

*Study for the Month of October 2009*

## **Spiritual Lesson from the Number 3**

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### **OCTOBER 22: A SPECIAL DATE FOR SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS!**

“Under the Mosaic system the cleansing of the sanctuary or the great Day of Atonement, occurred on the tenth day of the seventh Jewish month (Leviticus 16: 29-34), when the high priest having made an atonement for all Israel, and thus removed all their sins from the sanctuary, came forth and blessed the people. So it was believed that Christ, our great High Priest, would appear to purify the earth by the destruction of sin and sinners, and to bless His waiting people with immortality. **The tenth day of the seventh month, the great Day of Atonement, the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary, which on the year 1844 fell upon the twenty-second of October**, was regarded as the time of the Lord’s coming. This was in harmony with the proofs already presented that the 2300 days would terminate in the autumn, and the conclusion seemed irresistible.” *Great Controversy*, p. 400, (1911).

Thus, the Investigative Judgment (the antitypical Day of Atonement) in heaven, begun October 22, 1844 would have been in progress for **155** years this month. It begun with Adam and all who professed faith in Christ’s sacrifice and ends with the last person living before probation closes. It is during this time that “names are accepted, names rejected” for eternity. What a fearful truth! But if we daily choose to be united with the three Persons of the Godhead we need not fear the final outcome of this pre-advent judgment—our sins, not our names, will be blotted out! Acts 3:19.

### **The Number Three**

In the Bible the number three represents unity, union, and oneness.

- ***Though they are One, there are three divine Persons of the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit***

When referring to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit combined, it is definitely preferable to reverently address them as *the Godhead*—not the “trinity” or the “triune God.” I understand that the latter terms are used by Christian theologians, ministers, pastors and Bible teachers---but not all, and I am one of them. I do not do so merely to be different but because I subscribe to the Authorized (KJV), the New King James, and the Revised Standard versions which all use the term *Godhead*. According to the Reverend Alexander Hislop in his monumental book *The Two Babylons*, the term “trinity” is of pagan origin and he documents it well. See also the following: “Origin of the Trinity: From Paganism to Constantine,” Heraldmag.org; “The Kabballah—the Real Origin of the Trinity Doctrine,” [www.endtime-truth.com](http://www.endtime-truth.com); “The Origin of the Trinity Doctrine,” answers@yahoo.com, etc. The latter, a compilation of various quotations from official sources such as encyclopedias and the Catholic writers, while questioning the origin of the word Trinity, also denies the existence of three persons of the Godhead.

I have read quite a few excellent expositions and explanations of the “Trinity” including that of Samuel Spear, whose article was included in the *SDA Bible Student’s Library*. Another exposition found in the website argues that E.G. White increasingly accepted the term “Trinity” as evidenced by the uses of such phrases as “the heavenly Trio,” “the three heavenly Dignitaries,” “the three Persons of the Godhead,” etc., which are found in the passages quoted below—with one exception---she never specifically used the word “trinity” in itself. Assuming that such was implied is not the same as the use of the very word itself—especially as controversial as it has become in certain circles. By using the exact words that the above Bible versions do, keeps it at that Scriptural level where occasion for controversy and unnecessary debate is reduced to a minimum.

But I certainly feel most comfortable and safe when quoting the writings of E.G. White on this sacred topic. She uses the specific term *Godhead*, which Paul likewise uses in Roman 1: 20; Colossians 2:9; Acts 17:29 (KJV and NKJV). I know I cannot go wrong or off-track when using her writings because I am firmly convinced that they are genuinely inspired as “the testimony of Jesus Christ” which is “the spirit of prophecy.” The reader may judge this for himself, however.

Some say that E.G. White did use the word “Trinity,” at least once, in *Manuscript 145* (1901) as found in *Evangelism*, p. 616. A closer reading, however, reveals that the heading in bold, “**The Eternal Dignitaries of the Trinity**” is that of the compiler, not of E.G. White herself, who wrote the following words only, in which no word “trinity” is used at all. Notice:

“The eternal heavenly dignitaries---God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit---arming them [the disciples] with more than mortal energy. . . . would advance with them to the work and convince the world of sin.” – *Manuscript 45*, 1901.

## THE ABSOLUTE GODHEAD

No one is absolute, infinite, or eternal---even among those who will be eternally saved, for all are created beings. Only God Creator is uncreated, absolute, infinite, immortal, and eternal. Any finite human being, albeit motivated by the spirit and zeal of research, is cautioned never to attempt to fully set forth the infinity of the person of the Godhead beyond that which the Word of God has been pleased to reveal. As has been said, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. To do so is to place oneself on enchanted ground. The Godhead’s personality cannot be analyzed from any man-made means of analysis and research, whether philosophical, scientific, or technological. It is the height of man’s foolishness and pride to do so for all such efforts are not only a waste of God’s time and resources but at the very least is an act of presumption, which is the counterfeit of faith, or worse, is a rebellious act of defiance against God’s authority and pre-eminence over all the universe. No one can fully understand infinity but God.

