

"Watchman, what of the night?"

"The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you,
the hour and the end!"

Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)

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Editor's Preface

With this issue of WVN, we begin our 32nd year of continuous publication. Much has transpired during these three decades plus, both within the Church and within the world. This preface is being written just a few days after the American midterm election. If ever an election revealed the breakdown of the moral fiber of America, especially on the West and East coast this one did. The lifestyle of the days before the Flood, and the the culture of Sodom are the same forces which seek to dominate the American scene. We need to remember that Jesus said that this lifestyle and culture would mark the time just before His return. It is no longer a mere cliché to say that we have reached the end times. The devil indeed has come down knowing that he hath but a short time. The tragic factor is that the professed people of God with all the enlightenment of prophecy are still planning for "great days" in the 21st Century! The moral collapse in America coupled with the growing concern of the Religious Right foreshadows a "time of trouble" in which enforced righteousness will bring about the final events so long envisioned in the prophetic Word.

As we face the year ahead, we need to take stock of the basic understandings which marked the beginnings of God's final movement in the earth. We dare not forget that the Biblical hermeneutic of typology played an important role in the Millerite Movement, and in the Seventh-day Adventist perceptions of what actually took place in 1844. The Parable of Jesus in Matthew 25:1-13 did not end in 1844; it only began. We are in its ending time now. Since the days of Jesus, the word, "church," which we use to translate the Greek word, εκκλησια, meaning, "called out," has meant different things to different people. How do we relate it to today's proliferation within the community of Adventism? All of these "basic understandings" cry out for an answer. Is there one? We think so.

The discussion of Paul's theology in the Corinthian letters, which was begun in last month's issue of WVN, will be concluded in the February issue. Some planned articles for 1999 had to be rescheduled.



Basic Understandings

The underpinnings of Adventism rest on the prophecy of Daniel 8:14, typology associated with the Hebrew sanctuary and its services, and the parable of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 25. (See *The End of Historicism* by Kai Arasola, pp. 90, 128) Commenting on typology, Dr Arasola writes - "The typology of the NT is both horizontal, referring to historical fulfillments, and vertical, illustrating things considered as heavenly realities. An example of horizontal typology is in I Cor. 10 where Paul regards things from the Exodus and wilderness itinerary as symbols of various things in Christian experience" (p. 162) [Regarding vertical typology, he states - "Some of the clearest examples of vertical typology are found in the book of Hebrews" (p. 163)]

One horizontal type drawn by Paul from the Wilderness wanderings will preface our discussion of Basic Understandings. He wrote - "Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer" (I Cor. 10:10). This is referring to the experience found in Numbers 14 where it is written: "And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness" (ver. 2)

This murmuring and discontent was the result of the report of ten of the twelve spies sent into the land of Canaan to search out the land. While Paul does not draw specifics from this experience or any other which he cites, he does leave the whole open for typological instruction. "They are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come" (v. 11). There is one aspect to the murmuring experience at Kadesh-barnea which we need to give careful consideration. God in judgment declared - "Ye shall know my breach of promise" (14:34). The margin reads - "altering of my purpose." God intended to take the children of Israel into the Land of Promise at Kadesh-barnea, the point to which they had then come after leaving Sinai. Instead they went back into the wilderness for forty more years of wanderings till that generation died. They finally crossed over the Jordan at Jericho.

In the fifth volume of the *Testimonies for the Church*, there are a series of statements which associates the Church as "modern Israel" and compares its experiences with those of ancient Israel in the wilderness. (All of these statements were written in the decade leading up to 1888) They read:

I have been shown that the spirit of the world is fast leaving the church. You are following the same path as did ancient Israel. (pp. 76-76)

The sin of ancient Israel was in disregarding the expressed

will of God and following their own way according to the leadings of unsanctified hearts. Modern Israel are fast following in their footsteps and the displeasure of the Lord is surely resting upon them. (p. 94)

Satan's snares are laid for us as verily as they were laid for the children of Israel just prior to their entrance into the land of Canaan. We are repeating the history of that people." (p. 160)

