

GOSPEL ORDER

F. T. WRIGHT



Source:

The Messenger and News Review
March to December 1989

Cover:

Moses parts the Red Sea
From a Bible Story Book (1919),
enhanced by Gemini AI

Jared T. Wright,

Fonts:

Liberation Sans
Liberation Sans Narrow
Linux Biolinum
Linux Libertine



June 2026
practicaprophetica.com
srac.info

Contents

Foreword	
Introduction: A Critical Point.....	1
1. Essential Preparation for the Latter Rain.....	5
<i>Praying for the Latter Rain</i>	5
<i>Provisions for Unity</i>	7
2. Christ: the Pattern.....	20
3. Following the Path Where God Leads.....	30
<i>Conflict in the Early Church</i>	31
<i>The Original Conflict in Heaven</i>	37
<i>The Application to Our Time</i>	41
4. On Earth, As It Is in Heaven.....	45
<i>The Patriarchal Period</i>	49
<i>The Calling of Moses</i>	51
5. Lessons from the Work of Moses.....	56
<i>The Reluctance of Moses</i>	57
<i>One Channel of Communication</i>	60
<i>God was the Leader, Not Moses</i>	62
<i>God Reiterates His Leadership</i>	65
<i>The Support of the People Is Required</i>	66
<i>At Mount Sinai</i>	67
6. Gospel Order Confirmed at Sinai.....	71
7. Not Our Way, But God's Way.....	82
<i>Protection from Apostasy</i>	86
<i>Following On, Step by Step</i>	88
<i>A Seeming Contradiction</i>	89
<i>The Fall of Lucifer</i>	90
8. Lessons from the Fall.....	96
<i>Instruction Given to Adam and Eve</i>	98
<i>At the Tree</i>	102
<i>Unmixed Truth</i>	104
9. Redeeming the Failures of the Past.....	107
<i>God's Way Is Not a Limitation</i>	107
<i>Turning Away from False Messengers</i>	110
<i>The Failure at Kadesh Barnea</i>	114

10. A Deeper Look at Kadesh-Barnea.....	123
11. Faith in God's Way.....	132
<i>On Earth, As in Heaven</i>	132
<i>A Limited Role</i>	134
<i>Moses</i>	135
<i>Many Counselors, One Messenger</i>	138
<i>Jeremiah</i>	139
<i>Balaam</i>	140
<i>Faith in God, Not in Man</i>	141
12. No Place for Human Devising.....	143
<i>God Makes the Rules, Not Man</i>	143
<i>The Papal Counterfeit</i>	144
<i>The Treasure in Earthen Vessels</i>	147
13. The Danger of Self-Exaltation.....	152
14. Satan's Purpose to Restructure God's Kingdom.....	156
<i>In the Early Church</i>	172
15. The Rebellion of Miriam and Aaron.....	178
16. The Rebellion of Korah.....	205
<i>Dealing with the Spirit of Rebellion</i>	212
<i>The Subtlety of Rebellion</i>	217
<i>Summary</i>	223
17. The Extension of Gospel Order Through Redemption..	227
<i>The Original Arrangement</i>	229
<i>From the One to the Many</i>	231
18. Testing Times.....	245
19. The War.....	249
20. From Moses to Joshua.....	255
<i>Joshua Appointed by God</i>	257
<i>The Plan to Take Jericho</i>	258
<i>Faith in Gospel Order</i>	261
<i>Faith and Obedience</i>	262
<i>A State of Righteousness</i>	263
<i>The Failure at Ai</i>	264
<i>Defeat Turned to Victory</i>	267
<i>The League with the Gibeonites</i>	269
21. The Human Vessel.....	272

22. God's Unchanging Kingdom-Building Principles.....	289
<i>The Mosaic Order and the New Testament Order.....</i>	<i>290</i>
<i>A Temptation at Hazeroth.....</i>	<i>294</i>
<i>A Vital Principle of Divine Order.....</i>	<i>297</i>
<i>The Appointment of the Seventy.....</i>	<i>303</i>
23. Responsibilities of the Messenger and the People.....	307
<i>When the Messenger Stumbles.....</i>	<i>307</i>
<i>Revealing Truth vs. Counseling.....</i>	<i>308</i>
<i>Revelations of Truth vs. Errors from the Past.....</i>	<i>309</i>
<i>The Duty of the People.....</i>	<i>313</i>
<i>A Decay in the Practice of Gospel Order.....</i>	<i>314</i>
<i>The Call for a King.....</i>	<i>317</i>
<i>Differences Between Moses' Time and Ours.....</i>	<i>322</i>
24. The Full and Final Display.....	325
<i>The Vessel.....</i>	<i>325</i>
<i>The Treasure.....</i>	<i>328</i>
<i>Christ's Experience to Be Ours.....</i>	<i>337</i>
<i>The Coming Day of Glory.....</i>	<i>338</i>

Appendix

1. The Burning at Taberah.....	342
2. William Foy and Hazen Foss: A Reconsideration.....	348
<i>Historical Timeline.....</i>	<i>348</i>
<i>Inaccurate Histories.....</i>	<i>352</i>
<i>The Experience of Hazen Foss.....</i>	<i>354</i>
<i>Differences Between Foy and Foss.....</i>	<i>356</i>
<i>Refusing God's Call.....</i>	<i>357</i>
<i>The Calling of Elisha.....</i>	<i>359</i>
<i>God's Character.....</i>	<i>360</i>

Foreword

HERE are collected the articles by F. T. Wright on the topic of Gospel Order. This message was actually part of a larger topic. That larger topic was titled, *Pray for the Latter Rain*, which began to be presented in May 1986. That larger topic ended up compassing a few related themes, which have been published as separate works. Here is the actual breakdown:

THEME	START	END	STUDIES
Pray for the Latter Rain	May 1986	March 1989	32 + 2 (related)
- Gospel Order	March 1989 October 1990	January 1990 March 1991	22 + 4 (related)
- Melchizedek	January 1990	September 1990	9
- Gabriel	April 1991	October 1993	27

With the studies on *Gabriel*, the *Pray for the Latter Rain* series was ended, and a final series, *Daniel and the Revelation*, was commenced, which occupied Fred's time until he passed away, on June 29, 1997. Fred had pre-written many of the articles on this topic, and so these were published monthly after his death until December 2000. The *Daniel and the Revelation* series never extended to the book of *Revelation*, as was originally planned, but it covered most of the book of *Daniel* and is now available under the title, *The Little Book Opened*.

The Gospel Order message first began to be presented in March 1989, and continued until May 1991. The *Melchizedek* series came roughly in the middle of those studies, but has been extracted into a separate book. This was followed by the series on *Gabriel*, which has also been extracted into a separate book.