“The mightiest human being, whatever may be his claim, is not infinite. He cannot understand infinity. Christ plainly stated, ‘No man knoweth the Son, but the Father.’ A teacher was once endeavoring to present the exaltation of God, when a voice was heard saying, We cannot as yet understand who He is.’ The teacher nobly replied, ‘Were I able to fully set forth God, I should either be a god myself, or God Himself would cease to be God.’

“It is written in the prophets,’ And they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me’---not through confessionals or priests or popes, but through Me, you Savior. ‘Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He

which is of God, He hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.' *This is the absolute Godhead.* The mightiest created intellect cannot comprehend Him; words from the most eloquent tongue fail to describe Him. **Silence is eloquence.**" – *E. G. White Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 914.

**Individually, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit  
are each the fullness of the Godhead.**

(See *Evangelism*, pp. 614, 615).

**Jesus Christ is the fullness of the Godhead bodily and physically**---the very express image of the person of the Father, the fullest manifestation of the Father in the flesh. Having incarnated into the human nature, He was, in fact, seen, heard, and touched by His disciples and all those whom He laid His healing hands upon during His work on earth, which was confined to Palestine. This was done in order to fulfill His part of the covenant with the Jews during the last week of the 70 week prophecy of Daniel 9: 24-27 from A.D. 27 to A.D. 31.

All who saw Him *later* was through the element of *faith* in the witness and testimony of the words and deeds of those who saw Him in *fact, earlier*. For instance, all the Gentiles who accepted Christ through the preaching and ministry of Paul and the rest of the apostles, saw Christ by faith alone. After the apostles and the 500 who saw Him in His resurrected, glorified body had all passed away, all who saw Him thereafter, and will yet see and know Him to the very last remnant of time, is purely by the testimony of the Scriptures, the work of the Holy Spirit in the mind and heart, and by the living witness of those receive Christ and preach His message by their words, life, and through the printed and spoken word—the living testimony.

Jesus Christ is the Pre-existent, Self-existent Son of God from everlasting to everlasting. In Him is life original, unborrowed, underived. "In the beginning *was* the Word, and the Word *was* with God, and the Word *was* God." John 1:1, KJV; NKJV. He and the Father stood side by side as they proclaimed the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai.

"Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God. . . . In speaking of His pre-existence, Christ carries back to dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him." – *Signs of the Times*, Aug. 29, 1900.

"While God's word speaks of the humanity of Christ when upon this earth, it also speaks decidedly of His pre-existence. The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with the Father. From everlasting He was the mediator of the covenant, the one whom all nations of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, if they accepted Him, were to be blessed. "The Word was with God, and the Word was God.' Before men or angels were created, the Word was with God, and was God." – *Review & Herald*, Apr. 5, 1906.

"Jesus declared, 'I am the resurrection and the life.' In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. 'He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son does not have life.' 1 John 5:12. The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life." – *Desire of Ages*, p. 530 (1898).

"When Israel came to Sinai, He took the occasion to refresh their minds in regard to His requirements. Christ and the Father standing side by side upon the mount, with solemn majesty, proclaimed the Ten Commandments." – *Historical Sketches*, p. 231 (1866).

- **The Father is the fullness of the Godhead bodily yet He is invisible to mortals.**

Does that mean that when those who are eternally saved, as determined at the end of the Investigative Judgment, who will then have been conferred the crown of immortality will then get to see the Father face to face? Think about it!

“God cannot be compared with the things His hands have made. These are mere earthly things, suffering under the curse of God because of the sins of man. The Father cannot be described by the things of earth. **The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight.**” - *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, pp. 62, 63 (1905).

“My presence shall go with thee’ (Exo. 33:14), was the promise given during the journey through the wilderness. This assurance was accompanied by a marvelous revelation of Jehovah’s character, which enabled Moses to proclaim to all Israel the goodness of God and to instruct them fully concerning the attributes of their **invisible King**. . . . Till the close of his long life of patient ministry Moses continued his exhortations to Israel to keep their eyes fixed on their divine Ruler.” - *My Life Today*, p. 288.

- **Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the express image of the Father’s person, is the fullness of the Godhead bodily and is the Father fully manifested to man and angels.**

“The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead *manifested*. The Word of God declares Him to be ‘the *express* image of His [the Father’s] person.’ Heb. 1: 3. [John 3: 16 quoted]. *Here is shown the personality of the Father.*” - *Ibid*.

“For centuries the Jews had vainly endeavored to show wherein the promise of God given by Haggai had been fulfilled; yet *pride and unbelief* blinded their minds to the true meaning of the prophet’s words. **The second temple was not honored with the cloud of Jehovah’s glory, but with the living presence of One in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily---who was God Himself manifest in the flesh. The ‘Desire of all nations’ had indeed come to His temple when the Man of Nazareth taught and healed in the sacred courts. In the presence of Christ, and in this only, did the second temple exceed the first in glory.** But Israel had put from her the proffered Gift of heaven. With the humble Teacher who had that day passed out from its golden gate, the glory had forever departed from the temple. Already were the Savior’s words fulfilled: ‘Your house is left unto you desolate.’ Matt. 23: 38” - *Great Controversy*, p. 24 (1911).

- **The Holy Spirit is also the fullness of the Godhead, but He does not have a body visible to the eyes of human beings for He is a Spirit.**

Does that mean that in heaven the angels who have never fallen do not also see the Holy Spirit? What do you think?

