and the saints have to face that without an Intercessor!!
 - iv. **Heb 10:31**--"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. "

Then I saw that the seven last plagues were soon to be poured out upon those who have no shelter; yet the world regarded them no more than they would so many drops of water that were about to fall. I was then made capable of enduring the awful sight of the seven last plagues, the wrath of God. I saw that His anger was dreadful and terrible, and if He should stretch forth His hand, or lift it in anger, the inhabitants of the world would be as though they had never been, or would suffer from incurable sores and withering plagues that would come upon them, and they would find no deliverance, but be destroyed by them. Terror seized me, and I fell upon my face before the angel and begged of him to cause the sight to be removed, to hide it from me, for it was too dreadful. . .EW 64-65.

- e. Because many do not realize what the time of trouble is really all about, they also do not realize what they must be in order to survive it!

The people of God must purify their souls through obedience to the truth, and be prepared to stand without fault before Him at His coming. 1SM 67.

Reflecting the Image of Jesus Fully

2. The questions that beg asking now are:
 - a. how does one come to the point in his Christian experience where he fully reflects the image of Jesus "FULLY" in order to be sealed?
 - b. How many faithful Christians from past generations have been able to reach that?
 - c. It would seem that God is asking more from the final generation of believers than from the faithful of all ages in the past? Why?
3. **More questions:** Also, for the sake of argument, if one can just overcome every sinful habit and every bad behavior in his life, does that mean he is now reflecting the image of Jesus fully and can therefore receive the seal of God?
 - a. **ANSWER:** It will take more than just a work overcoming sinful habits and adopting good habits to reflect the image of Jesus fully;
 - b. if sin were just made up of bad habits and wrong words and actions, then overcoming these would be enough to reflect the image of Jesus;

The Hopelessness of Human Sinfulness

4. **Rom 7:14-15**--Sin is not just made up of sinful actions and bad behavior; it is a compulsion; the carnality of our sinful characters simply makes it impossible for us to rise above the pull of sin;
 - i. "sin dwelling in me" is the root of man's sin problem;
 - ii. that "sin dwelling in me" is not eradicated when sin is forgiven;
 - iii. overcoming bad habits does not eradicate "sin dwelling in me;"
 - iv. as long as "sin dwelling in me" is not taken away, we are not totally dead to sin and we are continuously prone to sinning;
 - v. "sin dwelling in me" makes it impossible to reflect the image of Jesus;

- b. **Mark 7:21-23; Jer 17:9**--the "heart" is where "sin dwelling in me" resides; it is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked
- c. **Isa 64:6**---doing good deeds does not remove "sin dwelling in me"
- d. **Rev 8:3-5; 1SM 343**--after conversion, "sin dwelling in me" taints even the very prayers we say which are indicted by the Holy Spirit;

The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary, but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the Intercessor, who is at God's right hand, presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ. He holds before the Father the censer of His own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption. He gathers into this censer the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ's propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable. Then gracious answers are returned. **1SM 344.**

- 5. **EW 71** places serious-minded Adventists in a hopeless dilemma similar to the one the Israelites faced on the shores of the Red Sea, where it was humanly impossible to escape destruction at the hands of Pharaoh and his armies.
- 6. Just as it took a miracle from God for the Israelites to be delivered from the armies of Egypt, it will take nothing short of a miracle on the part of God to enable desperately wicked, sinful human beings to be live completely above their sinfulness and become Christ-like;

The Miracle of the Cleansing of the Sanctuary

- 7. **Dan 8:14**-- Seventh-day Adventists must now take the proclamation about the cleansing of the sanctuary very seriously because it is the only way out of the dilemma they are facing right now
- 8. The sanctuary service going on in heaven to which **Dan 8:14** points is the only hope for God's people of ever reaching the point in their Christian experience where they can reflect the image of Jesus fully in spite of their sinfulness, and be prepared to stand in the time of trouble without an Intercessor;
 - a. This is the reason why the proclamation about the cleansing of the sanctuary is the foundation of the Adventist faith

The scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Daniel 8:14. **GC 409**