I've also published two other books on Gospel Order:

First, a series of articles that Andreas Dura began in February 2001, which was meant to be a full rewrite, but which was never

completed. It is released as *Gospel Order: An Introduction*. This one is very precise, with a full set of good diagrams.

The second publication is from the original 1989 camp meeting studies, the first camp meeting that Fred Wright was too weak to be able to fully conduct, and so he sat in attendance, but let Andreas handle the presentations. I added a second section to that book, including studies presented from 2006-2020 that were on the same topic. That publication is also titled, *Gospel Order*, but is authored by Andreas Dura, and it is the most complete.

The 4 parts of the *Pray for the Latter Rain* series are ready for download now, as separate titles. They are identified as a series by the use of the “Pray for the Latter Rain Series” bar at the bottom of the cover.

Where appropriate, at the beginning of some of the studies I have included a few paragraphs that Fred wrote in a section at the beginning of each *Messenger*, titled “A Word from the Editor.” These are his words, not mine.

Frank Zimmerman
practicaprophetica.com

Introduction: A Critical Point

Messenger and News Review, March 1989

PP Editor's note: This was a preliminary introduction to the theme of "Gospel Order," which began in the next month's edition of *The Messenger and News Review*.

EVERY movement which the Lord has brought into existence so far since sin become established in this world has failed except the present one, and there is no safety in supposing that this one is certain to succeed where the others have failed. The opportunity for it to succeed is still open, but the possibility of our history being but a sad repetition of all the others is so real, and so present, that we need to become acutely aware of how perilous our position really is. Then, once that consciousness is realized, we must learn precisely what is to be done to avert the tragedy recurring, and then do what has to be done without fear or favor.

All the movements of the past have begun so well so far as enthusiasm, dedication, the spirit of sacrifice, and high hopes for the speedy conclusion of the conflict, were concerned. But, there were always hidden time bombs in the form of inherited ideas and theories brought over from the Babylon they believed they had totally left behind. These awaited their time of detonation, unless detected and defused in time, as some were.

One would tend to expect that each movement would fail over a different point of issue and this might appear to be true when the matter is viewed superficially. However, when the history of each movement is correctly understood in the light of the principles underlying the great controversy, it will be seen that each has failed over the same issue precisely. There is no difference from generation to generation. Each is an exact repetition of the course followed by the arch deceiver's fall from his position as the covering cherub.

What then is the issue over which the Lord's people have repeatedly stumbled including the most promising of all—the Apostolic Church?

It is the issue of “Gospel Order,” otherwise defined as the divine principles of kingdom building. Unless this is understood, fully loved, respected, and carried out to the very letter without becoming legalistic and formalistic, there will be no falling of the latter rain. We can absolutely satisfy ourselves on that point. No amount of good intentions, love for the truth, self-sacrifice, dedication, knowledge, power, or anything else, can compensate for the disregard of gospel order. The kingdom must be built to the exact specifications laid down by the Lord.

Hebrews 8

⁵ For He said, See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.

In the early days of the great second advent movement before the Laodicean condition had imposed itself on the church, the believers laid themselves open to Satan's disruptive ministry by failing to understand and observe gospel order. This is evident from the following testimony from the Lord through Sister White:

Early Writings, p. 97:

The Lord has shown that gospel order has been too much feared and neglected. Formality should be shunned; but, in so doing, order should not be neglected. There is order in heaven. There was order in the church when Christ was upon the earth, and after His departure order was strictly observed among His apostles. And now in these last days, while God is bringing His children into the unity of the faith, there is more real need of order than ever before; for, as God unites His children, Satan and his evil angels are very busy to prevent this unity and destroy it.

Early Writings, p. 100:

I saw that this door at which the enemy comes in to perplex and trouble the flock can be shut. I inquired of the angel how it could be closed. He said, “The church must flee to God's word, and become established upon gospel order, which has been over-

looked and neglected.” This is indispensably necessary in order to bring the church into the unity of the faith.

It well may be asked why it is that gospel order is feared. It is because those who have been won to the truth come from a situation either in the church from which they came, or from the world, where they suffered the bondage and oppression of being ruled over by other men. Thus they have learned to associate order with restriction of liberty especially if the natural spirit of rebellion in them has not been completely expelled. It is a sad misconception to suppose that, when a person embraces the message, the spirit of rebellion which manifests itself in the most subtle forms, is entirely eradicated. We must never forget that...

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1114:

Rebellion and apostasy are in the very air we breathe. We shall be affected by it unless we by faith hang our helpless souls upon Christ.

So then, it is the natural tendency of the believer who has escaped from the oppression of formal law and order to swing to the opposite extreme. But this is not true Christian liberty; it is license, and the practice of it is licentiousness.

When this movement emerged from the Adventist Church, we tended to construct the movement after the organizational structure of the church which we had left, but the Lord taught us some priceless lessons which changed the order under which we were to operate. There are those in the movement who have truly understood these principles and have faithfully adhered to them. But it seems that there are others who have either forgotten these lessons or never learned them in the first case.

What is now desperately and urgently needed is for every believer to become solidly and permanently established on gospel order. This will require that each person approaches the subject determined to understand just what the Lord has declared to be the truth on the matter. He must be committed to an approach in which no space is given for any prejudice, personal ambition, pre-

conceived ideas, old habits of thinking, or spirit of rebellion. Each must set a watch on his soul with the fixed determination that he keep himself under critical observation so that he will recognize and eliminate the slightest stirrings of any of these elements.

The message on gospel order is taken from the inspired writings and developed in such books as *Lessons from the Reformation*, *Entering into God's Sabbath Rest*, and another yet to be written. *Early Writings*, p. 100-101 is a most important reference. Read the entire chapter but these two pages especially.

Be very careful to recognize that true gospel order is possible only among those who are truly free in Christ. Therefore, it is unknown to the Laodiceans, nor is it possible for them ever to know it until they cease to be such, and become Christians instead.

Yet, even they could not operate without law and order, but, because they are not married to the divine Head, Jesus Christ, they must be joined to human heads, for no body can operate without a head of some kind or the other. God recognized this and therefore sent many testimonies to the Laodiceans when it became clear that they would not forsake their Christless condition, advising them as to how they were to be joined to, and operate under human heads.

Such counsel is not applicable to Christians, just as God's command for Israel to slay the Canaanites has no validity today. The spiritually enlightened Christian will have no difficulty in distinguishing instruction given to the Laodicean from that which is applicable to the true Christian. If this difference is not understood, only confusion will result.

Those who really want the latter rain to come on us with unrestrained power, will make any sacrifice, and put forth every effort to clear the way for its coming. For my own part, I am determined to approach a further research into this subject motivated by only one consideration: What does the Lord declare to be His way of building the kingdom?