“*The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead*, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Savior. **There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers**---the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit---those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.” - *Ibid*.

John 3:16 is more particularly *a revelation of the personality of the Father*. Now read and contemplate on this familiar verse, asking God for a spiritual mind lest a less than spiritual consideration of it might lead into contempt. Read it now with the desire to know more of the personality of the Father in its expanded, allowable limits as revealed in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the only One who is His *express* image. Personality, according to *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (1942) is defined as the quality or state of being personal, or of being a person; personal existence or identity. It also means distinction or excellence of personal character; individuality.

### *Personality and power of the Holy Spirit*

While we cannot and never will see the Holy Spirit with our physical eyes, yet He is as much a Person as Jesus is but devoid of the personality of humanity and unencumbered by it, yet He *walks* on earth as Jesus did when He was on earth for thirty-three and a half years visiting individuals and places. One might be inclined to ask then, without being guilty of idle speculation presumptuous curiosity: Does that mean He has legs like ours? No, for as a Spirit He does not have a *body*, i.e., the body and its form as we know it but He certainly does have feelings and the *mind* of the Father and the Son.

“We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds.”- *Manuscript 66*, 1899. (From a talk to the students of Avondale School, Australia).

“The Holy Spirit is a person, for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. When this witness is borne, it carries with it its own evidence. At such times we believe and are sure that we are the children of God. . . The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God. ‘For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.’” - *Manuscript 20*, 1906.

“The Comforter is called ‘the Spirit of truth.’ His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, *and thus becomes the Comforter*. There is comfort and peace in the truth, *but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood*. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself.”- *Desire of Ages*, p. 671. See also 6BC 1053; Ev 615; MLT 36; TM 392.

This is how and why the Holy Spirit is called the Comforter. His work is to *define* and *maintain* the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth. And if the truth is abiding in the heart by the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit then there is comfort and peace in the heart and mind. The way the Holy Spirit defines and maintains the truth is through the written Word for it is He who inspired the holy men of God to write the Holy Scriptures. Biblical truth cannot be defined and maintained outside of these. All others are nothingness, counterfeits.

The Power of God in the Third Person. – “The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.” – *Special Testimonies*, Series A, No. 10, p. 37 (1897).

This better explains the nature of the unpardonable sin, as to why it is only against the Holy Spirit but is actually against the Godhead. The only power against evil and sin is of

and from God the Father. But it is only through the Holy Spirit, *who is the Spirit of Christ*, that we obtain this divine power when we ask, seek, and knock for it. Thus to grieve away the Holy Spirit, who alone can come *into our hearts*, is to grieve the Father and the Son. It is to grieve the Godhead.

### **Erroneous, spiritualistic representations of the Godhead**

“I am instructed to say, The sentiments of those who are searching for advanced scientific ideas are not to be trusted. Such representations as the following are made: ‘The Father is as the light invisible.’ ‘The Son is as the light embodied.’ ‘The Spirit is the light shed abroad.’ ‘The Father is like the dew, invisible vapor; the Son is like the dew gathered in beauteous form; the Spirit is like the dew fallen to the seat of life.’ Another representation: ‘The Father is like the invisible vapor; the Son is like the leaden cloud; the Spirit is the rain fallen and working in refreshing power.’

All these spiritualistic representations are simply nothingness. They are imperfect, untrue. They weaken and diminish the Majesty which no earthly likeness can be compared to. God cannot be compared to the things which His hands have made. These are mere earthly things suffering under the *curse* of God because of the *sins* of man. The Father cannot be described by the things of earth.” - *Evangelism* p. 614.

We are warned that while “the “mark of the beast” (the legislated Sunday law in the coming days) will be enforced upon all, free and bond, rich and poor, it is spiritualism that will “take the whole world captive.” Indeed, it already has. Every religion in the world believes, in one form or another, that the “soul is immortal.” This is the foundation of spiritualism; it was the very first sermon that Satan preached in the Garden of Eden. He told them, “Thou shalt *not* surely die,” even if you disobey God’s command. There is only one definition of sin in the Bible: the transgression of God’s law, His command, His word. 1 John 3: 4. Those who teach that all will be saved *in* their sins instead of *from* their sins, and assure instant transport of the “soul” to heaven at point of death are teaching spiritualism. They are captives and agents of Satan—until they allow themselves to be *delivered* from this delusion and accept this most fundamental Bible truth that that the soul, being the *person* itself, not a “disembodied spirit,” is not immortal. All sinners are mortal, subject to death and decay. The gift of eternal life, immortality, is conferred only upon those who have *overcome sin* in their lives while still alive. This eternal reward is given only at the resurrection of the just and righteous which takes place at Christ’s second coming.

### **The Godhead gave themselves to work out the plan of redemption**

“The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit *gave Themselves* to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order to carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin. What line can measure the depth of this love? God would make it impossible for man to say that He could have done more. With Christ He gave all the resources of heaven, that nothing may be wanting in the plan for man’s uplifting. Here is love—the contemplation of which should fill the soul with inexpressible gratitude!” - *Counsels on Health*, p. 222.