[While this last reference alludes to the time after the forty years of wandering, it does add to the conclusion that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was perceived as "Modern Israel" by the Messenger of the Lord and thus subject to the type-antitype analogy in I Corinthians 10. (See The Exodus and Advent Movement in Type and Antitype by Taylor G. Bunch. This has just been republished by Teach Services, Brushton, NY 12916)]

We reached our Kadesh-barnea at Minneapolis in 1888. God sent to His Church a report from the Land of Promise of the glorious redemption in Christ Jesus through faith in His righteousness. What broke out in the camp of modern Israel? - rebellion. The reaction to the report of "two spies" who brought forth evidences of the "fruit" of the Heavenly Land of Promise has been noted as a matter of record in the original edition of *1888 Re-Examined*. Quoting from the Writings, they wrote:

I (Ellen White) can never forget the experience which we had in Minneapolis, of the things which were revealed to me in regard to the spirit that controlled men, the words spoken, the actions done in obedience to the powers of evil... They were moved at the meeting by another spirit, and they knew not that God had sent these young men to bear a special message to them which they treated with ridicule and contempt, not realizing that the heavenly intelligences were looking upon them.

Wieland and Short rightly concluded - "Thus did modern Israel, fondly expecting to be vindicated before the world by a display of supernatural power in the long-expected 'loud cry' actually do despite to the Spirit of grace, and despised the riches of His goodness." (A Warning and Its Reception, p. 17)

Following the rejection of the God-sent message of Righteousness by Faith at Minneapolis, a series of crises followed, even as in the case of ancient Israel as they returned to the Wilderness (See Numbers 16 & 20). The organizational struggles which climaxed in 1901 and 1903 grew out of the rejection of the message of 1888. (See *Testimonies for Ministers*, pp. 362-363) Of this trend, Ellen White would write to P. T. Magan:

We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel, but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own

wrong course of action. (M-184-1901)

The fact that we are still here proves the accuracy this possibility. The possibility has become a reality. We face the necessity of accurately analyzing what did happen, and its significance for us as we stand on the eve of the Third Millennium of the Christian Era. We face the question - Will the final events be now as they would have been had the end come at the close of the 19th Century? Or, to ask the question in another way - Will the "altering of the Divine Purpose" affect the final events in a way similar to the way the course of the history of the Children of Israel was effected by the insubordination at Kadesh-barnea?

Beyond question, the Seventh Month Movement, out of which Adventism originated, taught that that Movement was the fulfilment of Jesus' parable-prophecy of Matthew 25. This is attested to in *The Great Controversy* which reads:

The parable of the ten virgins of Matthew 25 also illustrates the experience of the Adventist people. In Matthew 24..., Christ had pointed out some of the most important events in the history of the world and of the church from His first to His second advent... After this He spoke of His coming in His kingdom, and related the parable describing the two classes of servants who look for His appearing. Chapter 25 opens with the words, "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins." Here is brought to view the church living in the last days, the same that is pointed out in the close of Chapter 24. (p. 393; writer's emphasis)

In the parable of Matthew 25 the time of waiting and slumber is followed by the coming of the bridegroom. This was in accordance with the arguments just presented, both from prophecy and from the types. They carried strong conviction of their truthfulness; and the "midnight cry" was heralded by thousands of believers. Like a tidal wave the movement swept over the land. (p. 400)

Simply stated, those involved in the Seventh Month Movement, believed that the whole of the parable of the ten virgins applied to their experience. They could reason in no other way because they believed that Jesus would return October 22, 1844, the 10th day of the 7th month. Thus all prophecies of events prior to the return of Jesus would be fulfilled in their entirety. But if we continue to so believe as they did, we will err because we will fail to take into consideration the continuance of time, and the application of that parable as the scroll unrolls. Here is a critical area for study which left unresolved will continue to promote the disunity and continued confusion which marks the various segments in Adventism today.