1. Essential Preparation for the Latter Rain

Messenger and News Review, April 1989

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 33

Gospel Order, Part 1

A Word from the Editor

There is a change in the format of *The Messenger and News Review* this month which will continue each month for the time being at least. We are printing two chapters of the series entitled, "Praying for the Latter Rain," instead of the usual one chapter. This will come close to filling the magazine to the exclusion of news items.

This measure is being taken because, over the past few weeks, there has been pressed upon me the urgent need to present to you all, the principles and procedures of the extremely important subject of gospel order. By printing two chapters each month, we will cover the ground in half the time and thus hasten the coming of the Latter Rain.

Some idea of the critical importance of this subject can be gained when it is seen that the violation of the divine order cost Lucifer his place in heaven, launched the human family into the depths of misery and woe, and has kept God's people ever since from regaining Paradise. It is entirely correct to say that the Latter Rain will not fall until those upon whom it will fall, correctly understand, and faithfully live by the principles of true gospel order.

That being so, upon every believer there rests the enormous responsibility of making sure that in and through him God's kingdom is being built on earth as it is in heaven.

Praying for the Latter Rain

IT WAS in April, 1986, just three years ago, that the message to pray for the latter rain in the time of the latter rain, was first sent to us by the Lord. In the divine timetable, the hour had struck for believers everywhere to the pray most earnestly for the blessing of the unlimited outpouring of the latter rain, without which endowment of power, the work can never be finished.

Hopefully and expectantly, those who love and live the messages which the Lord has so graciously sent to us, obeyed the call to prayer, confident that the endowment of Heaven's mighty power would soon be experienced by the faithful, the loud cry would ring out, the final battle would be fought and won, and Jesus would return in majesty and light.

But the direct and immediate effect was a little different from what we all anticipated. While we remain sure that all that we have expected will happen, we have been compelled by the working of God's providences to realize that there is the need for still more preparation. Before the glorious gift could be imparted, we had to learn the power of importunate prayer, the design of which is to change, not God, but the suppliant. We were startled to see that we had looked by our praying to change God, not ourselves. Once we had seen this error and corrected it, remarkable changes for the better began to manifest themselves in our lives.

From many among us came reports of having entered a new phase in their life's experience, for a deep and thorough cleansing from hitherto unsuspected evils began to take place. Each person thought he was alone in this struggle, until, on comparing notes, we found that the situation was common to many of us. This was a comforting revelation, for we could see that the Lord was at work on His church. Painful as the experience was and still is, we are strengthened to bear it and bow in submission to the Lord's workings.

But, still the latter rain has not come. Still, before our longing eyes the little cloud does not rise above the horizon. Disappointment threatens to cloud our vision, hope deferred attacks our faith, and anxiety advances to grip us. We find ourselves obliged to fight the good fight of faith to ward off these dark forces.

The questions arise:

Why are we still kept waiting for the latter rain when we need this blessing so desperately?

How much longer must we endure this seemingly endless tarrying time?

Have we, after all, been following a cunningly devised fable?

Naturally, and quite properly, provided that we do not set out to find the solution ourselves, we desire to understand why this seeming delay continues.

The Lord is already supplying the answers. He is directing our attention to certain deficiencies in the movement which must be corrected before the latter rain can fall and the loud cry begin. Our divine Head and Commander is making it quite clear that we must all come into the unity of the faith before we can be entrusted with the unlimited power of the Holy Spirit.

Without a doubt, there is close and beautiful unity among most of the believers, but, at the same time, there are areas of disunity among us serious enough to guarantee the delay of the coming of the latter rain until the divinely provided safeguards against disunity have been thoroughly understood, fully and intelligently accepted, and implemented to perfection.

Before the Holy Spirit could be poured out on the day of Pentecost, the disciples...

Acts 2

¹ ...were all with one accord in one place.

This can only mean that, before the latter rain can fall, the believers must be brought into the same unity again wherein there is no discord, but only a perfect working harmony. Achieving this blessed state of sweet fellowship and perfectly coordinated effort requires much diligent, educated application to the task, which does not come naturally or easily. It has to be made to happen, not just be left to emerge of its own volition by a process of evolution. It is achieved rather by the effectual co-working of Creator and creature.

Provisions for Unity

So, what is it then that the Lord has provided in order to make certain that we all come into the unity of the faith?

1. THE NEW BIRTH

The first essential provision from the infinite Source of light and truth for the unifying of the people of the Lord, is the blessed gift of the new birth, which blessing we must be absolutely certain we have.

Without this, the only unity which could be achieved is the political unity which can be found among worldly people who neither know Christ nor possess Him. This is a superficial unity of convenience which breaks down as soon as it has served its purpose.

A common manifestation of this kind of eliminating differences and working together toward a mutually desired objective, is seen when men face a common enemy. It is then expedient to forget their ancient feuds and bitter animosities, and cooperate to an extent which they never thought would have been possible.

An excellent example of this is provided by the second world war fought out in Europe from 1939 until 1945. During that time, England faced the awful threat of coming under German occupation and slavery. Prior to the war, there had been a great deal of conflict and terrible disunity between capital and labor. Disputes caused strikes, suffering, loss, and even financial ruin for some, but all that disappeared soon after war broke out, and lasted till the danger was passed, and Britain was again free from any German threat. Then, once more, Capital and Labor turned upon each other.

But those who have been endowed with the new birth have a oneness with Christ and each other which transcends any unity born out of political expediency. This is because in the new birth a new life force from a common Source has been implanted within each of the believers. Let not this vital point be overlooked, for being born again involves much more than a change of personal convictions and the adoption of a different life-style from that which had previously been considered acceptable, even though these will always be present with the new birth.

Why is it then that those who have been blessed with the endowment of the new life have a oneness of heart and spirit unknown to those who have never received such a blessing? It is because, as must be plainly evident, that when Christ implants His life in a new believer, He imbues the receiver with the same life,

love, peace, and the rest of the righteous elements which He had established in every other person already born again. Therefore, no matter at what place or time a truly born again person may be located, he will be found to be charged with the same life-forces exactly as are found in every other such person.

It should not be difficult to understand that the actual life of Christ in one believer cannot but harmonize with the same life of Christ which is established in every other believer. The unity will be strong or weak in direct proportion to the development through diligent cultivation of Christ's life within.

But, powerful and wonderful as is the unifying strength of Christ's presence within the believer, it must be remembered that it is not the total answer to the problem. Some suppose that, once Christ's life has been implanted in the Christian, all his spiritual problems are solved, he has only to live out the new nature within him, and unity between him and his fellow pilgrims is assured. Some have even gone so far as to teach that, once the blessing of the new birth has been given them, they cannot sin anymore.

Those who promote such ideas demonstrate a very superficial understanding of the problems facing the Christian as he seeks to regain...

Prophets and Kings, p. 590:

...the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin.