### **Man must form a union with the great threefold power of the Godhead**

“Those who come out of the world in spirit and in all practice may regard themselves as sons and daughters of God. They may believe His word as a child believes every word of his parents. Every promise is sure to him that believes. Those who unite with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who show by their lives that they are no longer following the course they followed before they united themselves with these divine instrumentalities, will receive the

wisdom from above. In order to deal righteously with the world, as members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King Christians must feel their need of a power which comes only from *the heavenly agencies who have pledged Themselves to work in their behalf.*

After we have formed a union with the threefold power, we shall regard our duty to the members of God's family with much more sacred awe than we have ever done before. This is a phase of religious reform that very few appreciate."- *E.G. White Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1102.

From these passages we learn 3 important things as follows:

(1) it is those who come out of the world *in spirit and practice* who may regard themselves as truly the sons and daughters of God. Spiritual Egypt in the Bible is a symbol of sin. Thus, *physically coming out* of Egypt is not the same as being *delivered from* Egypt. Ancient Israel came out of Egypt in the Exodus but the majority still had Egypt in their *hearts*. They murmured and complained about the simple food God provided and demanded to be returned to their fish, leeks, and garlic in Egypt even while God was feeding them with the bread of heaven, manna. Thus they perished in the Wilderness instead of crossing Jordan River and inheriting the earthly Promised Land 40 years after. Those who claim to "children of God" yet do not strive to come out of the world *in spirit and practice*, confidently saying, "I am already saved," may not have the right to claim to be children of God . Until they come out of spiritual Babylon in spirit and practice—the doctrines of men and the things of this world---they will not inherit heavenly Canaan and eternal life.

(2) the wisdom that is from above is given to those who unite with the Godhead; the evidence of this union being that they no longer follow the lifestyle they had before their conversion. The change is progressive, however, not instantaneous or overnight even as the work of overcoming and sanctification is a lifetime. The Godhead empowers and co-operates with those who are obedient, and continues to work for the conversion of the disobedient and unbelieving---until they commit the unpardonable sin

(3) we will have a different view of and attitude towards our fellow erring members of God's family for we will see them through the eyes of Jesus who came the save sinners.

Those only who are baptized in the prescribed manner of water immersion by the example set by Jesus, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, receive the pledge of three Persons of the Godhead. (6BC 1074). Jesus specified this to Nicodemus: "Unless you are baptized by water and the Spirit you cannot enter the kingdom of God." John 3: 5. Those who seek any other means of baptism, such as sprinkling, do not receive the pledge of the Godhead.

- **"For here are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one." 1 John 5: 7, 8, NKJV.**

I find it a bit strange that the *Scripture Index to the E.G. White Writings* (in my library) do not include any of her published comments on 1 John 5: 7, 8--a powerful Scripture passage in support of the three Persons of the Godhead. If she did, these would have certainly been included by the publishers. If she did not, one wonders why. Maybe the Holy Spirit did not move upon her to do so is my only conclusion.

- **"A three-fold cord is not quickly broken." Eccl. 4: 12.**

Likewise, there are no published comments on this Scripture passage by E.G. White. But the principle and the context draw no other conclusion than the intent here is to show the value of true friends, and the more of such the better. It says: “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. Again if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone? Though one may be overpowered by one another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.” Eccl. 4: 9-12, NKJV.

- **“In the mouth or testimony of two or three witnesses truth is established.”**

See Deut. 17: 6; 19:15; Eccl. 4:12; Matt. 8: 16; 18:20; John 8:17; 1 Cor. 14; 28, 29; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5: 19; Heb. 10: 28.

Jesus always had at least three disciples with Him whenever a particular aspect of His mission, teachings, and experience were to be emphasized for later generations, such as His transfiguration, etc. Hence, the first four books of the New Testament, authored by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John respectively, are called the Synoptic Gospels. However, the use of the term “Gospel” to refer to any of the 4 books of the NT is extra-Biblical. Some see a suggestion of such use in Mark 1:1. So says the *SDA Bible Dictionary, Commentary Reference Series*, vol. 8.

We read in Matt. 17:1-7 and Mark 9: 2-8 that after 6 days that Jesus was transfigured or glorified. He takes with Him 3 witnesses, Peter, James, and John. These 3 disciples, in turn, also witness 2 persons who represent the 2 classes of people who will be inherit eternal life either through resurrection or translation: **Moses**, “the meekest of all men” (Num. 12: 3, 7), who tasted death (Num. 20:10, 11; Deut. 32: 48-52; 34:1-5) but was resurrected by Christ himself, and **Elijah**, (who with Enoch earlier) represents the 144,000 of Rev. 7: 1-4; 3: 7-12; 14:1 -5—who are translated to heaven without tasting the first death.

- **“I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.”** Rev. 16:13.

John says further, “For they are the spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. . . . And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.” Verses 14, 16. This “battle of the great day of God Almighty” takes place *after* the close of Earth’s probation since this is already the sixth plague (or “bowl,” KJV) when the spiritual Euphrates dries up (verse 12) and brings on the worldwide Battle of Armageddon.