The parable is twofold in its message. There are two calls to go forth to meet the Bridegroom, the first implied, the second explicit. Actually the lesson intended by the parable does not begin to unfold, until the first call is an ac-

complished fact. It is stated in the Greek aorist (past tense - "Then... ten virgins ... took their lamps, and went forth (εξήθον) to meet the bridegroom" (Matt. 25:1) Then Jesus describes *how* they went forth: five being "wise" took oil with them; five foolishly did not. However, after coming out as a united group - all ten - they "slumbered and slept" (ver. 5). The story as it unfolds indicates that at "midnight" a call from *outside* the sleeping virgins arouses them declaring - "Behold, the bridegroom; be going out (εξερχεσθε) to a meeting of him" (v. 6; literal) This verb is in the present tense indicating the focus of the parable on the time of the second call to go out to meet the bridegroom.

Ellen White was conscious of this factor and noted it in connection with the 1888 experience. She wrote:

I was confirmed in all I had stated in Minneapolis, that a reformation must go through the churches. Reforms must be made, for spiritual weakness and blindness were upon the people who had been blessed with great light and precious opportunities and privileges. As reformers they had come out [notice the past tense] of the denominational churches, but they now act a part similar to that which the churches acted. We hoped that there would not be the necessity for another coming out [present tense]. While we will endeavor to keep the 'unity of the Spirit' in the bonds of peace, we will not with pen and voice cease to protest against bigotry. (Ms. Release 1216, pp. 5-6; 1888 Material, Vol. I, pp. 357-357)

This statement says much. While the Adventist Church was not Babylon ("the denominational churches"), if she did not reform, but continued in the path of "Babylon," it would produce "the necessity for another coming out." Then in writing of the first Tasmanian Campmeeting in 1896, she interjects the concept that such a coming out will become a reality. She wrote:

My mind was carried into the future, when the signal will be given, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." But some will have delayed to obtain the oil for replenishing their lamps, and too late they will find that character, which is represented by the oil, is not transferable. (R&H, Feb. 11, 1896)

This revelation is saying in simplest language possible that there is to be a second coming out. There will be a division among the "Ten Virgins." It will not be a separation from the "denominational churches" which marked the initiation of the Ten Virgins into one corporate body. It will be a separation within the "Virgins." It will take character to respond to the "signal" and come out a second time. In 1896, the Spirit speaking through "the messenger of the Lord" indicated that it was yet future. What was then future is now present.

Further in 1901, the same year she was to indicate to P. T. Magan that because of insubordination our entrance into

"the land of Canaan" would be delayed, she conveyed at the close of a letter to Dr. J. H. Kellogg the necessity to study the prophecy of Jesus found in Luke 21. Her words were:

"The words of Revelation 18 will be fulfilled. [The specific verses are not given, so the whole of the chapter must be assumed] Is not this description enough to cause all who read to fear and tremble? But those who do not love the light, who will not come to the light lest their deeds shall be reproved, will not follow on to know the Lord. By their attitude they say, I want not thy way, Lord; I want my own way.

But God has given His object lesson. If the world will not heed, will not the people of God take heed? In the twenty-first chapter of Luke, Christ foretold what was to come upon Jerusalem; with it He connected the scenes which were to take place in the history of this world just prior to coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (MS. Rel., #1102, pp. 10-11: Letter 20, 1901)

Already in 1898 the Pacific Press had published a book by James Edson White, *The Coming King*, which commented on the prophecy of Jesus as given in Luke. Edson White wrote - "We also read that 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.' Luke 21:24. Jerusalem has never again come into the possession of the Jews, and will not until 'the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.' This will be when the work of the gospel is finished." (p. 98)

