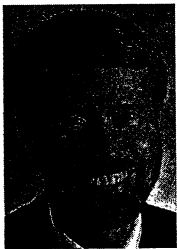

THE SECOND ADVENT AND THE “FULLNESS OF TIME”

In the summer of 1980, a watershed conference at Glacier View, Colorado,¹ examined an attempted refutation of the key pillars of Seventh-day Adventist prophetic interpretation.



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In the aftermath of that momentous meeting, a number of my ministerial colleagues left the Adventist Church. One of these, my closest theological friend, brought me a stack of books and said, “I dare you to read these and stay an Adventist!” As I read, questions that I had never considered before struck at the heart of the historic Adventist understanding of prophecy in general, and of the 2300 days in particular. Deciding to study the issues carefully, I determined to go wherever the truth took me, even if that were, indeed, out of the door of the Adventist Church itself.

So began long months of wrestling with Scripture and agonizing in prayer. I was not alone, either; many colleagues, and others throughout the world church, persevered in plumbing the depths of Scripture in order to test the prophetic underpinnings of Adventist eschatology. I am deeply indebted to many whose insights helped me greatly,

particularly to the Daniel and Revelation Committee, which had been appointed by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to grapple with issues raised at Glacier View and elsewhere. Out of the decade of their deliberations in the 1980s came seven precious volumes of research that helped change my life.²

Another Round

My testimony concerning the results of the past two decades of biblical study is straightforward: I have become overjoyed as I have seen, ever more clearly, that the historic Adventist prophetic interpretations dealing with the last days can stand the closest investigation. Point by point the objections and questions in my mind have steadily melted away like hoarfrost before the sun light of Scripture.

Little did I know right after Glacier View that almost twenty years later

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I would, at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, be privileged to teach these prophetic verities. At the same time, little did I realize that many of the same objections to the Adventist understanding of the end-time prophecies would resurface twenty years later. In a new round of barrages, books and videos have been widely distributed, punctuated by the personal appearances of former SDA pastors, all attempting to dismantle the prophetic basis of Adventism. The arguments of twenty years ago are recycled, while the powerful research of the Daniel and Revelation Committee and others since 1980 is almost totally ignored.

The basic questions have the same burning relevance now as twenty years ago: Where are we in relation to the “fullness of time” before the second advent of Christ? What is the nature of prophetic interpretation? How reliable is the Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14? What about the starting date for the 2300-day prophecy? Can we still maintain the historical position in light of the apparent long delay of Christ’s return? Is the day-year principle valid? And, finally, What do these prophecies say about the nearness of Christ’s return?

Investigating the Judgment

One of the Adventist prophetic teachings most widely rejected is that of a pre-advent, investigative judgment of God’s people. Critics have charged that this interpretation is based exclusively on a single text, Dan 8:14, and that this text has been misinterpreted by wresting it out of context.

In the first volume of the Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, a now retired associate director of the Biblical Research Institute examined at least 28 different Old Testament passages *outside* of Daniel, all of which deal with judgment from the sanctuary³. Twenty out of these 28 passages concerned judgment of God’s people and many clearly involve the aspect of investigative judgment from the heavenly as well as the earthly sanctuaries.

There are numerous other biblical passages where the sanctuary is not spe-

cifically mentioned as the place of judgment, but where God’s *procedure* is indicated for dealing with His people before executive judgment is meted out. In fact, the Bible reveals that *God’s regular procedure* in dealing with humanity before ending the probationary time of a given individual or people is to first conduct an investigative judgment, throwing open all the books, as it were, so that it can be seen that He is just and fair before pronouncing the verdict and executing judgment.

We find God using this procedure from the first entrance of sin, in Eden.

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When in the cool of the day God comes to Adam and Eve after they have sinned, He initiates a legal trial or investigative judgment before pronouncing the verdict and sentence. Liberal Protestant scholar Claus Westermann points out that after the Fall God comes for a “legal process,” a “trial,” a “court process.”⁴ Adam and Eve are placed on the witness stand, given opportunity to testify, and in their testimony perjure themselves and finally reveal their culpability before God pronounces them guilty.