I will be quoting extensively from a tract entitled “Armageddon, The Battle of That Great Day of God Almighty,” pp. 19-24 (no copyright on this edition, published in Melbourne, Victoria) by the late L. F. Were, Australian Bible scholar and evangelist, as follows (all emphasis and italicized words in the original):



**“Miracles’ precede Armageddon.** One of the outstanding features leading up to Armageddon is that ‘miracles’ will be performed by ‘the spirits of devil’ working through the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. See Rev. 16: 13, 14; Matt. 24: 24; 2 Thess. 2: 9-11; Rev. 13: 13, 14; etc. The ‘miracles’ which the ‘spirits of devils’ perform in conjunction with the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet have *no reference to military matters*). These ‘miracles’ or ‘signs’ mentioned in the Scripture demonstrate the *spiritual* power of the persons who perform them—whether of God or whether of Satan. Although the Greek word for ‘miracles’—‘*semeion*’—is employed no less than 70 times in the New Testament, not once is it used in a national or a military sense.

**“Preparation for Armageddon.** In the midst of the Revelator’s description of the gathering to the slaughter of Armageddon, our Lord says: ‘Behold, I come as thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, let he walk naked, and they see his shame.’ Rev. 16: 15. Thus we see again that the Battle of Armageddon does not refer to a military battle between nations, *for at the time the evils spirits are gathering the people to fight against God*, His truth, and His church, our Lord calls upon us to watch and keep our garments when Armageddon comes. Then, mercy’s door would have closed, the Savior’s mediatorial work will have been completed. Armageddon comes in ‘that great day of God Almighty’—that day of wrath wherein there will be no mercy extended. The watching and keeping of garments must be done *now*. The gathering to Armageddon is now in progress, but it reaches its *culmination* at the time of the sixth plague.

**“The symbolical gathering to Armageddon.** The *gathering* to Armageddon is also understood *symbolically*. In his notes to Revelation, Rev. Albert Barnes says: ‘To gather them. Not *literally* to assemble them all in one place, but to so *unite* them that it might be *represented* as an assembling of the hosts of battle. . . . there will be a *mustering of spiritual forces*; there will be a combination and unity of opposition against the truth. . . . *as if* the forces of the earth, marshaled by kings and rulers, were assembled in some great battlefield, where the destiny of the world was to be decided. . . . The meaning here is, that there would be, *as it were*, a decisive battle which would determine the question of the prevalence of true religion.’

“In the Greek, the word for ‘gather’ in Rev. 16:14, and ‘gathered’ in Rev. 16: 16; 19:19’ etc.—‘sunago’—is derived from ‘sun,’ the first definition of which Dr. Strong, in his ‘Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible,’ gives as ‘*union*.’

“The prophecies clearly portray that a short period of persecution must come before Armageddon. The ‘beast’ is quickly obtaining more and more power, and world events (hastened by his intrigue) will shortly greatly accelerate his temporary acquisition of power among the so-called nations of Christendom. The Protestant Reformation was made a powerful spiritual movement among men because it was sustained by clear expositions of the prophecies outlining the work of the papal apostasy. Rome’s only successful means of sabotaging this Heaven-sent revelation was by a masterpiece of strategy; by causing to be circulated among Protestants a counter-interpretation to that proclaimed by the Reformers: the Futuristic system, which refers to the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the ‘beast’ to the future and *Palestine*. The Futuristic conception declares that prophecies relating to the Antichrist making ‘*war*’ on the ‘saints’ refer to a person who is yet to arise and do his deadly work against the *literal Jews* in Palestine. Futurism teaches that all the things in Revelation pertaining to ‘Israel’ are to be taken ‘literally—including the ‘place called Armageddon.’ ‘Armageddon,’ they say, is a literal, military battle during which the Lord delivers the *literal Jewish* remnant in Palestine

from their national enemies led by the beast and the false prophet. Protestants should see that by teaching this futuristic conception of 'Armageddon' as a military war in Palestine, they not only weaken the work of proclaiming God's Message concerning 'the beast,' but by diverting people's attention to a military war in Palestine they shield the Papacy and further its rise to power. It should be thundered forth that 'Armageddon' will be God's 'war' against the 'beast' and all who follow him."

"The 'beast' (who is exercising such tremendous power among the nations of Christendom to-day) will soon be strong enough to take a stronger course of action. Circumstances will enable 'the beast' to exercise power through the State to persecute those who will not yield to certain religious dogmas. As shown in a previous outline, the river Euphrates—Babylon's river---is employed in the Scriptures as *the symbol of the persecution* of God's people. The drying up of the Euphrates—the persecuting river—is mentioned in association with the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16: 12-16) because 'Armageddon' will be 'the battle. . . of God Almighty' against those persecuting His people. 'The beast' and 'the false prophet' will unite (Rev. 19:19), and the dragon---the State---will *'agree'* (Rev. 17:17) with them in their persecution of the church. But that *unity* will lead them to their destruction, for by uniting to bring persecution and death to the people of God they will 'make war with the Lamb, and *the Lamb shall overcome them*: for He is the Lord of lords, a King of kings [a title He wears in the 'war' against the kings of the earth, and the beast, and the false prophet, see Rev. 19: 11, 14, 16, 19, 20]; and they are with Him [i.e., gathered or united to Him] are called, and chosen, and faithful.' Rev. 17:14. . . ."