While the new birth is a very wonderful experience by which one is delivered from the bondage of sin and the presence of the enmity against God which is called the old man—the wicked offspring of his father the devil—and is endowed with the actual life of Christ; it does not instantly and miraculously re-educate the mind, nor instruct in the ways in which the Lord's work is to be conducted.

This is made evident by the appalling mistakes recorded in the Scriptures by men who were truly born again. Consider for instance the disciples of Christ as they followed and worked with Him while He was on earth. They certainly were born again when Christ ordained them to the gospel ministry.¹ However, despite the unceasing daily efforts of the Master Teacher to deliver them from their wrong concepts in regard to His mission, and to replace these with living truths, they remained locked in their own theories and ideas until after the resurrection. During all that time, those sincere and dedicated men were not unified in mind or action and could not be until their thinking as well as their hearts were brought into harmony with the mind and heart of Christ.

Those who were won to the truth by their efforts, showed the same unity. Sad to say, it did not last, the breakdown beginning with the departure in their minds from the pure principles of the divine order. This was followed by their increasing adoption of their own ways in the place of God's, which eventually robbed the church generally of their new birth experience, which in turn paved the way for their descent into total apostasy.

At all costs we have to avoid falling into the same pattern of failure if we are to successfully achieve what all the other movements failed to do. Therefore, we must prayerfully examine ourselves to see if we are in fact truly born again.

2. THE PRINCIPLES OF GOSPEL ORDER

Once we have determined to our entire satisfaction that we are new creatures in Christ Jesus, the next requirement is to make absolutely certain that we really understand the principles of the divine order, otherwise called "Gospel Order," and meticulously follow and apply them.

¹ See *Revival and Reformation*, p. 155-162, for an explanation of this (it is in chapter 16, "Ideas and Theories" starting with the subtitle "Twelve Men" and going to the end of the chapter).

It will not be enough to do this from an intelligent and well educated conviction only, no matter how powerful and essential that conviction is. While we would not for an instant discard the necessity for conviction, nor would we minimize it in the least, yet far beyond and above that, each believer must fall deeply in love with the principles of Gospel Order. With the Psalmist, he must find himself exclaiming in irrepressible delight and rapturous appreciation for the divine order:

Psalm 119

⁹⁷ Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.



Some might find difficulty in equating the principles and procedures of gospel order with God's law, thinking of these as two distinct entities. To them, the law is the ten commandment expression of God's character, while gospel order is something else. But, when each is rightly understood, they will be seen to be one and the same thing. Gospel order is the revelation of God's kingdom-building principles and procedures, and so is the awesomely beautiful moral law of which the ten commandments are but a

faint reflection. I trust that this truth will become very apparent as we proceed with this study. I pray for every believer and for myself, that we shall all come to the place where, in genuine sincerity, we spontaneously testify:

Psalm 119

⁹⁷ Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.

The Psalmist was so intensely and deeply in love with these principles, that they occupied his thoughts throughout the entire day, and must therefore have been the guiding force in all his actions. He had reached the point to which every believer must come and beyond which all must progress, for when his love for the divine precepts of gospel order is so great that he meditates upon them all the day long, evil thoughts and desires are excluded, and he is kept from evil deeds by the word of the living God.

Those angels who refused to accept the arguments of Lucifer in his rejection of gospel order and his attempt to establish his own principles and procedures in place of God's ways, are finding and will continue to find their science and their song in the cross of Calvary where these truths are presented in their clearest and greatest manifestation as it is written:

The Desire of Ages, p. 19-20:

Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song.

Consider those words well! There they will find "their science and their song." What does it mean to find their science? It means to discover the correct way of doing things, the divine order, the righteous procedures, and then make that way a personal possession. It is also to know God's self-sacrificing love and how to express that love. It is to repudiate the satanic science of calling upon others to sacrifice and suffer that we may profit and progress at their expense. It is also to repudiate the satanic science of taking God's gifts, including His love, and exercising them according to how we think they should be used.

These principles must be learned as the Master Teacher reveals them to us. We cannot search out these things, for Christianity is a revealed religion. It is never God's way to raise up a movement to search out the truths needed for a given time. The movement's responsibility is to receive the revealed truth from whatever channel the Lord chooses to send it, and then proclaim it wherever the Lord opens the doors for its dissemination.

Therefore, the believer in Jesus never sets out to vindicate and establish what he thinks the truth shall be. Instead, he seeks only to know what the Lord has declared on the matter. He maintains a constant guard against attaching a meaning to the Lord's words which the Almighty never intended to convey through His pronouncements.

When the leading brethren in the Apostolic Church assembled in Jerusalem to discuss and rule on the question of the Jew and the Gentile in relation to salvation, they did not understand this principle. This is evident from their entering into vigorous disputation by which means each sought to impose his ideas on the rest. Each was confident that he was arguing on the basis of what he was convinced was a correct interpretation of the Scriptures. This unfortunate situation continued and worsened until Peter called upon them to observe what the Holy Spirit had done—He had fallen on the Gentile believers with the same power and freedom as He had upon those of Jewish descent. That settled the question. The story is recorded in *Acts 15*.

So, today, it must be remembered that He is God who formulated the science of the cross which embodies the principles and procedures of gospel order. Man did not participate in that work to the slightest degree. His part is to receive the light from the Lord as He imparts it through His chosen messengers, and then, by deep study, earnest prayer, and practical application, make the message the operational science of his life for the present time and the coming eternity.

But, not only is it to be our science; it is also to be our song! In our religious life, songs serve more than one purpose. Some are prayers, examples of which are:

“Break Thou the Bread of Life, Dear Lord to Me,”
“Hover o’er Me Holy Spirit,” and
“Abide with Me.”

Others are statements of belief such as:

“In the Sweet By and By,”
“The Lord’s My Shepherd, I Shall Not Want,” and
“Christ Is Coming.”

Still others are calls to commitment and obedience such as:

“Trust and Obey,”
“Give of Your Best to the Master,” and
“Take Time to Be Holy.”

There are some which inspire us to carry the gospel to the world. Examples are:

“Far and Near the Fields Are Teeming with the Sheaves of
Ripened Grain,”
“Rescue the Perishing,” and
“Seeking the Lost.”

There are more categories yet, but there is no need to list them here except for one of the most important—the expressions of praise, thanksgiving, and gratitude to God for the wonder, beauty, and effectiveness of His ways. This is the particular type of song they will sing when they find in the cross of Calvary their science and their song. It will not be sung so much in gratitude for what the message on gospel order has done for them, although that factor will be inescapably present. Instead, the redeemed, together with those who have never betrayed the sacred trusts, will behold such beauty and perfection in the divine system that they

will be radiant with joy and appreciation as they see and comprehend its wondrous perfection.

Gospel order, or the divine principles of kingdom building, when correctly understood and rightly applied, is not a restrictive, burdensome load which must be endured by the Christian. Quite the opposite, it is an operational guideline of the most incredible beauty and perfection which will cause those who understand it to sing its praises.

