

Habakkuk's Two Tables #5

THE RISE AND FALL OF NATIONS

“Every nation that has come upon the stage of action has been **permitted** to occupy its place on the earth, that it might be seen whether it would fulfill the purpose of ‘the Watcher and the Holy One.’ **Prophecy has traced the rise and fall of the world’s great empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.** With each of these, as with nations of less power, **history repeated itself.** Each had its period of test, each failed, its glory faded, its power departed, and its place was occupied by another. . . .

“**From the rise and fall of nations as made plain in the pages of Holy Writ,** they need to learn how worthless is mere outward and worldly glory. Babylon, with all its power and its magnificence, the like of which our world has never since beheld,—power and magnificence which to the people of that day seemed so stable and enduring,—how completely has it passed away! As “the flower of the grass” it has perished. So perishes all that has not God for its foundation. Only that which is bound up with His purpose and expresses His character can endure. His principles are the only steadfast things our world knows.” *Education*, 177, 184.

AS MADE PLAIN IN THE BOOKS OF DANIEL AND THE REVELATION

“**From the rise and fall of nations as made plain in the books of Daniel and the Revelation,** we need to learn how worthless is mere outward and worldly glory. Babylon, with all its power and magnificence, the like of which our world has never since beheld,—power and magnificence which to the people of that day seemed so stable and enduring,—how completely has it passed away! As ‘the flower of the grass,’ it has perished. James 1:10. So perished the Medo-Persian kingdom, and the kingdoms of Grecia and Rome. And so perishes all that has not God for its foundation. Only that which is bound up with His purpose, and expresses His character, can endure. His principles are the only steadfast things our world knows.” *Prophets and Kings*, 548.

THE DOWNFALL OF AN EMPIRE

“In prophetic scripture, the sounding of trumpets is always used to **denote the downfall of some empire**, nation, or place, or some dreadful battle, which may decide the fate of empires, nations, or places. . . .

“The last three trumpets will claim our attention in his discourse; the first four having their accomplishment under Rome Pagan; to the last three under Rome Papal. **These three trumpets and three woes are a description of the judgments that God has sent and will send on this Papal beast, the abomination of the whole earth.**” *William Miller’s Works*, volume 2, page 115–116.

“We name as the subject of this chapter the seven trumpets, as these constitute the main theme of the chapter, although there are other matters introduced before the opening of that series of events. The first verse of this chapter relates to the events of the preceding chapters, and therefore should not have been separated from them by the division of the chapter.

“‘VERSE 1. And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.’

“The series of seven seals is here resumed and concluded. The sixth chapter closed with the events of the sixth seal, and the eighth commences with the opening of the seventh seal; hence **the seventh chapter stands parenthetically** between the sixth and seventh seals, from which it appears that the sealing work of that chapter belongs to the sixth seal.

“Silence in Heaven.—Concerning the cause of this silence, only conjecture can be offered,—a conjecture, however, which is supported by the events of the sixth seal. That seal does not bring us to the Second Advent, although it embraces events that transpire in close connection therewith. It introduces the fearful commotions of the elements, described as the rolling of the heavens together as a scroll, caused by the voice of God, the breaking up of the surface of the earth, and the confession on the part of the wicked that the great day of God’s wrath is come. They are doubtless in momentary expectation of seeing the King appear in, to them, unendurable glory. But the seal stops just short of that event. The personal appearing of Christ must therefore be allotted to the next seal. But when the Lord appears, he comes with all the holy angels with him. Matthew 25:31. And when all the heavenly harpers leave the courts above to come down with their divine Lord, as he descends to gather the fruit of his redeeming work, will there not be silence in heaven?

“The length of this period of silence, if we consider it prophetic time, would be about seven days.

“VERSE 2. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.’

“This verse introduces a new and distinct series of events. In the seals we have had the history of the church during what is called the gospel dispensation. In the seven trumpets, now introduced, we have **the principal political and warlike events** which were to transpire during the same time.

“VERSE 3–5. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand. 5. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth; and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.’

“Having as it were, in verse 2, brought out the seven angels, and introduced them before us upon the stage of action, John, for a moment, in the three verses last quoted, directs attention to an entirely different scene. The angel which approaches the altar is not one of the seven trumpet angels. The altar is the altar of incense, which, in the earthly sanctuary, was placed in the first apartment. Here, then, is another proof that there exists in heaven a sanctuary with its corresponding vessels of service, of which the earthly was a figure, and that we are taken into that sanctuary by the visions of John, A work of ministration for all the saints in the sanctuary above is thus brought to view. Doubtless the entire work of mediation for the people of God during the gospel dispensation is here presented.