**“Armageddon’---God’s battle against the ‘beast’ for endeavoring to compel obedience to false worship.** From whatever angle of the Scriptures Armageddon is considered it is evident that it concerns the matter of false worship. Armageddon is described under the sixth plague, and plagues are poured out upon Babylon. Rev. 16: 19. The Lord distinctly terms then 'her plagues.' Rev. 18: 4, 8, 9; etc. The drying up of the Euphrates, under the sixth plague, has distinct reference back to the overthrow of ancient Babylon by the strategy of Cyrus in drying up of the Euphrates, when he diverted the river from its normal bed through Babylon. See marginal references of Rev. 16:12 (Jeer. 50: 38; 51:36); and also Isa. 44: 27, 28, etc. Ancient Babylon was founded by Nimrod. Gen. 10:8-10. The name 'Nimrod' means 'rebellious.' Babylon means 'confusion.' Gen. 11: 9, margin. From the time Nimrod, 'the rebellious one' founded Babylon we can trace Babylon in the Scriptures as the kingdom of rebellion. She comes to her end in the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:16), which is the 13<sup>th</sup> (the Bible number of rebellion) time Megiddo, meaning 'slaughter' or 'destruction' is mentioned in the Bible. See Josh. 12:21; 17:11; Judges 1: 25; 5:19; 1 Kings 4: 12; 9: 15; 2 Kings 9: 27; 23:30; 1 Chron. 7: 29; 2 Chron. 35:22; Zech. 12: 11; Rev. 16: 16. In the Revelation the 'dragon,' the first mention of the trinity of evil leading the world to Armageddon (see Rev. 16: 13-16) is mentioned 13 times. See Rev. 17; 13: 2, 4, 11; 16: 13; 20:2. The number 13 is not a national, but a *spiritual* number---the number of *rebellion against God*. Armageddon is not a national conflict but God's answer to a war of *rebellion against Him*.”

“The Revelation plainly declares that the our Lord comes with His 'armies which were in heaven' to 'make war' against the *beast*, and the kings of the earth, and 'their armies' because of their endeavor to deceive and compel people into allegiance to a false system of *worship*. This 'war' concerns 'the mark of the 'beast'---a religious institution---and the worshipping of 'his image.' See Rev. 19:19, 20. In the Revelation our Lord warns us against worshipping the beast and his image. This warning is mentioned 6 times---Rev.

13: 15; 14: 9, 11; 16:2; 19: 20; 20: 6. The people in ancient Babylon were commanded to 'worship' the golden *image* that Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. This fact is stated 6 times---Dan. 3: 5, 7, 10, 12, 14, 18. Then, it was a matter of rendering homage to the Commandments of God or obeying the despotic king of Babylon. In the anti-typical decree of the king of spiritual Babylon all will be commanded to obey the decree of the State to worship the *spiritual 'image* of the beast,' or be killed."

**"The two symbolical gatherings are now in progress.** There are 2 gatherings of unions, taking place in the world to-day: the gathering of God's people out of Babylon (Rev. 18: 4; Isa. 11: 11, 12; Eph. 2: 21, 22, etc.) under the banner of loyalty to God's government (those who obey the commandments of God receive *His mark*, see Deut. 6: 2, 8; Exo. 31:13, 17; Eze. 9:4-6; 20: 12, 20; Rev. 7: 1-4), and the gathering or unity of those who follow the lead of the Papacy in exalting 'the *mark of the beast*.'

"If the gathering and the battle referred to military events after probation for the human family is closed it could have no spiritual value to the church either now or then. But if it were of no present spiritual value to the church it would not be mentioned in God's Word. The belief that the work of the 'unclean spirits. . . the 'spirit of devils' (Rev. 16: 13, 14) is to gather the nations to Palestine *after* the 6<sup>th</sup> plague is one of 'the wiles of the devil' (Eph. 6: 11) to blind eyes to the great importance of the fact that the *gathering* to the slaughter of Armageddon is now in progress. Clearly taught in the Scriptures is the solemn truth that there are two 'gatherings' *now* in progress---a gathering of those who love the Lord into His church for salvation, and a gathering for destruction of those who are disobedient to His Commandments."

"When God's people heed the call: 'Come *out* of her [Babylon] My people' (Rev. 18:4), they '*gather* together. . . from the 4 corners of the earth.' Isa. 11: 11, 12. The meaning of the word 'gather' (mentioned in so many of the last day prophecies---see Isa. 54:15; 60:4; Eze. 38:8; 39: 27, 28; Joel 3: 2, 11; Zech. 14: 2, 3, 12; Rev. 16: 14, 16; 19:19; 20:8) is 'union,' 'unite.' It is by this spiritual 'union' that believers in the Lord are now being 'built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.' Eph. 2:21, 22."