The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith. **Ev 221.**

9. **Lev 16:30-33**---**Dan 8:14** points us to the final ministrations in the heavenly sanctuary which is to cleanse it and to cleanse the worshippers as well;
- this occurred on the Day of Atonement following the Old Testament type (**Lev 16:30-33**);
 - the sanctuary service in the heavenly sanctuary has been in progress now for more than 18 centuries since Jesus ascended to heaven
 - this cleansing is what miraculously takes away the "sin dwelling in me" problem, the root and source of all human sinfulness and miraculously puts on the believer the robe of Christ's perfect character AS A GIFT!!;
 - this is why the subject of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary should now be clearly understood by serious-minded Seventh-day Adventists living in the time of the end;

". . .the minds of believers were to be directed to the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ had entered to make atonement for His people."-- **1SM 67**.

10. **Lev 16:29-31**---This final atonement made by the high priest on the Day of Atonement cleansed not only the sanctuary, but also the priests and the members of the congregation who brought sin offerings during the year and afflicted their souls;
11. **Lev 16:16, 21**---Why did the sanctuary need cleansing? the sanctuary needed to be cleansed of "sins, transgression, iniquities, uncleanness" from the daily sin offerings and trespass offerings of the people;
12. **Lev 4:27-31**--Why did the congregation need cleansing on the Day of final Atonement? The root of the sin problem, "sin dwelling in me" was not removed with the forgiveness of sin during the daily service; **JESUS SAVES THE "WORST" IN THE FINAL ATONEMENT**;

Take Away Their Filthy Garments

13. **Zech 3:9; 1-5**--the vision of Joshua and the Angel in the book of Zechariah gives us a glimpse of how the final atonement will be made and what the results will be:
- The high priest Joshua represents the sinner (**COL 206**) and his filthy garments represents his defective character which is characterized by "sin dwelling in me" (**COL 168; PK 588**)
 - the taking away of the filthy garments and the putting on of a change of raiment represents the work of Christ in taking away the "sin dwelling in me" and the "deceitful", and "desperately wicked" heart and replacing it with His Christ's robe of perfect character;
 - this is the final cleansing on the Day of Atonement; the blotting out of sin from the lives of God's people and subsequently from the books of heaven;
 - This work began at the expiration of the prophetic 2300 days in 1844 for the dead;
 - Jesus will do this work for the living just before He leaves the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary;
 - Rev 6:9-10**--For the faithful dead, this work has been done since 1844, the end of the 2300 days prophecy of **Dan 8:14**; these died having their filthy garments or their defective characters with them to the grave even though their sins have been pardoned;

i. **Rev 22:11**--characters locked in place after the final atonement;

14. In **PK 587-591**, EGW gives an amazing blow by blow account of the events to take when Jesus makes His final atonement in the heavenly sanctuary to cleanse it and along with the believers:

Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing scenes of the great day of atonement. . . Men will be required to render obedience to human edicts in violation of the divine law.

Those who are true to God will be menaced, denounced, proscribed. They will be "betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends," even unto death. Luke 21:16. Their only hope is in the mercy of God; their only defense will be prayer. As Joshua pleaded before the Angel, so the remnant church, with brokenness of heart and unflinching faith, will plead for pardon and deliverance through Jesus, their Advocate. They are **fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives**, they see their weakness and unworthiness; and they are ready to despair.

As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, "Take away the filthy garments," and the encouraging words are spoken, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Zechariah 3:4. The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, **nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world**. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. **Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices**. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. A "fair miter" is set upon their heads. **PK 587-591**.

Conclusion

15. So back to **EW 71**,

- a. Do we now understand why there is **no intercession**, in the time of trouble? It is not needed;
- b. Are we still part of the **many who do not realize** what they must in order to stand in the sight of the Lord without an Intercessor through the time of trouble?
- c. Do we now know what it means to **reflect the image of Jesus fully**?

16. What are we doing with the call on the Day of Atonement to afflict the soul?

We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work.. **GC 489-490**.

In a view given June 27, 1850, my accompanying angel said, "Time is almost finished. Do you reflect the lovely image of Jesus as you should?" Then I was pointed to the earth and saw that there would have to be a getting ready among those who have of late embraced the third angel's message. Said the angel, "Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye will have to die a greater death to the world than ye have ever yet died." I saw that there was a great work to do for them and but little time in which to do it. **EW 64**