“This is apparent from the fact that the angel offers his incense with the prayers of all saints. And that we are here carried forward to the end, is evident from the act of the angel in filling the censer with fire and casting it unto the earth; for his work is then done; no more prayers are to be offered up mingled with incense; and this symbolic act can have its application only at the time when the ministration of Christ in the sanctuary in behalf of mankind has forever ceased. And following the angel’s act are voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake—exactly such occurrences as we are elsewhere informed transpire at the close of human probation. (See Revelation 11:19; 16:17, 18.)

“But why are these verses thus thrown in here? Answer: As a message of hope and comfort for the church. The seven angels with their warlike trumpets had been introduced; terrible scenes were to transpire under their sounding; but before they commence, the people of God are pointed to the work of mediation in their behalf above, and their source of help and strength during this time. Though they should be tossed like feathers upon the tumultuous waves of strife and war, they were to know that their great High Priest still ministered for them in the sanctuary in heaven, and that thither they could direct their prayers, and have them offered, with incense, to their Father in heaven. Thus could they gain strength and support in all their calamities.

“‘VRSE 6. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.’

“The subject of the seven trumpets is here resumed, and occupies the remainder of this chapter and all of chapter 9. The seven angels prepare themselves to sound. Their sounding comes in as **a complement to the prophecy of Daniel 2 and 7**, commencing with the breaking up of the old Roman empire into its ten divisions, of which, in the first four trumpets, we have a description.” Uriah Smith, *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation*, 475–477.

“In the Revelation all the books of the Bible meet and end. Here is **the complement of the book of Daniel**. One is a prophecy; the other a revelation. The book that was sealed is not the Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel relating to the last days. The angel commanded, ‘But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end.’ Daniel 12:4.” *Acts of the Apostles*, 585.

“Revelation is a sealed book, but it is also an opened book. It records marvelous events that are to take place in the last days of this earth’s history. The teachings of this book are definite, not mystical and unintelligible. In it **the same line of prophecy is taken up as in Daniel**. Some prophecies God has repeated, thus showing that importance must be given to them. The Lord does not repeat things that are of no great consequence.” *Manuscript Releases*, volume 9, 8.

“For an exposition of this trumpet, we shall again draw from the writings of Mr. Keith. This writer truthfully says: ‘There is scarcely so uniform an agreement among interpreters concerning any other part of the Apocalypse as respecting the application of the fifth and sixth trumpets, or the first and second woes, to the Saracens and Turks. It is so obvious that it can scarcely be misunderstood. Instead of a verse or two designating each, the whole of the ninth chapter of the Revelation in equal portions, is occupied with a description of both.

“The Roman empire declined, as it arose, by conquest; but the Saracens and the Turks were the instruments by which **a false religion became the scourge of an apostate church**; and hence, instead of the fifth and sixth trumpets, like the former, being designated by that name alone, they are called woes.” Uriah Smith, *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation*, 495.

“In the New York Journal of Commerce of November 14, 1833, appeared a long article regarding this wonderful phenomenon, containing this statement: ‘No philosopher or scholar has told or recorded an event, I suppose, like that of yesterday morning. A prophet eighteen hundred years ago foretold it exactly, if we will be at the trouble of understanding stars falling to mean falling stars, . . . in the only sense in which it is possible to be literally true.’

“Thus was displayed the last of those signs of His coming, concerning which Jesus bade His disciples: ‘When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.’ Matthew 24:33. After these signs, John beheld, as the great event next impending, the heavens departing as a scroll, while the earth quaked, mountains and islands removed out of their places, and the wicked in terror sought to flee from the presence of the Son of man. Revelation 6:12–17.

“Many who witnessed the falling of the stars, looked upon it as a herald of the coming judgment, ‘an awful type, a sure forerunner, a merciful sign, of that great and dreadful day.’—*The Old Countryman*, in Portland Evening Advertiser, November 26, 1833. Thus the attention of the people was directed to the fulfillment of prophecy, and many were led to give heed to the warning of the Second Advent.

“In the year 1840 another remarkable fulfillment of prophecy excited widespread interest. Two years before, Josiah Litch, one of the leading ministers preaching the Second Advent, published an exposition of Revelation 9, predicting the fall of the Ottoman Empire. According to his calculations, this power was to be overthrown ‘in A.D. 1840, sometime in the month of August;’ and only a few days previous to its accomplishment he wrote: ‘Allowing the first period, 150 years, to have been exactly fulfilled before Deacozes ascended the throne by permission of the Turks, and that the 391 years, fifteen days, commenced at the close of the first period, it will end on the 11th of August, 1840, when the Ottoman power in Constantinople may be expected to be broken. And this, I believe, will be found to be the case.’—Josiah Litch, in *Signs of the Times, and Expositor of Prophecy*, August 1, 1840.