This appreciation is not experienced by the legalist, the person who knows what is right, is convinced he ought to be performing according to the commandment, and sets himself to do so without having the divine Presence within him. Such a person is forcing himself to act contrary to the nature which dwells in him. He faces a never ending, painful, frustrating, and discouraging battle against himself. He, while remaining in this unhappy state, can never find in the cross his science and his song. That is an impossibility.

Therefore, if we find that we have not fallen in love with the principles of gospel order, if we cannot find in them our science and our song, and if we cannot testify with the Psalmist,

Psalm 119

⁹⁷ Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day,

—we need to realize that a definite work of divine grace is needed to open our eyes to behold the wondrous things contained in the law. Look to the Lord to perform a wonderful work in every believer till our hearts sing for joy at such wonderful truth. Let the promise be claimed:

Matthew 5

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Let us pray with the psalmist:

Psalm 119

³³ Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end.

³⁴ Give me understanding, and I shall keep your law; Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

³⁵ Make me walk in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.

³⁶ Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to covetousness.

³⁷ Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in your way.

³⁸ Establish your word to your servant, who is devoted to fearing you.

³⁹ Turn away my reproach which I dread, for your judgments are good.

⁴⁰ Behold, I long for your precepts; revive me in your righteousness.

Those who find in themselves a growing appreciation for gospel order will long as did the writer of this *Psalm* for an ever deeper and clearer revelation of these mighty and beautiful principles. When such holy aspirations are manifest in our lives, we may be sure that we are moving in the right direction, and that our spirit is responding to and acting in harmony with God's spirit. It is wonderfully reassuring when such a unity of mind and spirit between God and us is realized.

But, if we find a spirit of fear and of resistance rising in the face of God's calling us to gospel order, then, instead of bracing ourselves to fight against it, let us in the deepest humility, and lowly spirit of sweet submission, seek the Lord's grace to instill His righteousness within us. Our eternal life depends on such a victory being achieved.

This makes this subject to be one of the greatest importance, for the future destiny of each person depends on the way in which that person relates in mind, spirit, and practice to gospel order.

Absolute and incontestable proof of this is given by the following facts. Consider them most carefully:

Firstly, it was Lucifer's rejection of the principles and procedures of gospel order, plus his determination to replace God's ways with his own, and his first subtle, and later open warfare against heaven's order, which cost him his place in heaven and his forfeiture of eternal life. As if that was not more than enough, it opened the flood gates of misery, woe, and death on this consequently ruined and dying world. Only if we had the capacity to fully assess the loss and suffering which has been endured so far, could we know how serious is the rejection of the principles and procedures of gospel order.

Then, once we had beheld the magnitude of this disaster, we would have the most powerful motivation to utterly and eternally reject anything which in any way violates gospel order. Our zeal to defend God's ways would know no limits and then how swiftly the great controversy would be brought to its close.

Secondly, since the fall in the Garden of Eden, every movement which the Lord has raised up and which He commissioned to be His instrument for the finishing of the work, has failed because the members did not faithfully operate within the guidelines established by God in gospel order. The only exception so far is the current movement which is under test to see whether it will fail like all the rest before it, or will succeed where the others have fallen down and been rejected.

Each of these movements of the past were made up from individuals who, obeying God's call to "Come out of Babylon," separated themselves from those systems of religion in which gospel order had become a forgotten relic of history. This meant that they knew nothing of true gospel order as an operational facility even though they had the spirit of Christ within them.

Consequently, some at least tended without question to bring their old ways with them, and expected to establish these in the new movement. This naturally caused conflict as they sought to rule over workers who, emancipated as they were from the bondage of the fallen churches, and rejoicing in the freedom they

had obtained in Christ, would not be enslaved again. At the same time, they understood that they had to submit themselves to the will of the Holy Spirit as it was expressed through the church. Lacking in the early days of the new movement a clear, precise, and comprehensive teaching on the subject of gospel order, they were unsure as to how to balance their personal freedom with their need to be subject one to another, to the church, and to Jesus Christ. Some tended to pull too far in one direction, while others leaned toward the opposite.

These conflicts between people within whom was the spirit of Christ and who were possessed with a most earnest desire to safeguard the best interests of the church, naturally led to serious crises which threatened to destroy the movement.

But the Lord saw in these situations splendid opportunities to educate and establish His people in the principles of gospel order. These efforts on the Lord's part were usually very successful. They united the believers and brought wonderful prosperity to the church. The busy believers ever reaching out to bring salvation to the perishing, knew just what the correct procedures were, how to relate to one another as supporters and coworkers, and how to serve the Head of the church as He should be served.

But, as time passed it was not long before some and then others began to revert to their old ways once more. As certainly as they did this, apostasy was inevitable. It returned, surely enough, with separation from God in its train, and another promising movement receded into history as a total and dismal failure.

Despite this, there never is a time when the Lord does not have His movement, though as Elijah discovered, they are sometimes difficult to find. So, at the present time, God has His movement and it is a very visible and active body of people. It has been raised up at a truly momentous and opportune time, to succeed where others have failed miserably.

The possibilities for failure are just as high for us, if not even higher, as they were for every movement which has gone before

us. But we also have the same opportunity for victory which they had. That triumph will become a living, eternal reality only if we take some definite and urgent steps.

The first of these is to learn from the fall of every previous movement how their apostasy from the principles and procedures of gospel order was the cause of their downfall. Then, when we see what they did on the one hand, and what they should have done on the other, we will understand exactly what we must not do, and what we must do. Then we must dedicate ourselves to unswerving loyalty to the divine principles of operation knowing that failure to do so will doom the movement to the same apostasy, failure, and separation from God as have marked the destruction of every promising movement before us.

Let our entire beings thrill with the high and noble resolve never to let the history of failure be repeated in this movement.

Early Writings, p. 100:

I saw that this door at which the enemy comes in to perplex and trouble the flock can be shut. I inquired of the angel how it could be closed. He said, "The church must flee to God's word, and become established upon gospel order, which has been overlooked and neglected." This is indispensably necessary in order to bring the church into the unity of the faith.

2. Christ: the Pattern

Messenger and News Review, April 1989

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 34

Gospel Order, Part 2

THERE has been no one who has observed gospel order so perfectly and so faithfully as Jesus Christ when He was on earth. Consequently, there is no mystery attending the reasons for His unqualified, brilliant, and enduring victory over the powers of darkness. It was His meticulous observance of the principles and procedures of gospel order which made His triumph over the kingdom of darkness sure and certain. His life testifies that every follower of His who is equally faithful to the divine order will in like manner be as completely successful and as totally victorious.

