

Habakkuk's Two Tables #3

LEADING AND TEACHING

“We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way **the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.**” *Life Sketches*, 196.

“On this path the advent people were traveling to the city which was at the farther end of the path. **They had a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path, which an angel told me was the ‘midnight cry.’ This light shone all along the path, and gave light for their feet, so that they might not stumble.**

“If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, **who was just before them**, leading them to the city, they were safe. But soon some grew weary, and said the city was a great way off, and they expected to have entered it before. Then Jesus would encourage them by raising His glorious right arm, and from His arm came a light which waved over the advent band, and they shouted ‘Alleluia!’ **Others rashly denied the light behind them, and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out, leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and lost sight of the mark and of Jesus, and fell off the path down into the dark and wicked world below.**” *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*, 57.

THE LORD'S LEADING—THE FIRST DISAPPOINTMENT

“When the time passed at which the Lord's coming was first expected,—in the spring of 1844,—those who had looked in faith for His appearing were for a season involved in doubt and uncertainty. While the world regarded them as having been utterly defeated and proved to have been cherishing a delusion, their source of consolation was still the word of God. Many continued to search the Scriptures, examining anew the evidences of their faith and carefully studying the prophecies to obtain further light. The Bible testimony in support of their position seemed clear and conclusive. Signs which could not be mistaken pointed to the coming of Christ as near. The special blessing of the Lord, both in the conversion of sinners and the revival of spiritual life among Christians, had testified that the message was of Heaven. And though the believers could not explain their disappointment, they felt assured that God had led them in their past experience.

“Interwoven with prophecies which they had regarded as applying to the time of the second advent was instruction specially adapted to their state of uncertainty and suspense, and encouraging them to wait patiently in the faith that what was now dark to their understanding would in due time be made plain.

“Among these prophecies was that of Habakkuk 2:1–4: ‘I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov’d. And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.’

“As early as 1842 the direction given in this prophecy to ‘write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it,’ had suggested to Charles Fitch the preparation of a prophetic chart to illustrate the visions of Daniel and the Revelation. The publication of this chart was regarded as a fulfillment of the command given by Habakkuk. No one, however, then noticed that an apparent delay in the accomplishment of the vision—a tarrying time—is presented in the same prophecy. After the disappointment, this scripture appeared very significant: ‘The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. . . . The just shall live by his faith.’”

“A portion of Ezekiel’s prophecy also was a source of strength and comfort to believers: ‘The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth? Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord God. . . . The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision. . . . I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged.’ ‘They of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off. Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; There shall none of My words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done.’ Ezekiel 12:21–25, 27, 28.

“The waiting ones rejoiced, believing that He who knows the end from the beginning had looked down through the ages and, foreseeing their disappointment, had given them words of courage and hope. Had it not been for such portions of Scripture, admonishing them to wait with patience and to hold fast their confidence in God’s word, their faith would have failed in that trying hour.

“The parable of the ten virgins of Matthew 25 also illustrates the experience of the Adventist people. In Matthew 24, in answer to the question of His disciples concerning the sign of His coming and of the end of the world, 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; namely, the destruction of Jerusalem, the great tribulation of the church under the pagan and papal persecutions, the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars. 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. In this parable their experience is illustrated by the incidents of an Eastern marriage.

“‘Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.’

“The coming of Christ, as announced by the first angel’s message, was understood to be represented by the coming of the bridegroom. The widespread reformation under the proclamation of His soon coming, answered to the going forth of the virgins. In this parable, as in that of Matthew 24, two classes are represented. All had taken their lamps, the Bible, and by its light had gone forth to meet the Bridegroom. But while ‘they that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them,’ ‘the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.’ The latter class had received the grace of God, the regenerating, enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, which renders His word a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. In the fear of God they had studied the Scriptures to learn the truth, and had earnestly sought for purity of heart and life. These had a personal experience, a faith in God and in His word, which could not be overthrown by disappointment and delay. Others ‘took their lamps, and took no oil with them.’ **They had moved from impulse. Their fears had been excited by the solemn message, but they had depended upon the faith of their brethren, satisfied with the flickering light of good emotions, without a thorough understanding of the truth or a genuine work of grace in the heart. These had gone forth to meet the Lord, full of hope in the prospect of immediate reward; but they were not prepared for delay and disappointment. When trials came, their faith failed, and their lights burned dim.**

“‘While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.’ By the tarrying of the bridegroom is represented the passing of the time when the Lord was expected, the disappointment, and the seeming delay. In this time of uncertainty, the interest of the superficial and halfhearted soon began to waver, and their efforts to relax; but those whose faith was based on a personal knowledge of the Bible had a rock beneath their feet, which the waves of disappointment could not wash away. ‘They all slumbered and slept;’ one class in unconcern and abandonment of their faith, the other class patiently waiting till clearer light should be given. Yet in the night of trial the latter seemed to lose, to some extent, their zeal and devotion. The halfhearted and superficial could no longer lean upon the faith of their brethren. Each must stand or fall for himself.” *The Great Controversy*, 391–395.