Yet in the heart of that judgment is the first gospel promise (Gen 3:15). God’s investigative judgment is not to see whom He can damn, but whom He

can save. As much as anything else, the judgment is a message of God’s grace and mercy.

The process continues in Genesis. God comes for a legal investigation before He brings the Flood (Gen. 6:1-13). The same procedure is described in His coming down to investigate at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:5-7) and Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:20, 21). In each of these cases, biblical scholars of a variety of persuasions have recognized that a legal trial procedure, an investigative judgment, is involved⁵. God comes to investigate, not because He needs to know, but to reveal that He is fair and just in all His dealings. In each case, however, there is at the heart of the judgment God’s grace, revealing His desire to save those under examination.

This legal procedure is often given a technical name in the Old Testament—a *rib*, or covenant lawsuit; it regularly consists of a divine legal *investigation* of the evidence before sentence is pronounced and judgment meted upon God’s professed covenant people, such as is done in the covenant lawsuits or investigative judgments described by Hosea and Micah upon the Northern Kingdom, and that of Malachi in the post-Exilic period.⁶ A covenant lawsuit or investigative judgment is also clearly present in the New Testament with regard to Israel in A.D. 34 before their close of probation and divine executive judgment.⁷

The Ezekiel parallel

Perhaps the most dramatic and illuminating of the examples of an investigative judgment of God’s professed covenant people appears in the first ten chapters of Ezekiel. John the Revelator’s extended citations and allusions to Ezekiel 1-10 in his portrayal of God’s dealings with His people in the last days hints that the events surrounding the end of probationary time for the Judean monarchy may be a type of God’s antitypical procedure for dealing with His people before the final close of their probation. And what was God’s procedure in Ezekiel’s day, in the closing years of Judah’s history before the curtain was pulled, before executive judgment was

meted out? The procedure was an investigative judgment conducted from the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary!⁸

Ezekiel reveals not only the divine procedure before the close of probation, namely an investigative judgment, but also God's desire to save His people. Over and over in Ezekiel, the Lord cries out, "Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of any one, says the Lord God; so turn, and live." (Ezek. 18:31, 32; 33:11, RSV).

One can also read between the lines and see similar characteristics in the way God leaves the temple at the conclusion of the investigative judgment. Ezekiel 10-11 shows that the celestial chariot does not simply rush away as it had come. The glory of the Lord slowly mounts up from its place of investigative judgment over the ark in the Most Holy Place, moves to the threshold of the temple and pauses. Then in His chariot, the Lord slowly moves across the courtyard, and pauses once more at the east gate of the temple precincts. He then slowly ascends in His throne and

crosses the Kidron Valley, pausing again one last time—now on the Mount of Olives, just as the Son of man six centuries later, weeping over Jerusalem, paused as well. It is as if the Lord is loathe to close the investigative judgment, as if He is waiting for all to repent, to turn, and to live.

Confirming evidence for the investigative judgment

What do all these biblical examples illustrating the patterns of God's procedure in judgment have to do with the "fullness of time" before the second advent of Christ? I believe the first prophet in history to explicitly describe the Second Advent brings clarity on this point. Enoch, who lived in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesies about the Parousia: "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints, to *execute judgment* on all..." (Jude 14-15, NKJV, emphasis added). The second advent of Christ is clearly a time of cosmic executive judgment.⁹ If God is consistent, acting at the end of time as He has

throughout history, then the executive judgment at the Second Advent will also be immediately preceded by an investigative phase. Thus, if we could know *when* that cosmic investigative phase begins, we would have a clear sign that we are nearing the executive judgment of Christ's second coming.