Daily the Saviour sought to teach these wonderful things to His disciples, but they were so slow to learn, tended to ever revert to their old ways once more, and tried to compel Jesus to abandon the ways of God in favor of their own. Consequently, they shut themselves out from the close and intimate fellowship which would otherwise have been theirs, worked in opposition to the Lord, and suffered much confusion, failure, and perplexity. But the Master Teacher never abandoned them to their perversity. Instead, He lovingly and forgivingly worked to establish them in the principles and procedures of the divine order. A splendid example of this is given in the teaching session conducted at Caesarea Philippi, as recorded in *Matthew* 16:13-20.

Matthew 16

¹³ When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?

It is most important that we correctly understand Christ's purpose in asking this question, for it would be all too easy to misinterpret His motives and objectives. He was certainly not looking to His disciples to provide Him with inside information on how

He was regarded by the people, for He already knew that better than they did.

His thoughts were far removed from any intention of confirming or justifying himself. Instead, His objective was to guide those disciples down a specific pathway of learning; down the same pathway of light in which the Lord still seeks to lead us today.

As a highly skilled Teacher, Jesus led them from the known to the unknown, beginning with the general knowledge that he was a son of man, a very real human being. Everyone could see that so clearly that no one had any doubts or questions about it. They saw too that He was a very gifted man so that they equated Him with the great prophets of the past.

Matthew 16

¹⁴ So they said, Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

The disciples realized that the people saw Christ as one of the prophets, a gifted and spiritually powerful individual, but did not recognize the presence of divinity in Him. The people did not discern that He was God tabernacled in the flesh. Yet, this knowledge was and ever will be essential to those who will inherit eternal life. So, to reveal this truth to them, Jesus continued His questioning:

¹⁵ He said to them, But who do you say that I am?

Peter, speaking for himself and the rest of the twelve, replied:

¹⁶ You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Thus the disciples had truly learned much more than the general populace. By the ministration of the Holy Spirit through Christ they had come to discern that Jesus was more than a man. He was also God. They had responded correctly so far as they could see this truth, as Christ's reply reveals:

Matthew 16

¹⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this Rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

We are left with no doubt in regard to the identity of the Rock on which the mighty Deliverer would build His church. It was certainly not Peter as some affirm. It was Christ, the Rock of Ages.

The Desire of Ages, p. 412-413:

Jesus continued:

Matthew 16

¹⁸ I say also unto you, That you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The word Peter signifies a stone—a rolling stone. Peter was not the rock upon which the church was founded. The gates of hell did prevail against him when he denied his Lord with cursing and swearing. The church was built upon One against whom the gates of hell could not prevail.

Centuries before the Saviour's advent Moses had pointed to the Rock of Israel's salvation. *Deuteronomy* 32:4. The psalmist had sung of...

Psalm 62

⁷ ...the Rock of my strength.

Isaiah had written,

Isaiah 28

¹⁶ Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation.

Peter himself, writing by inspiration, applies this prophecy to Jesus. He says,

1 Peter 2 [RV]

³ If you have tasted that the Lord is gracious:

⁴ Unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious,

⁵ You also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house.

1 Corinthians 3

¹¹ Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Matthew 16

¹⁸ Upon this rock, [said Jesus,] I will build my church.

In the presence of God, and all the heavenly intelligences, in the presence of the unseen army of hell, Christ founded His church upon the living Rock. That Rock is himself—His own body—for us broken and bruised. Against the church built upon this foundation, the gates of hell shall not prevail.

So then, when Christ declared that upon this Rock He would build His church which is His kingdom, He was affirming that He himself is the foundation on which the church is built. But, this not all, for, of himself He said,

John 14

⁶ I am...the Truth.

This is a powerful declaration, the full significance of which needs to be understood by every believer in Jesus. It must be seen that Jesus spoke the truth because He himself is the truth.

Education, p. 78-79:

What He taught, He lived.

John 13

¹⁵ I have given you an example, [He said to His disciples;] that you should do as I have done.

John 15

¹⁰ I have kept my Father's commandments.

Thus in His life, Christ's words had perfect illustration and support. And more than this; what He taught, He was. His words were the expression, not only of His own life experience, but of His own character. Not only did He teach the truth, but He was the Truth. It was this that gave His teaching, power.

So then the words "Rock," "Christ," and "Truth," all refer to the same glorious entity. For Christ to say that upon this Rock He would build His kingdom, was to declare with mighty force, that upon a particular, all embracing Truth—the glorious marriage of

divinity and humanity, the thrilling fact that Christ is both God and man—He will build His kingdom. It is the only way in which the kingdom can be built, for it is a living kingdom which cannot be divorced for so much as an instant from the Source of life. This requires the services of an unfailing, capable, and adequate Connector through whom a continuous stream of life can flow from the Lifegiver into the helpless receiver.

Thus, in the beginning, the Omnipotent Creator centered His kingdom structure around the system in which He is the Source of life, Christ is the Connector, and all created beings are the dependent receivers. In this arrangement born out of necessity and formulated by the supreme wisdom of the Almighty, Christ was the sole Connector. Nothing, absolutely nothing, passed from God to His creatures except through Christ, the Only Begotten of God.

It is so important that this be clearly seen, truly understood, and firmly held, that we will stress the truth of it again. It is the truth that, when Lucifer was the covering cherub, absolutely nothing was available to any created being except through Christ. No truth was imparted to them, no rays of light shone upon them, no message unfolded before their delighted gaze, no life was given them, and no blessing bestowed on them which had not flowed to them through Christ. He alone was the great Connector in the kingdom, which was the church. There was no one with whom He shared that unique position.

This was so, not because God had arbitrarily decreed that it should be so, but because there was no other way, under the circumstances, it could possibly successfully operate. Because of the awesome power of God who is so great that He could speak the multiplied billions of suns and systems into existence, it is impossible for any created being to receive anything directly from Him without being destroyed. To overcome the problem, there had to be provided a Mediator who on the divine side was equal in power with the Father, and on the other side was one with the creatures.

There was only one Being in the entire universe who had the qualifications to fill that position—Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten of the Father. He could do it because He was Creator and creature in the one Person. On His divine side, He reached all the way up to the throne of the Almighty himself, while on His other side, He reached all the way down to where the creature looked to heaven for light and life. It was an arrangement born of infinite love and perfect wisdom in which there was not a single thread of selfishness whatsoever.²

There are probably some who hold the limited view that the only reason for Christ's taking human nature upon Him was so that He could die to pay the penalty for guilty man. There is no denying that He could never have paid the price for our sins and won the right to redeem us if He had not taken fallen, sinful, mortal humanity upon Him. But, dying for the perishing sinner is only a portion of His work. It must be seen and understood that by being both Creator and creature in His one person at the same time, He fulfills an eternal purpose in the divine scheme of things.