TESTED AND PROVED

“God designed to prove his people. His hand covered a mistake in **the reckoning of the prophetic periods**. Adventists did not discover the error, nor was it discovered by the most learned of their opponents. The latter said, ‘Your reckoning of **the prophetic periods** is correct. Some great event is about to take place; but it is not what Mr. Miller predicts; it is the conversion of the world, and not the second advent of Christ.’

“The time of expectation passed, and Christ did not appear for the deliverance of his people. Those who with sincere faith and love had looked for their Saviour, experienced a bitter disappointment. **Yet the Lord had accomplished his purpose: he had tested the hearts of those who professed to be waiting for his appearing.** There were among them many who had been actuated by no higher motive than fear. Their profession of faith had not affected their hearts or their lives. When the expected event failed to take place, these persons declared that they were not disappointed; they had never believed that Christ would come. They were among the first to ridicule the sorrow of the true believers.” *The Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 4, 228.

THE LORD'S TEACHING

HIS HAND HID A MISTAKE

"I have seen that the 1843 chart was directed by the hand of the Lord, and that it should not be altered; that the figures were as He wanted them; that **His hand was over and hid a mistake in some of the figures**, so that none could see it, until His hand was removed." *Early Writings*, 74.

FIGURE, n. 10. In arithmetic, a character denoting a number; as 2. 7. 9. *Webster's 1828 Dictionary*.

Early Writings:

"His hand was over and hid a mistake in some of the figures," "His hand covered a mistake in the reckoning of the prophetic periods." 74, 236.

THE MISTAKE EXPLAINED

"I saw the people of God joyful in expectation, looking for their Lord. But God designed to prove them. **His hand covered a mistake in the reckoning of the prophetic periods**. Those who were looking for their Lord did not discover this **mistake**, and the most learned men who opposed the time also failed to see it. **God designed that His people should meet with a disappointment**. The time passed, and those who had looked with joyful expectation for their Saviour were sad and disheartened, while those who had not loved the appearing of Jesus, but embraced the message through fear, were pleased that He did not come at the time of expectation. Their profession had not affected the heart and purified the life. **The passing of the time was well calculated to reveal such hearts**. They were the first to turn and ridicule the sorrowful, disappointed ones who really loved the appearing of their Saviour. I saw the wisdom of God in proving His people and giving them a searching test to discover those who would shrink and turn back in the hour of trial.

"Jesus and all the heavenly host looked with sympathy and love upon those who had with sweet expectation longed to see Him whom their souls loved. Angels were hovering around them, to sustain them in the hour of their trial. Those who had neglected to receive the heavenly message were left in darkness, and God's anger was kindled against them, because they would not receive the light which He had sent them from heaven. Those faithful, disappointed ones, who could not understand why their Lord did not come, were not left in darkness. Again they were led to their Bibles to search the prophetic periods. **The hand of the Lord was removed from the figures, and the mistake was explained**. They saw that **the prophetic periods reached to 1844, and that the same evidence which they had presented to show that the prophetic periods closed in 1843, proved that they would terminate in 1844**. Light from the Word of God shone upon their position, and they discovered a tarrying time—'Though it [the vision] tarry, wait for it.' In their love for Christ's immediate coming, **they had overlooked the tarrying of the vision, which was calculated to manifest the true waiting ones**. Again they had a point of time. Yet I saw that many of them could not rise above their severe disappointment to possess that degree of zeal and energy which had marked their faith in 1843.

"Satan and his angels triumphed over them, and those who would not receive the message congratulated themselves upon their farseeing judgment and wisdom in not receiving the delusion, as they called it. They did not realize that they were rejecting the counsel of God

against themselves, and were working in union with Satan and his angels to perplex God's people, who were living out the heaven-sent message.