In fact, just as God's executive judgments throughout history regularly were preceded by an investigative phase, Daniel reveals that the same thing happens at the end of earth's history. The book of Daniel not only indicates the *existence* of a pre-advent cosmic investigative judgment—it also reveals *when* that judgment would begin. Daniel 7 clearly indicates that a cosmic investigative judgment on behalf of the saints immediately precedes the executive judgment upon the "little horn"¹⁰ power and Christ's reception of the kingdom.¹¹ And the parallel chapter, Daniel 8, indicates *when* this final Day of Atonement judgment, or cleansing of the sanctuary, would begin: after 2300 "evening-mornings."¹²

This historicist Adventist interpretation simply builds upon the foundation of the early church and the Reformation. The historicist view of prophecy was the view of the early church and of all the Reformers, although today most other major denominations except Seventh-day Adventists have abandoned this position in favor of counter-Reformation systems.¹³

Yet only the historicist view of prophecy does justice to the whole of Daniel. The preterists must say that prophecy failed, and the futurists must posit a gap where none exists. But the historicists can be consistent with the whole sweep of the prophetic time prophecies, moving from the prophet's day to the eschaton.¹⁴

The year-day principle is crucial in the historicist interpretation. This principle was also widely held by Reformation theologians. Adventists have traditionally supported the year-day principle from Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34, only two texts, and both outside of Daniel. Skeptical of such an approach even before the Glacier View Conference, I still remember my euphoria as I read the DARCOM volumes,¹⁵ which show not two or three lines of evidence—but 23 different biblical reasons that validate the application of the day-for-a-year principle to the time prophecies of Daniel as well as Revelation. And most of this evidence is from the book of Daniel itself!

I also still rejoice in the confirmatory evidence for the dates regarding the 2300-days and 70-week prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9. God preserved crucial papyrus manuscripts buried for over 2000 years on a little island in the middle of the Nile River; the discovery and translation of these double-dated Elephantine papyri from the fifth century B.C. helped confirm that the date of Artaxerxes's first decree was 457 B.C., as Adventists have believed, and not 458.¹⁶ Further lines of biblical and extra-biblical evidence have been forthcoming, which show why this decree and not some other, marked the beginning of the 70 weeks and the 2300 days.¹⁷

No less stirring is the confirmation

of the ending date of the 2300 days-years, October 22, 1844. I have heard it said that the Adventist pioneers were simple and unlearned, without the intellect or the sophistication to do responsible biblical study. Although most of the pioneers did not have the advantage of higher theological education, and certainly did not have all the light, in my reading from the more than 1000 pages of pioneer articles related to the prophetic interpretation of the 2300 days,¹⁸ I have been amazed at the way God guided those humble, teachable men to such profound and reliable conclusions.

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The date of *October 22, 1844* is such a case in point. Scholarly detractors from the Seventh-day Adventist teaching claim that the Adventist pioneers chose a date for Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) that was proposed by an obscure Jewish sect, the Karaites, rather than taking the date accepted by the mainstream rabbinic tradition, which in 1844 came a month earlier than October 22. The truth is that this move proves just how studious the pioneers actually were. They found that the rabbinic method of calculating the beginning of the religious year was based upon fixed cyclical formulas for adding a second 12th month to bring the lunar calendar in line with the solar calendar. The procedure is linked to the Spring equinox, *not* to the Judean barley harvest moon stipulation given in Scripture, and

thus often sets the festival dates one month too early. Only the Karaites, who rejected all rabbinic tradition and accepted *sola Scriptura*, still preserved in 1844 the biblical method of reckoning the festival dates, thus arriving at October 22 as the correct date for the Day of Atonement.¹⁹

How interesting, too, that most of the Karaites outside of Palestine had abandoned the biblical method of reckoning by 1844, and that shortly after 1844 even the Karaites in Palestine ceased to use this method. I'm thankful God kept a "remnant" faithful to the biblical method—at least until 1844! And I thank God for His leading of our pioneers in solidly founding this doctrine upon Scripture, not tradition.

I have also been interested to learn that in the last several years the Karaites in Israel have once again begun to calculate the beginning of the year by the biblical method, adding an extra twelfth month when necessary so the barley will be ripe to wave at Passover time. It so happens that the beginning of this past Jewish year (A.D. 1999-2000) presented a calendrical situation almost identical to that of 1843-1844, and according to the Karaite firsthand examination of the barley in Israel, it was necessary to add a "leap month"—even though according to rabbinic reckoning no extra month was added. Thus the Day of Atonement this past year, figured according to the biblical way of reckoning, came during the last part of October, not in September, just as it did in 1844.²⁰ This is contemporary corroboration for the Adventist pioneers' correct calculation of the Day of Atonement in 1844.