The counsel was not heeded, and the exegesis given Luke 21: 24 by James Edson White was left undeveloped. In 1944, the same Pacific Press published a paperback by J. C. Stevens titled - *Palestine in Prophecy*. This was given wide circulation as a book of the month by the Voice of Prophecy. It closed with the sentence - "Palestine and Jerusalem do not have a bright future in this present world, and those who are holding the hope of national restoration for the Jews are following a theological will-o'-wisp." (p. 97) Again in 1947, another paperback, *The Jews and Palestine*, came from the Pacific Press, this time written by Roy F. Cottrell. He declared - "The God of heaven who overthrew the city and nation and who because of their apostasy dispersed the inhabitants to the ends of the earth, forever settles the question of a complete return and restitution in old Canaan by asserting that it 'cannot be.'" (p. 61) Yet one year later, Israel once more became a State. Was this a fulfilment of Bible Prophecy? No! But "coming events cast their shadows before." (See *Desire of Ages*, p. 636)

God was beginning to set His hand a second time "to recover the remnant of His people." God convicted again two young men to re-examine the Message of 1888, and to call the attention of the leadership of the Church in 1950 to the results the rejection of that message had brought upon

the people of God. The Bible Conference called in 1952 had as its main objective to show that the Church did proclaim the message of Righteousness by Faith (*Our Firm Foundation*, Vol. II, pp. 616-617), and thus blunt the charge made by Wieland and Short. However, during this Conference, the Church's attention was redirected to the prophecy of Luke 21:24, and the exegesis as given by James Edson White was enlarged.

Arthur S. Maxwell, in his presentation of the "Imminence of Christ's Second Coming," listed three areas of "Unfulfilled Prophecy" from his viewpoint in time (1952). One of these then, unfulfilled prophecies was Luke 21:24. He stated - "The recent dramatic restoration of the nation of Israel focused the attention of mankind once more on Palestine." (*ibid.*, p. 230) Here is a reversal of the interpretation given the previous decade, and a tacit admission that our prophetic exegesis had been faulty in certain aspects. Observing that this event was not "in fulfilment of the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," Maxwell said, "however, there is one prophecy concerning Palestine that we should all be watching with special care," and he quoted Luke 21:24.

As Maxwell reviewed how victorious "the forces of Israel" were "in every other part of Palestine," he observed that "they failed to take the most dazzling objective of all. Mysteriously they were held back from achieving this most cherished goal, this culminating triumph, as by an unseen hand." Then he asked - "What could be the reason?" And his own answer was - "Only that the times of the Gentiles are not yet fulfilled." He cited an experience of ancient Israel where because "the iniquity of the Amorites" was "not yet full" (Gen. 15:16); they were not permitted to enter Palestine. He concluded - "it may well be that the same principle applies today, on a wider scale. If so, then Jerusalem is to remain trodden down by Gentiles till the probationary time of all Gentiles has run out." (pp. 230-231)

From this date - 1952 - to the fulfilment of Luke 21:24 in 1967, the agitation over the 1888 Message has paralleled in time. (See *A Warning and Its Reception* for the reaction of the Church to the allegations made in *1888 Re-Examined*, and the responses of Wieland and Short.) In 1967, in the same month that Jerusalem came again under Jewish control, a meeting was held in Washington by the General Conference brethren at which Elder R. J. Wieland was given an opportunity to defend his and Short's manuscript. In an eight page letter, Wieland outlines for D. K. Short the reaction and attitude of the leadership of the Church. The final paragraph reads -

To sum it all up, as I see the meeting in retrospect: the 1951 report [by the General Conference] said the Ms was unworthy of serious consideration because it was "critical"; the 1958 report said it was unworthy of such consideration because it used EGW statements out of context; the 1967 hearing concludes it is likewise unworthy because its fruitage is evil. When we are not able to say

anything effective to clarify misunderstandings, I do not think the last charge is really fair; but I believe the time has come to "let go and let God," and keep still. The Lord Jesus gave everybody, good and bad, an excellent example - as sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. Whether I am right or wrong, I believe I must from hereon be "dumb." (p. 8, "Buff Section" of A Warning & Its Reception)

[Wieland did not follow through on his "belief," but the events of history indicate that God has indeed taken the reins in His own hands, and that the Enemy has come down in great wrath setting in operation "every conceivable power of evil." (R&H, Dec. 13, 1892)]

To declare the fruitage of the message of Christ's righteousness as evil, is no different than declaring that very Righteousness One, a malefactor [evil doer] (John 18:30). The leadership had made its decision. Thirteen years later, the Church in session would place its imprimatur on a Statement of Beliefs which denied the original trust given to it by God. The "signal" was then given. Israel moved its capital from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and by an act of the Knesset declared that Jerusalem united as one city was to be the capital of all Israel.