"Commenting upon the 'gathering' of the tares (see Matt. 13: 30, 40), one writer [E.G. White] says: "Can we not see how earnestly Satan is at work binding the tares in bundles, *uniting* the elements of his kingdom, that he may gain control of the world? The work of binding up the tares is going forward far more rapidly than we imagine.' "They [men] have united. . . They are represented in God's Word as being bound in bundles to be burned. Satan is *uniting* his forces for perdition.' The spirits of devils are already marshalling the nations to fight against the government of Heaven; already in progress is the gathering of God's people in preparation for the closing conflict. In this very hour it is of vital importance for all to know these solemn facts. The watching and keeping of the garments (Rev. 16:15) applies now; to the time *before* the close of probation; to the time when the evil spirits are abroad deceiving the people regarding obedience to the law of God; to the time when Satan is 'gathering' or 'uniting' the world in rebellion against the claims of God's Law. It is now that God's people must hold fast to the righteousness of Christ---the garments with which they are clothed---and to 'the Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.' Rev. 14:12. Through the false teaching of the Palestinian 'Armageddon' Satan endeavors to blind people to the Bible teaching that it is *now* that we are to 'gather' or 'unite' with Christ in His 'warfare' against evil. The reason the prophecy places the work of evil spirits and the *gathering* of the nations to the slaughter of 'Armageddon' . . . the battle of the great day of God Almighty' at the end of the sixth

plague is because that it is *then* that God's wrath is poured out in its fullness; that it is the time for the final outcome of their deception.

"The 'gathering' pictured in Rev. 16: 13, 14 does not refer to some sudden military maneuver by nations to [the valley of ] Megiddo but refers to the culmination of the work of deception carried on through the years by Satan as he prepares to '*unite*' the world to '*join*' him in his 'last struggle' against God. By the time of the sixth plague 'the wicked have *fully* united with Satan in his warfare against God."

"Through Isaiah, God says to His church: 'Behold, they shall surely *gather together*, but not by Me; whosoever shall *gather together against thee* shall fall for thy sake.' Isa. 54:15. Writing of the progress of the work of the church in making known the gospel to the world, the Lord says: 'Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all *they gather themselves together*, they come to thee; thy sons shall come from afar.' Isa. 60: 3, 4, etc. This great gathering foretold by Isaiah does not refer to a literal gathering of people to literal Zion (see Isa. 59:20), but a spiritual gathering to the Lord Jesus (a spiritual uniting with our Lord by the acceptance of His gospel) Who now reigns in His church, the spiritual Zion. Since the rejection of the Jewish *nation* as God's chosen people, and Jerusalem as His chosen city, the church is referred to as God's nation' (see Matt. 21:43; 1 Pet. 2:9), His spiritual 'Zion.' See 1 Pet. 2: 5, 6. Compare Joel 2: 32 with Rom. 10:13; Isa. 28:16 with 1 Pet. 2: 6-8; Isa. 59: 20 with Rom. 11: 26, etc."

"The church is *symbolically* represented as being in Mount Zion with the Lord Jesus. Rev. 14:1. By a spiritual *union* they are just as much '*with Him*' (Rev. 17: 14) *as if* they were there literally. When the kings of the earth—the governments of the earth---'make war with the Lamb' His church is said to be '*with Him*.' See Rev. 17: 12-14. Thus the gathering of the nations to make war against the Lamb and His church is not a *literal* gathering to Mount Zion in the *literal* city of Jerusalem, but a *uniting* of the elements of Satan's kingdom into concerted action against the Lord's church, just as *if* there were two armies involved; one in Jerusalem, and the other gathered outside of the 'the valley of Jehoshaphat'---the valley of "God's judgment."

"In Rev. 11:2 the church is *symbolized* under the figure of the city of Jerusalem. During the Dark Ages the church was trodden underfoot for the 42 months, or 1,260 years of papal supremacy. The Revelator describes the slaughter of the rebellious, who 'make war with the Lamb. . . and they that are *with Him*' in the spiritual city, Jerusalem, as bunches of ripened grapes that have been *gathered* 'into the great winepress of the wrath of God.' Rev. 14: 20."

"As the enemies of God and His church are not *literal* bunches of grapes, their *gathering* is not a literal gathering. God command the angels: '*Gather* the clusters of the vine of the earth [i.e., the *world-wide* vineyard]. . . and the angel thrust in his sickle into the *earth*, and *gathered* the vine of the earth, and cast into the *great* winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was *trodden without the city*.' Rev. 14: 18-20. Those who are slaughtered in the destruction of Armageddon are said to perish '*without the city*'---the spiritual Zion, the spiritual Jerusalem. By the light shining from the New Testament we know that this is the meaning of the prophecy found in Joel 2: 32 and Joel 3. Zion in Joel 2: 32 is interpreted in Rom. 10:13 to refer to the church. 'For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be *deliverance*.' Joel 2: 32. Thus '*deliverance*' is assured those who, heeding the call of Christ, 'come out' of spiritual Babylon and enter into the *spiritual* city of Jerusalem."