“The **believers in this message were oppressed in the churches**. For a time, those who would not receive the message were restrained by fear from acting out the sentiments of their hearts; but the passing of the time revealed their true feelings. They wished to silence the testimony which the waiting ones felt compelled to bear, **that the prophetic periods extended to 1844**. With clearness the believers explained their **mistake** and gave the reasons why they expected their Lord in 1844. Their opposers could bring no arguments against the powerful reasons offered. Yet the anger of the churches was kindled; **they were determined not to listen to evidence, and to shut the testimony out of the churches, so the others could not hear it**. Those who dared not withhold from others the light which God had given them, **were shut out of the churches**; but Jesus was with them, and they were joyful in the light of His countenance. They were prepared to receive the message of the second angel.” *Early Writings*, 235–237.

JAMES WHITE:

“Says an objector, ‘I do not believe that the midnight cry has yet been given.’ Neither do we believe that the midnight cry has been heard by us, or that it ever will be. The cry of Matthew 25:6, ‘Behold the bridegroom cometh,’ is in the history of an eastern marriage. But that a cry was given, and fully received by the entire Advent body in the autumn of 1844, that compares well with the midnight cry of the parable, should not be denied by those who had an experience in it. It came in the right time. The cry of the parable immediately followed the **delay**, and the slumbering and sleeping. This followed our **delay**, having been **disappointed**, and reached our ears while in a dormant state. That cry waked up the ten virgins, and led them to trim their lamps. This, attended by the power of the Spirit, aroused the Advent people, and led them to **search the Bible as never before**, and to consecrate themselves and their worldly possessions wholly to the Lord. Those who gave the cry that the Lord would come at the seventh month, 1844, clearly saw that **the prophetic periods reached to that time**, therefore, the **evidence** that had been presented from **the periods** to prove that **the Advent would be in 1843, proved that it would be in 1844**. We then saw **an error in that manner of reckoning** which terminated the 2300 days in **1843**. None of those who wrote against the Advent saw it. **The hand of Providence** covered the **mistake** until the time came for it to be seen. **The error was in taking 457 full years** from the 2300, which left 1843, without making any account of the fraction of the year 457 B. C., that had passed, when the commandment went forth, from which the 70 weeks are reckoned. As it takes 457 **full years** and 1843, to make 2300, the fraction of the year 457, B. C., that had passed when the 70 weeks commenced, should be added to 1843, which brings the termination of the 2300 days in 1844. **This point is made clear** in the following testimony from the *Advent Herald* of November 13, 1844.

“Our minds were directed to that point of time, [1843,] from the fact that dating the several **prophetic periods** from those years in which the best chronologers assign the fulfillment of those events which were to mark their commencement, they all seemed to terminate that year. This was, however, only apparent. We date **the ‘seven times,’ or 2520 years**, from the captivity of Manasseh, which is, with great unanimity, placed by chronologers **BC677**. This date is the only one we have ever reckoned from, for the commencement of this period; and subtracting **BC677** from **2520** years there remained **AD1843**. We, however, did not observe that as it would require **677 full years BC** and **1843 full years AD to complete 2520 years**, that it would also oblige us to extend this period as far into **AD1844** as it might have commenced after the beginning of **BC677**. The same was also true of the other periods. The great jubilee of 2450 years [**not represented on either the 1843 or 1850 charts**], commencing with the captivity of Jehoiakim **BC607**; and **the 2300 days, commencing with the 70 weeks BC457**, would respectively require **1843 full years** after Christ added to as many **full years** before Christ, as the years in which we have always respectively commenced each period, to complete the number of years in each; and as subtracting from each period the date BC of its commencement, there would remain **AD1843**, no reference whatever was made to the fraction of the year, which in each case, had transpired from its commencement, and which would require that each period should extend as much beyond the expiration of **AD1843**, as they respectively began after the commencement of the year BC from which they are dated.

“While **this discrepancy was not particularly noticed by us**, it was also not noticed by any of our learned opponents. Amid all the arguments which were brought to bear against our position, no allusion was made to that point.’

“The right application of Habakkuk 2:2–3, was seen clearly by those who gave the seventh month message. The Advent body then held that the publication of what is called **the old chart** was a fulfillment of the words of the Prophets, ‘Write the vision and make it plain upon tables.’—Reference to the different Advent papers published in 1844, will settle this point.—As time is connected with the visions of Daniel and John, the conclusion seems natural that their prophecies were the subject matter to be made ‘plain on tables,’ which was to be for ‘an appointed time.’