For those who may still be skeptical about the Karaite calendar calculations, I also rejoice that God has recently raised up another witness to the accuracy of the date, October 22, 1844. By the study of Babylonian astronomical and mathematical data, it is now possible to arrive at the precise date for the Day of Atonement in 457 B.C. and by mathematical calculation to establish the modern equivalent for this date in 1844. This study was recently undertaken by William Shea and clearly demonstrates by

mathematical and astronomical reckoning independent of the Karaite calendar, that *October 22* is the correct date for the Day of Atonement in 1844.²¹ We have a sure and firm foundation for our faith.

The Adventist interpretation of the date indicated by the text of Daniel 8:14 is solid, and so is the interpretation of the *significance* of this date. There is not space for a detailed exegesis,²² but I note here that the word for “cleansed” in Dan. 8:14 is *nidaq*, which in Hebrew has nuances that can only be encompassed by at least three different English expressions: “set right/restore,” “cleanse,” and “vindicate.” This breadth of meaning provides the solution to the three problems set forth in the previous verse (Dan. 8:13): the removal of the “continual” ministry in the sanctuary, the “transgression that causes horror,” and the “trampling” of sanctuary. The “continual” mediatorial ministry of Christ needs to be “restored/set right”; the transgression in the sanctuary needs to be “cleansed”; and the trampling of sanctuary and host, which defamed the character of God, calls for “vindication” of God and His people. There are separate Hebrew words for each of these ideas, “set right,” “cleanse,” “vindicate”—but only *one* Hebrew word can simultaneously encompass all three, the word *nidaq*. Here is the wholistic message of the investigative judgment encapsulated in a single word.

The good news of Judgment

The doctrine of the cosmic investigative judgment before Christ’s second advent is the theme of numerous other biblical passages outside of Daniel,²³ including the “everlasting gospel” of the first angel’s message in Revelation 14:6, which includes these words: “the hour of his judgment *has* come!”

It has *already* come! While it is a fearful time to those who have neglected and rejected the provisions made for their salvation, for those in Christ the investigative judgment is a reason for rejoicing. The investigative judgment is the revelation to the universe of the saints standing before God. It does not

put the salvation of God’s people in jeopardy.

Since 1844, God’s saints can joyfully proclaim, “It’s finally here!” Since the death of Abel the blood of the martyrs has been crying out, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?” (Rev. 6:9, 10, RSV). At last the fullness of prophetic time has come. Just as in the first century, “when the fullness of the [prophetic] time [*chronos*] had come” (Gal. 4:4, NKJV), God sent forth His Son to do His redeeming work on earth, so at the time of the end when the “fullness of time” arrived,²⁴ the Son of Man “came to the Ancient of Days” to do His work of investigative judgment and then to receive the kingdom (Dan. 7:9-14). That work of final judgment has begun. Yom Kippur is here. Satan is finally to be silenced, the truth can finally come out vindicating God and His people.

The fact that the final judgment has already begun is the most unmistakable sign of the nearness of the

Second Advent. The Day of the Lord has arrived, and it was announced on earth by cosmic signs—a great earthquake, the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars, just as biblical prophets and Jesus Himself predicted (Joel 2:30, 31; Isa. 13:9, 10; 34:4; Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24, 25; Luke 21:24, 25).²⁵

But, some may reply, “1844 is a long time ago! Does the investigative phase of the judgment have to take that long for God?” No, it doesn’t. The inspired evidence is clear that He could have come within a few short years after 1844, if His people had been faithful in giving the three angels’ messages to the world. The whole world would have been warned, and Christ would have come again.²⁶

Many are tempted to get discouraged by such a long apparent delay. But I find every day of God’s “delaying” His coming another evidence of His awesome love for this world, not wanting any to perish. In the antitype of the microcosmic investigative judgment of Israel as portrayed by Ezekiel and six centuries later by the Gospel writers,

Christ is now, as it were, pausing on the Mount of Olives, with tears in His eyes, not willing to end probationary time for His people if there is just one more who will “turn and live” (see Eze. 18:32). He longs to gather together His children like a mother hen gathers her chicks (see Matt. 23:37). He has not slacked on His promises, but is amazingly patient, not willing that anyone should perish (see 2 Peter 3:9).