"The call of God is being sent to many, many thousands of God-fearing people who are still in Babylon: 'Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and

that ye receive not of *her* plagues.’ Rev. 18:4. The battle of Armageddon is the last of the plagues to fall upon *Babylon*. See Rev. 16. Before the plagues begin to fall God’s message is to be proclaimed with mighty power. See Revelation 18. The final and mighty call of God is heard by His faithful people living up to the light they have, and many thousands come out of Babylon and heed the call to obey God’s commandments and receive His sign [seal, mark] of approval. Rev. 7: 1-4. Satan’s anger knows no bounds, and with great wrath he makes ‘war’ on the last portion of the church, who are then fortified by the Spirit of God to stand in the hour of trial. See Rev. 12:17; 18:1; 3; 10, etc. Satan makes ‘war’ on ‘the remnant’ of Jesus Christ.’ Rev. 12:17. Satan works through the State (the dragon) to bring distress to the church. In this way he persecuted the church in the days of pagan and papal Rome. The prophecies are clear and definite that in the final crisis the kings of the earth—the governments of the various lands---will give their power and strength to the beast in a matter upon which they can all ‘agree,’ namely, the enforcement of a papal institution. See Rev. 17:12, 13, 17; 19: 19, 20. By comparing Rev. 16: 13 with Rev. 19: 19, 20, we see that ‘*the dragon, who is associated with the beast and false prophet in leading the world to Armageddon*,’ refers to ‘*the kings*’---the governments---who give their strength and power in the enforcement of ‘the mark of the beast.’ World conditions will become so desperate that, with the aid of evil spirits (Rev. 16:13), desperate measures will be adopted in the endeavor to compel people to receive ‘the mark of the beast’ as a means of bringing about world peace and prosperity.”

“The death penalty will be threatened. The people of God who are true to the call of Christ will be faced with Satan’s anger and his threat of death. Thus the world will be brought to a crisis, for the church is the apple of God’s eye; it is His earthly treasure upon which He bestows His supreme regard. His anger is aroused to save His people. “The kings of the earth and *the whole world*’ meet their doom in ‘the battle of the great *day of God Almighty*.’ Rev. 16:14. Armageddon brings defeat and destruction to God’s enemies; but it is the day of triumph for Christ and His church.” (end of quote).

In *Great Controversy*, pp. 624 (1911 ed), E. G. White wrote by inspiration that it is at this dreadful time, at the climax of the sixth plague, that the crowning act in the great drama of deception will finally take place (emphasis mine):

“Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon revealed *in the heavens*, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. The spirit of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven, By these agencies [evil spirits], rulers and subjects will be alike deceived. Persons will arise pretending to be Christ Himself, and claiming the title and worship which belongs to the world’s Redeemer. *They will perform wonderful works of healing and will profess to have revelations from heaven contradicting the testimony of the Scriptures.*

As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Savior’s advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In *different parts of the earth*, Satan will manifest himself men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Rev. 1: 13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: Christ has come! Christ has come!’ The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths

which the Savior uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have *changed* the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the *seventh day* are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion. Like the Samaritans who were deceived by Simon Magus, the multitudes, from the least to the greatest, give heed to these sorceries, saying, This is ‘the great power of God.’

But the people of God [at this very time] will not be misled. The teachings of this false Christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures. His blessings are pronounced upon the worshipers of the beast and his image, the very class upon whom the Bible declares that God’s unmingled wrath shall be poured out.

And furthermore, *Satan is not permitted to counterfeit the manner of Christ’s advent.* The Savior has warned His people against deception upon this point, and has clearly foretold the manner of His second coming. [Matt. 24: 24-27, 31; 25: 31; Rev. 1; 7; 1 Thess. 4: 16, 17 quoted]. This coming there is *no* possibility of counterfeiting. *It will be universally known—witnessed by the whole world.*

*Only* those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the whole world captive. By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in his disguise. To *all* the testing time will come. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed. Are the *people of God* now so firmly established upon His word that they will not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible and the Bible only?

Satan will, if possible, prevent them from obtaining a *preparation* to stand in that day. [How?] He will so arrange affairs as to hedge up their way, entangle them with earthly treasures, cause them to carry a heavy, wearisome burden, that their hearts may be *overcharged with the cares of this life* and the day of trial may come upon them as a thief.

As the decree issued by the various rulers of *Christendom* [not the Muslim nations!] against commandment-keepers shall withdraw the protection of government and abandon them those who desire their destruction, the people of God will flee from the cities and villages and associate together in companies dwelling in the most desolate and solitary places. Many will find refuge in the strongholds of the mountains. Like the Christians of the Piedmont valleys, they will make the high places of the earth their sanctuaries and will thank God for the ‘munitions of the rocks.’ Isa. 33: 16.”

**Important Note:** All these events described take place during the *sixth plague*, and the plagues fall on spiritual Babylon and the whole earth only *after* the close of probation! Moreover, we are told that, like the Jewish nation who “knew not that God’s presence was finally withdrawn from them,” “when the irrevocable decision of the sanctuary has been pronounced and the destiny of the world has been forever fixed, the inhabitants of the earth *will know it not*. The forms of religion will be *continued* by a people from whom the Spirit of God has been *finally* withdrawn; and the satanic zeal with which the prince of evil will inspire them for the accomplishment of his malignant designs, will bear the semblance of zeal for God.” *Great Controversy*, p. 614.

Therefore the primary value of these revelations, are to show God’s people *today*, what will transpire in the future and the *preparation* necessary. God is fully in charge, though at times it appears He isn’t. Truth will triumph gloriously *in the end*. If we are not living at that time (only the 144,000 are), it is our *character preparation now, during the Investigative Judgment* going forward *now* that prepares us for these final events. It is as if we are already part of the faithful ones at *that* time. May God help us *now* to *overcome* so that we shall be found among the final, faithful remnant people!