“‘Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.’ Here is a seeming contradiction, **which can only be explained by facts in our Advent experience**. The period, 1843, was written upon the chart, as the apparent time of the termination of the 2300 days; but that, as was clearly seen in 1844, **was not the real date of their termination**. Therefore the vision did not really tarry, but seemed to tarry. ‘Though it tarry, [beyond the period of expectation,] wait for it,’ for at the real point of time for the termination of the 2300 days, 1844, the vision ‘will speak, and not lie.’ It is said that the message of the 7th month, 1844, was **a ‘lie,’** because Christ did not then come. True, the vision of 2300 days did not teach that Christ would then come, or that his coming would be at the end of the days; but we have the best of evidence that the days, then ended, as was taught that they would end, by those who gave the message of the seventh month.

“The types of the law of Moses did not teach us that our Great High Priest would come out of the heavens, on the tenth day of the seventh month, 1844, yet they, in connection with the 2300 days, clearly prove that Christ did then enter upon the work of cleansing the Heavenly Sanctuary, shadowed forth by the tenth day atonement in the law. Such a change in the position of our Great High Priest, represented by the coming of the bridegroom in the parable, was very properly heralded by those who gave the seventh month message. Neither did the parable teach that the Lord would come at the point in our history where the midnight cry applied. We now see points in the parable that apply later in our experience, yet before the Second Advent, such as the knocking. When giving the seventh month message the then future scenes of trial **were sealed up to us**, and for our lives we could not see any Prophecy to be fulfilled prior to the Advent.

“The Advent people scripturally sought, and earnestly plead, for the ‘bread’ of life in **1843**, and we are loath to believe that our heavenly Father gave us a ‘stone,’ or that he gave us a ‘scorpion’ in **1844**. And **we fail to see how it was possible for the Advent body to follow down the track of prophecy, without experiencing such a movement as that of the autumn of 1844. The vision that had seemed to tarry then spake.** Let others call it ‘a lie.’ But we fully believe that then was experienced the fulfillment of the words of the Prophet ‘at the end [of the 2300 days] it shall speak, and NOT LIE.’ True we were disappointed as to the event to take place, but that is no evidence that the movement was not in the order of the Lord, and a fulfillment of Prophecy. Those that ‘cast their garments in the way,’ and cried ‘Hosanna to the Son of David,’ as Jesus rode into Jerusalem, entirely mistook the object of the first Advent, yet that display was all necessary to fulfill Zechariah 9:9. The Pharisees said, ‘Master, rebuke thy disciples,’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.’

“If such an exhibition should take place at this day, a thousand voices would be raised pronouncing it ‘Mesmerism.’ Our ‘mistake,’ as it is called, at the seventh month, was of the same nature as that of the disciples. They had an opportunity of learning the object of the first Advent. Adventists have a chance to learn the events that in order precede the Second Advent.

“No doubt but many who joined in the general shout of ‘Hosanna to the Son of David,’ were afterwards ashamed of it, and perhaps made their ‘confession’ to the Pharisees. Adventists should not be ashamed of the very experience that called them from the world and churches, and has made them Adventists. **Consistency requires them to own their experience, or give up the Advent name.**” James White, *Review and Herald*, volume 1, July 9, 1851. Edited by Joseph Bates, S.W. Rhodes and J.N. Andrews.

URIAH SMITH:

“As time continued beyond **AD1843**, many began to inquire the reasons of their disappointment respecting the year of their expected deliverance. **It was then seen**, that commencing all **the prophetic periods** in the years **BC**, where we had always dated their commencement, they would not be respectively completed, even upon the supposition that our chronology and date of their commencement were correct, until sometime within the year **1844**. Thus, of **the seven times, or 2520 years, commencing in BC677**—the great jubilee, or 2450 years [**not represented on either the 1843 or 1850 charts.**], commencing in **BC607**—and **the 2300 years of Daniel, commencing in BC457**—as a portion of each of those years, from which **the prophetic periods** were respectively dated, had expired before the occurrence of the several events which marked their commencement, it would be necessary that **they should extend as far into AD1844**, as they respectively commenced after the beginning of the years **BC** from which they are severally reckoned, in order, either to complete the number of years in each, or to test the correctness of our chronology. But there was no clue to the time, in the respective years **BC**, at which the several periods began; and consequently the time in the year of their termination, could not be accurately marked.” Uriah Smith, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, August 27, 1857, J. N. Andrews, James White, J. H. Waggoner, R. F. Cottrell, and Stephen Pierce Editors.