Conclusion

It’s been a long time since Glacier View. Many good people have left us since then. At the same time, many good people have stayed, convinced by the clear testimony of Scripture that our message is what we have been taught it is: present truth. No doubt, more challenges will come, and more good people will leave. Undoubtedly, more people will study the Bible and, convinced from the overpowering evidence revealed in that Word, stay faithful to these truths, and to the Lord who has graciously given us this message to proclaim to a dying world. ■

¹ For a report of the background to, and proceedings of, this conference, see the “Special Sanctuary Issue” of *Ministry*, October 1980, and Frank Holbrook, ed., *Doctrine of the Sanctuary: A Historical Survey*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, vol. 5 (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 1989), appendices D and E (217-233).

² These volumes are called the Daniel and Revelation Committee Series.

³ W. H. Shea, “Biblical Parallels for the Investigative Judgment,” *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1982), 1-24.

⁴ Claus Westermann, *Creation*, translated by John J. Scullion (London: SPCK, 1974), 96.

⁵ For example, regarding Sodom and Gomorrah, T. F. Mafico, “The Crucial Question Concerning the Justice of God,” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 42 (1983): 13, points out that “Yahweh came down to make a judicial investigation” (emphasis supplied).

⁶ The word *rib* explicitly introduces the covenant lawsuits of Hosea and Micah: Hosea 4:1; Micah 6:1, 2. Sometimes the prophets use a synonym, *miṣpat* (“judgment”), as in Malachi 3:5; Ezekiel 5:8, etc. The recent scholarly literature on the covenant lawsuit is immense. For introductory discussion, starting bibliography and numerous biblical examples, see James Limburg, “The Root’ *rib* and the Prophetic Lawsuit Speeches,” *JBL* 88 (1969): 291-304; the article on *rib* in the *Theological Wordbook of the*

Old Testament, eds. R. Laird Harris, Gleason Archer, and Bruce Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980) 2: 845-846; and Kirsten Nielsen, *Yahweh as Prosecutor and Judge: An Investigation of the Prophetic Lawsuit (Rib-Pattern)*, JSOT 9 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1978).

⁷ See William Shea, “The Prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27,” *The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 80-82.

⁸ See William Shea, “The Investigative Judgment of Judah, Ezekiel 1-10,” in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Arnold V. Wallenkampf and W. Richard Leshner (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1981), 283-291; Shea, *Selected Studies*, 13-20; and Richard Davidson, “The Chiastic Literary Structure of the Book of Ezekiel,” *To Understand the Scriptures: Essays in Honor of William H. Shea* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Institute of Archaeology, 1997), 71-93.

⁹ God executes judgment at His second coming by dismantling the final confederacy of the False Trinity, thus putting an end to the system of the little horn or Babylon; by resurrecting or translating the righteous; and by destroying the wicked. Of course, then comes a review judgment during the millennium, followed by the final executive judgment, where the wicked including Satan and his angels receive punishment “according to their works.”

¹⁰ Identification of the “little horn” of Daniel and the “antichrist” and Babylon of the NT with the papal system is another point in which the Adventist interpretation is upholding the almost unanimous position of Reformation scholars. My own personal count isolates some 170 different characteristics of the “little horn”/antichrist/Babylon described in Scripture, and only the papacy matches all of these characteristics.

¹¹ See especially William Shea, “Judgment in Daniel 7,” *Selected Studies*, 94-131.