Paul was granted a very special ministry in respect to the mystery of God as he testifies:

Ephesians 3

⁸ To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,

⁹ And to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;

¹⁰ To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,

¹¹ According to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

²For a more detailed discussion of this, see *Entering into God's Sabbath Rest*, Chapter 3, "Christ the Great Connector," and *The Living and the Dead*, Chapter 2, "Seed Bearers."

An eternal purpose has no beginning and no ending. There never was nor ever will be a time when this eternal purpose is not in full operational force. In order for this wonderful purpose to be fulfilled today so that you and I can have access to the Father through Jesus Christ, our mighty Intercessor must be both God and man.

Likewise for anyone at any period in history to have the same vital connection with the Almighty Source, Immanuel had to be both God and creature. Therefore,

The Desire of Ages, p. 311-312:

Christ is the ladder that Jacob saw, the base resting on the earth, and the topmost round reaching to the gate of heaven, to the very threshold of glory. If that ladder had failed by a single step of reaching the earth, we should have been lost. But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (*Romans* 8:3), He lived a sinless life. Now by His divinity He lays hold upon the throne of heaven, while by His humanity He reaches us. He bids us by faith in Him attain to the glory of the character of God. Therefore are we to be perfect, even as our “Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

But taking this back to Abraham or even to Adam does not plumb the eternity of the past during which the same provisions and principles were in force. That is to say that, from the first day of His creation, for any angel to achieve access to the Father, he had to do it through Christ, who, in order to make this possible then had to be both God and Angel.

Christ was never that originally, for, before the beginnings of any created things, He was God only, but just so soon as the need arose, He humbly and willingly accepted the limitations imposed upon Him by His adopting the actual life of the creature. That this is true is verified by the fact that He was the Only Begotten of the Father before sin appeared or man was even created. This verification appears in the following paragraph which describes a convocation which took place after sin began to develop in Lucifer,

but before man was created. As you carefully read it through, please notice that Christ is consistently presented as the Son of God or the Only Begotten Son of God, or other words to the same effect.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 36:

The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both. About the throne gathered the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng—"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (*Revelation* 5:11), the most exalted angels, as ministers and subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity. Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. The Son of God had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for himself contrary to God's plan, but would exalt the Father's glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love.

In this paragraph the issues of the great controversy are set forth. By it we are enabled to understand that Lucifer was determined to set aside the divine principles of kingdom building, which is rebellion against the law of God, which is the rejection of gospel order.

The entire issue centered around the position of God's Only Begotten Son, the problem arising because of the development of pride in Lucifer, the covering cherub. By this means he was so blinded that he could not see anything clearly anymore. Thus he lost sight of the fact that Christ was more than angel like himself, but was also, at the same time, God in verity. If he had been pre-

pared to humble himself to the point where true righteousness again filled him, he would have recovered the capacity to see God in the Angel, Jesus Christ, and the problem of rebellion would have ceased to exist. He would have understood and accepted the fact that only the Archangel possessed the qualifications to fill the vital position of Connector, and would have rejoiced at the unutterable manifestation of the infinitely loving spirit of self-sacrifice which had brought Christ to accept this work.

We must strive with all our powers under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit to understand Lucifer's problem and the entirely adequate provisions made by God to solve his problem and completely avert the establishment of rebellion. This must be done, for the same tests remain with us, and we must come out on the right side of the same issues if we are ever to re-enter heaven. That point must become embedded in the consciousness of every person who is determined to be saved in the kingdom which shall be built according to the same unchangeable principles now and in the future, as they ever were in the past. Like Lucifer, we can rebel against them, or, like Christ, we can live in perfect accord with them. The choice is ours; the results for good or ill are as far-reaching as eternity.

First and foremost, the rebel angel should have made certain of maintaining faith in the everlasting Father, established in the unshakable conviction that God was perfectly just, totally impartial, everlastingly righteous, and uncompromisingly committed to the promotion of the welfare of all His subjects. Absolute, unquestioning faith in God is essential for those who have dedicated themselves to work with God in His kingdom-building procedures.

Hebrews 11

⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Had Lucifer retained this kind of faith in the Omnipotent One, then, when he found himself unable to understand the mystery of God which is the embodiment of the operative principles of gospel order, he would have reasoned, "I do not understand what the Lord is doing, nor do I have to until it is eventually made clear to me. But, for the present, what I can and will do is to study what God has done and is doing and conform my life and work to harmonize with Him."

To carry out this plan necessitated his being able to actually and accurately see what God was doing. There was no problem in this regard, for, Lucifer, together with the angels, observed the actions of the Infinite One in placing Michael, the Archangel, in the position of Connector or Daysman. Furthermore, they all saw that light, truth, knowledge, and life could be received only through Him.

Let it be stressed that, before pride began to develop in Lucifer, he would have understood and been very much in harmony with the knowledge that Christ had been appointed to His position by His Father, and had not taken the position to himself.

This observation of God's behavior as a guideline for ours, is a practice we should develop until we become quite skilled at it. It is an infallible means of ensuring that God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. It is a sure and certain safeguard against God moving in one direction, and His people in another.

3. Following the Path Where God Leads

Messenger and News Review, May 1989

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 35

Gospel Order, Part 3

A Word from the Editor

Once again there is no *News Review* this month, the entire space in this publication being devoted to *The Messenger*. This is a further emphasis of the urgent need for the entire movement to come into total harmony with God on this question.

Inevitably, as these studies progress, we will find that old ideas and theories will be challenged and will have to be exchanged for truths of divine origin. When confronted with this requirement, we shall be severely tested to see whether we are committed to following the Lord, regardless of the cost. In fact, we should right now determine that we shall not even think about the price to be paid, but will ask only one question: not, "Is it the truth?" but, "Is it the truth for this time and place?"

The written and created word of God is so filled with truth that students of the Scriptures and of nature, can put together inspirational and fascinating studies containing nothing but truth, but, unless the message is present truth, it is but a diversion which delights the devil. Studying and presenting it can only confuse the believers and delay the finishing of the work.

We must therefore strictly confine ourselves to what God is sending us through the messenger of His choosing. Those are the truths we are to receive, know, experience, and teach to the exclusion of all others. Then will come the latter rain.

I AM deeply impressed, actively inspired, and greatly encouraged by the principle and procedure introduced in the closing paragraphs of the last chapter—that of carefully observing what God has done in a situation, as the guide for what we are to do under the same conditions. I can see that, when the believers in Jesus faithfully carry out this course of action, the church will be preserved from making fearful mistakes, and the will of God, and the building of the kingdom, will in truth be done on earth as it is carried forward in Heaven. We will be divorced from human scheming, will be unified in spirit and practice, and will soon see the latter rain fall.

Conflict in the Early Church

A splendid example of this is provided in the early Christian Church. Paul and Barnabas had been laboring successfully among the Gentiles, but others in the church demanded that these new believers from the Gentile world be physically circumcised. The matter developed into a rather intense controversy. It was finally decided that these two missionaries should go to Jerusalem to have the problem solved by airing it in a general meeting.