“At the very time specified, Turkey, through her ambassadors, accepted the protection of the allied powers of Europe, and thus placed herself under the control of Christian nations. **The event exactly fulfilled the prediction.** When it became known, multitudes were convinced of the correctness of the principles of prophetic interpretation adopted by Miller and his associates, and a wonderful impetus was given to the advent movement. Men of learning and position united with Miller, both in preaching and in publishing his views, and from 1840 to 1844 the work rapidly extended.” *The Great Controversy*, 334–335.

“Faithfully the prophets continued their warnings and their exhortations; fearlessly they spoke to Manasseh and to his people; but the messages were scorned; backsliding Judah would not heed. As **an earnest of what would befall the people should they continue impenitent**, the Lord permitted their king to be captured by a band of Assyrian soldiers, who ‘bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon,’ their temporary capital. This affliction brought the king to his senses; ‘he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto Him: and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God.’ 2 Chronicles 33:11–13. But this repentance, remarkable though it was, **came too late to save the kingdom** from the corrupting influence of years of idolatrous practices. Many had stumbled and fallen, never again to rise.” *Prophets and Kings*, 382.

“The second angel’s message of Revelation 14 was first preached in the summer of 1844, and it then had a more direct application to the churches of the United States, where the warning of the judgment had been most widely proclaimed and most generally rejected, and where the declension in the churches had been most rapid. But the message of the second angel did not reach its complete fulfillment in 1844. The churches then experienced **a moral fall, in consequence of their refusal of the light of the advent message; but that fall was not complete**. As they have continued to reject the special truths for this time they have fallen lower and lower. Not yet, however, can it be said that ‘Babylon is fallen,... because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.’ She has not yet made all nations do this. The spirit of world conforming and indifference to the testing truths for our time exists and has been gaining ground in churches of the Protestant faith in all the countries of Christendom; and these churches are included in the solemn and terrible denunciation of the second angel. But the work of apostasy has not yet reached its culmination.

“The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord, Satan will work ‘with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;’ and they that ‘received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,’ will be left to receive ‘strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11. Not until this condition shall be reached, and the union of the church with the world shall be fully accomplished throughout Christendom, will the fall of Babylon be complete. **The change is a progressive one**, and the perfect fulfillment of Revelation 14:8 is yet future.” *The Great Controversy*, 389.

“God is not giving us a new message. We are to proclaim the message that in 1843 and 1844 brought us out of the other churches.” *Review and Herald*, January 19, 1905.

“God bids us give our time and strength to the work of preaching to the people the messages that stirred men and women in **1843 and 1844**.” *Manuscript Release*, Number 760.

“All **the messages given from 1840–1844 are to be made forcible now**, for there are many people who have lost their bearings. The messages are to go to all the churches.

“Christ said, ‘Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them’ [Matt. 13:16, 17]. **Blessed are the eyes which saw the things that were seen in 1843 and 1844.**

“The message was given. And there should be no delay in repeating the message, for the signs of the times are fulfilling; the closing work must be done. A great work will be done in a short time. **A message will soon be given by God’s appointment that will swell into a loud cry. Then Daniel will stand in his lot, to give his testimony.**” *Manuscript Releases*, volume 21, 437.

“**The truths that we received in 1841, ‘42, ‘43, and ‘44 are now to be studied and proclaimed.** The messages of the first, second, and third angels will in the future be proclaimed with a loud voice. They will be given with earnest determination and in the power of the Spirit.” *Manuscript Releases*, volume 15, 371.

“We understand the present feebleness and smallness of the work. We have had an experience. In doing the work God has given us, we may go trustingly forward, assured that He will be our efficiency. He will be with us in 1906, **as He was with us in 1841, 1842, 1843, and 1844.**” *Loma Linda Messages*, 156.

“The warning has come: Nothing is to be allowed to come in that will disturb **the foundation of the faith upon which we have been building ever since the message came in 1842, 1843, and 1844.** I was in this message, and ever since I have been standing before the world, true to the light that God has given us. We do not propose to take our feet off the platform on which they were placed as day by day we sought the Lord with earnest prayer, seeking for light. Do you think that I could give up the light that God has given me? It is to be as the Rock of Ages. It has been guiding me ever since it was given.” *Review and Herald*, April 14, 1903.

“Those who stand as teachers and leaders in our institutions are to be sound in the faith and in the principles of the third angel’s message. God wants His people to know that we have the message as He gave it to us in 1843 and 1844.” *General Conference Bulletin*, April 1, 1903.