¹² See especially, Gerhard Hasel, “The ‘Little Horn,’ The Heavenly Sanctuary and the Time of the End: A Study of Daniel 8:9-14,” *Symposium on Daniel*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, ed. Frank Holbrook, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 378-461.

¹³ See LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946-1954), passim.

¹⁴ For examples of the contrast between these three main schools of prophetic interpretation, see Shea, *Selected Studies*, v-vi, 25-55 (regarding Daniel 8) and Gerhard F. Hasel, “Interpretations of the Chronology of the Seventy Weeks,” in *Seventy Weeks*, 3-63 (regarding Daniel 9).

¹⁵ Shea, *Selected Studies*, 56-93.

¹⁶ This evidence is written up by Siegfried Horn and Lynn Wood, in *The Chronology of Ezra 7*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1970); summary in the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 3:100-104.

¹⁷ See especially Arthur J. Ferch, “Commencement Date for the Seventy Week Prophecy,” in *Seventy Weeks*, 64-74; and William Shea, “The Prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27,” in *Seventy Weeks*, 84-108.

¹⁸ Paul A. Gordon, ed., *Pioneer Articles on the Sanctuary, Daniel 8:14, the Judgment, 2300 Days, Year-Day Principle, Atonement: 1846-1905* (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1983); synthesized in *idem*, *The Sanctuary, 1844, and the Pioneers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1983).

¹⁹ For a discussion of the Karaites and their continuation of the biblical method of calendrical calculation as opposed to the rabbinic departure from the biblical method, see Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 2: 196-199; 4: 792-797.

²⁰ See the data and discussion by Israeli Karaites in several articles on the subject posted on the Internet at the following website: <karaites@netvision.il>.

²¹ See Shea, *Selected Studies*, 132-137.

²² For a detailed study of the meaning of Daniel 8:14, see Hasel, “Daniel 8:9-14,” in *Symposium on Daniel*, 378-461; on the specific meaning of *nidaq*, see Richard M. Davidson, “The Meaning of *Nidaq* in Daniel 8:14,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 7/1 (1996): 107-119.

²³ See, for examples, Leviticus 16 and 23:28-32; Malachi 3:1-5; Matthew 22 (especially verse 11); 25:1-13; Hebrews 10:25-31 (note also the implication of investigative as well as executive future judgment also in Heb. 4:12, 13; 6:4-8; and 9:23, 27, 28); Revelation 11:1-3, 18, 19; 14:6 (note also the implication of pre-advent investigative judgment in the sequencing of Rev. 6:10; 18:4-8; and 19:2).

²⁴ Note that Jesus Himself alludes to the “fullness of time” concept with regard to the time of the end. He explicitly refers to the “times” of Daniel 7:25 in His Olivet discourse in Luke 21:24 (same word in the Greek of Luke and the LXX of Dan. 7:25), and in the same verse alludes to the “trampling” of Daniel 8:10, 13 (again the same Greek root word in both). This is immediately followed by the description of the “signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars.” He thus implies that when the fullness of the prophetic time given in Daniel 7 and 8 is completed, the end-time cosmic signs will begin. The book of Revelation also indicates this fullness of time concept: after alluding to the time prophecy of Daniel 7:25 and 12:7, John states that “time [chronos] shall be no more” (Rev. 10:6).

²⁵ The Lisbon earthquake of 1755 is considered by seismologists as “the largest shock ever,” the “greatest known earthquake” (see G. A. Eiby, *Earthquakes* [New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1980], chapter 11); the “Dark Day” of May 19, 1780, is referred to in Encyclopedias as the “Great Dark Day,” and has not been equaled in intensity in North America since; likewise the Leonid meteor shower display of Nov. 13, 1833 has not been matched since in extent and duration. These cosmic signs came at the right time—“the first two” in those days” of the 1260-year ascendancy of the papacy (Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 11:2; 12:14; 13:5) but “after that tribulation” had ceased in about 1750 (Mark 13:24), and all of them before 1844 and the start of the antitypical “Day of Atonement.”

²⁶ See, e.g., Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), 695, 696; *The Desire of Ages* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1898), 633, 634.