““God **tested and proved** his people by the passing of the time in 1843. The mistake made in reckoning **the prophetic periods** was not at once discovered even by learned men who opposed the views of those who were looking for Christ's coming. These profound scholars declared that Mr. Miller was right in his calculation of the time, though they disputed him in regard to the event that would crown that period. But they, and the waiting people of God, were in a common error on the question of time.

“We fully believe that God, in his wisdom, **designed that his people should meet with a disappointment, which was well calculated to reveal hearts and develop the true characters** of those who had professed to look for and rejoice in the coming of the Lord. Those who embraced the first angel's message through fear of the wrath of God's judgments, not because they loved the truth and desired an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, now appeared in their true light. They were among the first to ridicule the disappointed ones who sincerely longed for and loved the appearing of Jesus. This **most searching test of God revealed the true characters** of those who would shirk responsibility and stigma by denying their faith in the hour of trial.

“Those who had been disappointed were not left in darkness; for **in searching the prophetic periods** with earnest prayers, the error was discovered, and the tracing of the prophetic pencil down through the tarrying time. In the joyful expectation of the coming of Christ, the apparent tarrying of the vision had not been taken into account, and was a sad and unlooked for surprise. Yet this very trial was highly necessary to develop and strengthen the sincere believers in the truth.” *Life Sketches*, 186–187.

THE LAST DECEPTION FOR ADVENTISTS

“Satan is . . . constantly pressing in the spurious—to lead away from the truth. The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. ‘Where there is no vision, the people perish’ (Proverbs 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different

ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony.

"There will be a hatred kindled against the testimonies which is satanic. The workings of Satan will be to unsettle the faith of the churches in them, for this reason: Satan cannot have so clear a track to bring in his deceptions and bind up souls in his delusions if the warnings and reproofs and counsels of the Spirit of God are heeded." *Selected Messages*, book 1, 48.

ONE THING IS CERTAIN

"One thing is certain: **those Seventh-day Adventists who take their stand under Satan's banner will first** give up their faith in the warnings and reproofs contained in the **Testimonies** of God's spirit.

"The call to greater consecration and holier service is being made, and will continue to be made. Some who are now voicing Satan's suggestions will come to their senses. There are those in important positions of trust who do not understand the truth for this time. To them the message must be given. If they receive it, Christ will accept them, and will make them workers together with him. But if they refuse to hear the message, **they will take their stand under the black banner of the Prince of Darkness.**

"I am instructed to say that the precious truth for this time is open more and more clearly to human minds. In a special sense men and women are to eat of Christ's flesh and drink of his blood. There will be a development of the understanding, for **the truth is capable of constant expansion.** The divine originator of truth will come into closer and still closer communion with those who follow on to know him. As God's people receive his word as the bread of heaven, they will know that his goings forth are prepared as the morning. They will receive spiritual strength, as the body receives physical strength when food is eaten.

"We do not half understand the Lord's plan in taking the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, and leading them through the wilderness into Canaan.

"As we gather up the divine rays shining from the gospel, we shall have a clearer insight into the Jewish economy, and a deeper appreciation of its important truths. **Our exploration of truth is yet incomplete.** We have gathered up only a few rays of light. Those who are not daily students of the Word will not solve the problems of the Jewish economy. They will not understand the truths taught by the temple service. The work of God is hindered by a worldly understanding of his great plan. The future life will unfold the meaning of the laws that Christ, enshrouded in the pillar of cloud, gave to his people." *Spalding and Magan*, 305–306.

THE SUNDAY LAW

"There can be only two classes. Each party is distinctly stamped, either with the seal of the living God, or with the mark of the beast or his image. Each son and daughter of Adam chooses either Christ or Barabbas as his general. And all who place themselves on the side of the disloyal are **standing under Satan's black banner**, and are charged with rejecting and spitefully using Christ. They are charged with deliberately crucifying the Lord of life and glory." *Review and Herald*, January 30, 1900.

WE NEED NOT TO LOOK FOR THE MIDNIGHT CRY

“Here we see that the church—the Lord’s sanctuary—was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. **They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God’s power as in former days. Times have changed.** These words strengthen their unbelief, and they say: The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. He is too merciful to visit His people in judgment. Thus ‘Peace and safety’ is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God’s people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs that would not bark are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children all perish together.” *Testimonies*, volume 5, 211.

Thus saith the Lord; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. Jeremiah 17:5.