What are all of these facts - if so recognized - saying to us? Number one and primary is the factor that the final edition of *The Great Controversy* in 1911 did not contain the added light given to the Messenger of the Lord between 1888 and 1911 involving the Parable of the Ten Virgins and Luke 21. How this omission should effect our use of *The Great Controversy* in understanding current event is a question that must be resolved.

Secondly, an understanding of Revelation 18 as well as Luke 21 was indicated in the letter to J. H. Kellogg written by Ellen White in 1901. While, as we noted above, no specific verses are indicated in the counsel, the section of Revelation 18 which concerns the call to come out of Babylon is primary in current "historic" Adventist thinking. Certain aspects of this factor of basic understandings, essential for this hour, need to be addressed. This we shall do in the following article.

Basics in Revelation 18:1-4

Key representations in these verses are "another angel," "Babylon," "all nations...kings...and merchants," "another voice," and "my people." First some questions that need to be resolved and/or addressed:

Are we to interpret the symbolism of "another angel" in the same way that we interpret the first three "angels" of Revelation 14?

Are "voice" and "my people" interrelated? The previous "voice" is "the great voice out of the temple, from the throne" (16:19). Could this be the "voice" of Jesus? If so, is this the call of Jesus so that for those who respond He will make His final intercession (atonement)?

At what point in time have all nations, with their rulers and "the great men of the earth"(18:23), drunk of the cup offered them by "the woman" with whom they have committed fornication?

It is obvious in context that the "Babylon" of Revelation 18:2 is the woman of Revelation 17:5. This means simply that the understanding of Revelation 18 is closely related and cannot be separated from an understanding of the events prophetically portrayed in the 17th Chapter. Further, it needs to be recognized that "Babylon" is not, and never has been "my people." The reverse corollary is also true; neither are "my people" Babylonians. However, these verses indicate that "my people" are in Babylon, else why are they called out of Babylon? The Greek text emphasizes twice the come *οὐτὶ - ἔξελθατε, ο λαος μου, ἐξ αὐτης* - "Come out, the people of me, out of her."

This symbolism and the Greek emphasis connects this verse to two Scriptural comparisons, one of typology, the other the parable of Matthew 25. First typology:

The northern Kingdom of Israel was carried into captivity by Assyria. Two centuries later, when Babylon had succeeded to the dominion of Assyria, Judah was carried into captivity. These captivities were the result of the professed people of Jehovah giving themselves over to the idolatrous practices of paganism. Babylon was used of God to punish His people. Scripture refers to Nebuchadnezzar as God's "servant" in this judgment on Judah (Jer. 43:10), but nowhere are the people of Babylon referred to as "my people." Interestingly, also, is the fact that when Judah returned from captivity, there is no mention of a "mixed multitude" coming from Babylon with them, as in the days when Israel came out of Egypt (Ex. 12:38). It was the same "my people" returning from captivity who were carried into captivity, not a multitude of Babylonian "converts."

The type and antitype can be carried a step further. The returned captives were to rebuild the temple of the Lord with "the prophets of God helping them" (Ezra 5:2). One of the prophets cited is Haggai. He stated the design of Heaven for this restored "house of God." He quoted God as declaring - "I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts" (2:7) The promise was carried a step further. The words of the Lord of hosts read - "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former, ... and in this place will I give peace" (v. 9).

[Beyond the simple application of type and antitype, there is much spiritual food for thought which can be developed

from this analogy. The "Desire of all nations" brought a unique glory - the glory of the fullness of "grace and truth" (John 1:14). His very righteousness was "pure, unadulterated truth." Further, this justifying righteousness would bring "peace with God" (Rom 5:1) - the whole purpose of the ministry of the sanctuary, whether it was the earthly in type, or the heavenly temple in reality]

Now to the parable of the Ten Virgins: The same Greek word is used in Matthew 25 and Revelation 18 - εξερχομαι - whether it be the aorist (past) and present tense as in Matthew 25, or the imperative as in Rev. 18:4. The emphasis is to come "out" of the state they are in at the time of the call from "a voice." In the parable, all ten virgins are sound asleep; in Revelation, "my people" are in captivity in Babylon. The "awakening" in the parable caused separation among the "virgins." The separation was basically involved with "light" and the oil which produced that "light." The "call out" of "my people" from Babylon in the 18th Chapter of Revelation is a call to break from the captivity in which they find themselves. As in the type, all that went into captivity to Babylon did not return to Jerusalem to help rebuild the temple of God. In fact it was only a small remnant (Haggai 1:14).

There is one distinct difference between the type and antitype in regard to the captivity experienced. Judah was forced into captivity against its will; modern Israel deliberately placed themselves in captivity to modern Babylon. The facts of our own church history dare not be overlooked, even though today, the control of the Church is rapidly passing to the hands of those who did not live through the decades of change but rather either accepted a changed message or else grew up in the church that had already altered its doctrinal commitment.

The fifth and sixth decades of the 20th Century marked the "golden age of Adventist Evangelism." In the very center of this time period came the call to re-examine our "Kadesh-barnea" experience of 1888. The review of certain doctrinal positions (not all) at the 1952 Bible Conference and the proclamation that at this Conference, the great truth of "righteousness by faith" was given "with far greater power than it was given in the 1888 Conference" left the Church feeling "good," except for one point! Seventh-day Adventism was still considered a "cult" in the Evangelical world. Within three years of the Bible Conference, the Enemy offered the leadership of the Church - many of whom had affirmed their faith in the basic doctrines of the Church at the Bible Conference - an opportunity to shed the stigma of being considered a "cult." They "bought" it and went into "captivity" to Babylon. The SDA-Evangelical Conferences of 1955-56 mark basic compromises in key doctrinal positions which had made true Adventism unique. What occurred at these conferences was stated clearly by the Evangelicals - Barnhouse and Martin - in Barnhouse's publication - *Eternity*. Twenty years later, T. E. Unrue, who chaired this "captivity" gave the Adventist viewpoint in *Adventist Heritage*. [Facsimile

copies of these reports may be secured from the Foundation office. See publications form included with the November, 1998, WWN]

Today, those who proclaim themselves as "historic" Adventists are merely travelling the same path that led to the original captivity. The 1952 Bible Conference reiterated faith in doctrinal fundamentals without following the counsel given in connection with the 1888 Message of Righteousness by Faith. In 1892, the Messenger of the Lord had clearly called for a "learning" and an "unlearning" process so that the "truth" committed to our trust might be "pure, unadulterated truth." (R&H, July 26, 1892; *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 65) In the same year - 1892 - the same Messenger warned: "Let no one come to the conclusion that there is no more truth to be revealed. The diligent, prayerful seeker for truth will find precious rays of light yet to shine forth from the word of God." (*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 34)

The call today is simply to "come out" of the captivity in which the leadership has placed the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and rebuild the broken down "temple of truth." The promise is sure that to such a temple "the Desire of all nations" will come the second time without sin unto salvation. To accept this call of "the voice" in Revelation 18 means the separation of the "virgins," the ones to whom the sacred trust of truth was given. The one is a response to the other.

Basic Understandings of Church

The Scripture clearly states - "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). This verse plainly indicates that there is a relationship between salvation and church fellowship. Does that mean that I must have my name on a church record? Yes, but what record?

The gospel of John alone records the story of the man born blind (Chapter 9). Here was a man who unable to see but who when confronted with the fact of his restored sight evidenced more insight into truth than the religious leaders. Because of this insight and his willingness to voice his convictions, he was excommunicated (9:34; margin). Such an experience became a common occurrence in the decades following Pentecost. Did those who were thus cast out of the "house of Israel" have any hope? The experience recorded in this chapter has an interesting conclusion directly related to the casting out. It reads - "Jesus heard that they had cast him out" (9:35) What did He do? "He...found him."

The issue of "church" was a real issue in apostolic times. The book of Hebrews as well as Acts addresses the question. Contrasting the experience of the establishment of Israel as a "church" at Mt. Sinai, - "the church in the wil-

derness" (Acts 7:38) - the book of Hebrews sets before the "excommunicated" followers of Jesus who had accepted Him as the Messiah, a new mount and new church. It reads:

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven. (Heb. 12:22-23)

In the book of Acts, we see the same controversy over "church" as is evidenced today in the community of Adventism. Paul on his missionary tours "separated" those who accepted the gospel from the synagogues of the Jews, and he did not take the Gentile converts into the synagogues as their "church". See Acts 18:7; 19:9. This resulted in "home" churches. See Rom. 16:5, 14,15; I Cor. 16:12; Col. 4:15; Philemon 2. In contrast to this practice, the Church in Jerusalem under James continued to worship in the synagogues. (James 2:2, margin, Gr) Further, the Jerusalem followers of Jesus as the Messiah still participated in the temple rites and ceremonies. (Acts 21:23,26) When Paul reported to the leadership of the Jerusalem church at the close of his third missionary tour, James, in turn, told him of the thousands of Jews "which believe; and they are all zealous of the law." (21:20)

This difference of concept of place to worship - "home" church or synagogue - also involved a difference of perception of how men are justified. Paul wrote - "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28). James would write - "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (2:24). This teaching of James was cited as the basis for the Tridentine gospel of Rome. See *The Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. II, p. 99. On the other hand, the teaching of Paul was the basis of the Reformation emphasis on justification by faith alone. Today, what constitutes "church," and what is Righteousness by Faith are again issues involving the "historic" Adventist segment, as well as others on the periphery of the main body.

Into this picture comes the issue of accountability. The Jewish leadership sealed their probation in their action against Jesus Christ in securing His death by Pilate. This can be deducted from Peter's defence before the same council who had tried Jesus (Acts 4:5-12) He offered them no opportunity to repent as he had in preaching to others in Jerusalem (Acts 2:28; 3:19). The nation as a corporate body sealed its fate in the stoning of Stephen in AD 34 (Dan. 9:24). The Israel of the Diaspora as well as the Jews of Jerusalem had to decide whether their leadership did right in pressuring the Roman authority to kill Jesus, or was He indeed the Messiah. If they decided that their leadership had denied "the Holy One," and killed "the Prince of life," they had a choice to make. They could no longer remain in that corporate body under that leadership sharing in that guilt (Acts 3:13-15; 17-19).

We have in the Writings various uses of the word, "church." Familiar to most is the statement - "From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth." (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 11) However, there is another concept of the church set forth in the Writings - the corporate identification. It reads: "*In the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to be weighed. She will be judged by the privileges and advantages that she has had.*" (Vol 8, p. 247) This is corporate language. Everyone who is a part of the corporate body stands in that judgment and faces the guilt of not only what the leadership has done and but also what it has been permitted to do. You cannot stand with one foot among "faithful souls" and the other foot in the corporate body. If you conclude that the leadership did right in the compromises of 1955-56, and the confirmation of those compromises in 1980, then stand in and with the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church and face the weighing in "the balances of the sanctuary." If not, then "repent" and become a part of the "faithful souls," the "church of the firstborn," whose names "are written in heaven."

In Conclusion

As we face 1999, as we near the close of the 20th Century, we have no choice but to face certain basic understandings regarding the meaning of church as a corporate body and our individual responsibility in being truly a "faithful soul." To make the right choice, we must understand the basics of our religious heritage involved in typology and parable. This means simply studying the Bible, and the Bible only, to ascertain basic truth, even as did those who laid the foundations for what became the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church. Traditions which have petrified our thinking must be set aside until a renewed in-depth study of the Bible reveals what we are to learn and what we are to unlearn from our past.

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