But the plan threatened to become self-defeating, for the meeting quickly degenerated into a babble of disputation in which no one for the moment, asked the vital question:

“What has God done in all this?”

That that church, charged as it was with the living power and immediate presence of the Holy Spirit, could fail so badly, so soon, is truly amazing. You would expect that they, in the glorious freshness of their new experience, would have fixed their gaze on their divine Leader, and kept pace with Him as He led the way forward. But they did no such thing. Their fixed focus was on their deeply entrenched prejudices against the Gentiles which had been systematically and diligently inculcated for centuries. But the Lord absolutely required them to gain the victory over those old habits of thought no matter how long they had been cherished.

Likewise today, as the principles of gospel order are being unfolded, God will call upon us to make changes in our attitudes, convictions, and practices which will run directly opposite to what we would naturally accept, and require us to adopt and live by principles contrary to our human dispositions. Like the early Christians, we will tend to forget all about the need to keep our eyes fixed on our great Leader, while instead, we shall, like them, be busily arguing from our own faulty point of view.

Why do we do this? Why did they do it? Why did each one of them argue from the point of view of his prejudices, convictions, ideas, and theories instead of asking what the Lord was doing?

It was because...

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 189:

The Jewish converts generally were not inclined to move as rapidly as the providence of God opened the way.

God's providences are revealed to us by what He does, but the members of the churches back then made the common mistake of looking to their own wisdom instead of taking great care to see how God was working. Thus, when they came together to settle the problem, none adopted the true gospel order procedure of looking at what God was doing, even though His providential actions were clearly visible to all. If they had taken a moment to look, they would have seen that God, by His actions, had already revealed what they were to do.

But what had God done that was so clear and convincing as to entirely settle the question?

He had endowed the Gentile believers with the same gift of the Holy Spirit as that which He had bestowed upon the Jewish converts. He had made no distinction between them whatsoever, and if He had not, then they must not. There was no doubt about what God had done, for it was too plain not to be seen. There was no one who could argue that He had made a difference, for none was detectable.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 192-193:

The various points involved in the settlement of the main question at issue seemed to present before the council insurmountable difficulties. But the Holy Spirit had, in reality, already settled this question, upon the decision of which seemed to depend the prosperity, if not the very existence, of the Christian church.

Acts 15

⁷ When there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, you know how that a good while

ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

He reasoned that the Holy Spirit had decided the matter under dispute by descending with equal power upon the uncircumcised Gentiles and the circumcised Jews.

It was extremely fortunate for the cause of God that at least one man looked at what the Lord had done, saw in the light of that what they in turn had to do, and then fearlessly and with deep conviction, called the church to walk where the Lord had led the way. The measure adopted by Peter was incredibly effective. Every person there stopped pressing his own views of what should or should not have been done.

Acts 15

¹² Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles.

All disputation ceased, and a wonderful quietness descended upon the assembly as they directed their attention to the actions God had taken. As they saw without difficulty what the Lord had done in that He made no distinction between the Jew and the Gentile, they saw and accepted what they had to do. It is an inspiration to see that they all did it, with the result that the believers were unified on this question, and a marvelous day of power and prosperity opened before the church.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 400-401:

As a result of this council, the brethren had united in making definite recommendations to the churches concerning certain rites and customs, including circumcision.

That they also had put aside their prejudices against the Gentiles, is evidenced by their uniting in their recommendation of Paul and Barnabas to be missionaries to the Gentiles.

It was at this general council that the brethren had also united in commending to the Christian churches Barnabas and Paul as laborers worthy of the full confidence of every believer.

It would have been impossible for them to have made such an unqualified recommendation of those two men, if they, after beholding what God had done, had not wholeheartedly submitted to the Lord's leadership. Note that the church had been ignoring the actions of God for quite some time, according to Peter who said,

Acts 15

⁷ Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.

That which had happened "a good while ago," was God's instruction to Peter to respond to the call by Cornelius to come to Caesarea to preach the gospel in this so-called Gentile household. Obedient to the directive sent from heaven, Peter, despite the fact that to do so was to act contrary to a lifetime of deeply established prejudices, and to invite the censure of his brethren in the church, went to the Roman household, and delivered the light from heaven. Then, even...

Acts 10

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

Peter, as he saw what the Lord had done, was completely convinced that, in God's sight—the only view which mattered—there was no distinction between Jew and Gentile. Peter's attention was focused on nothing but the actions of God. It was He who had given him the instructional vision of the clean and unclean animals; it was He who had told Cornelius to send for him personally; it was He who had arranged it so that the messengers from Caesarea should arrive at the door the moment the vision ended; it was He who had directed him to go to the home of Cornelius; and it was He who had poured out the former rain on the Romans with the same power as He had poured it out on the Jews. Throughout the entire drama, Peter had been nothing more than an obedient instrument of his heavenly Father's will. Thus, when He saw that the Almighty made no distinction between different

nationalities, he knew he could no longer hold those distinctions either.



Thus this experience in which he witnessed the demonstration of God’s actions, fitted him to be God’s instrument to settle the disputation in the great council of Jerusalem “a good while” later.

There should have been no need for Peter to have reminded the delegates at the Jerusalem conference, for, “a good while” before, they had seen the actions of God and been convinced by them. It had happened when they had heard of his visit to Cornelius, and they had called him to account for it. But, as Peter had recited the actions of God throughout the entire experience, they had been thoroughly convinced, and had advanced no arguments to the contrary. In fact, they had rejoiced at this revelation of the Father’s great love.

Acts 11

¹⁸ When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.

Having come so far that they saw by His actions that God made no distinctions between the different races of people, they should never have needed reminding of this ever again. It should have become a fixed conviction, a matter settled beyond all question, and immune from all challenge or disputation. That is what the Lord expected of them but was disappointed when they at the Jerusalem council had behaved as if no light had ever come through on the question.

Today, as never before, the Almighty needs men and women of fixed, established convictions, believers who have studied the truth until it has become their very own, until nothing can move them from it. Until such reliability can be achieved so that the Lord has a people whom He can implicitly rely upon, He cannot entrust us with the gift of the Holy Spirit in latter rain power.

SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1161:

Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God’s people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come.

Not only does God instruct us by demonstration, He likewise teaches us by declaration. In the emancipation of Peter and the rest of the believers from Jewish exclusiveness, God declared His position in the instructive vision of the clean and unclean food offered for Peter’s ingestion, and by the explanation accompanying the dream. It was all given so clearly that Peter and the others to whom he related the messages from God, plainly understood what their divine Leader was teaching them.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 135:

The vision conveyed to Peter both reproof and instruction. It revealed to him the purpose of God—that by the death of Christ the Gentiles should be made fellow heirs with the Jews to the blessings of salvation.

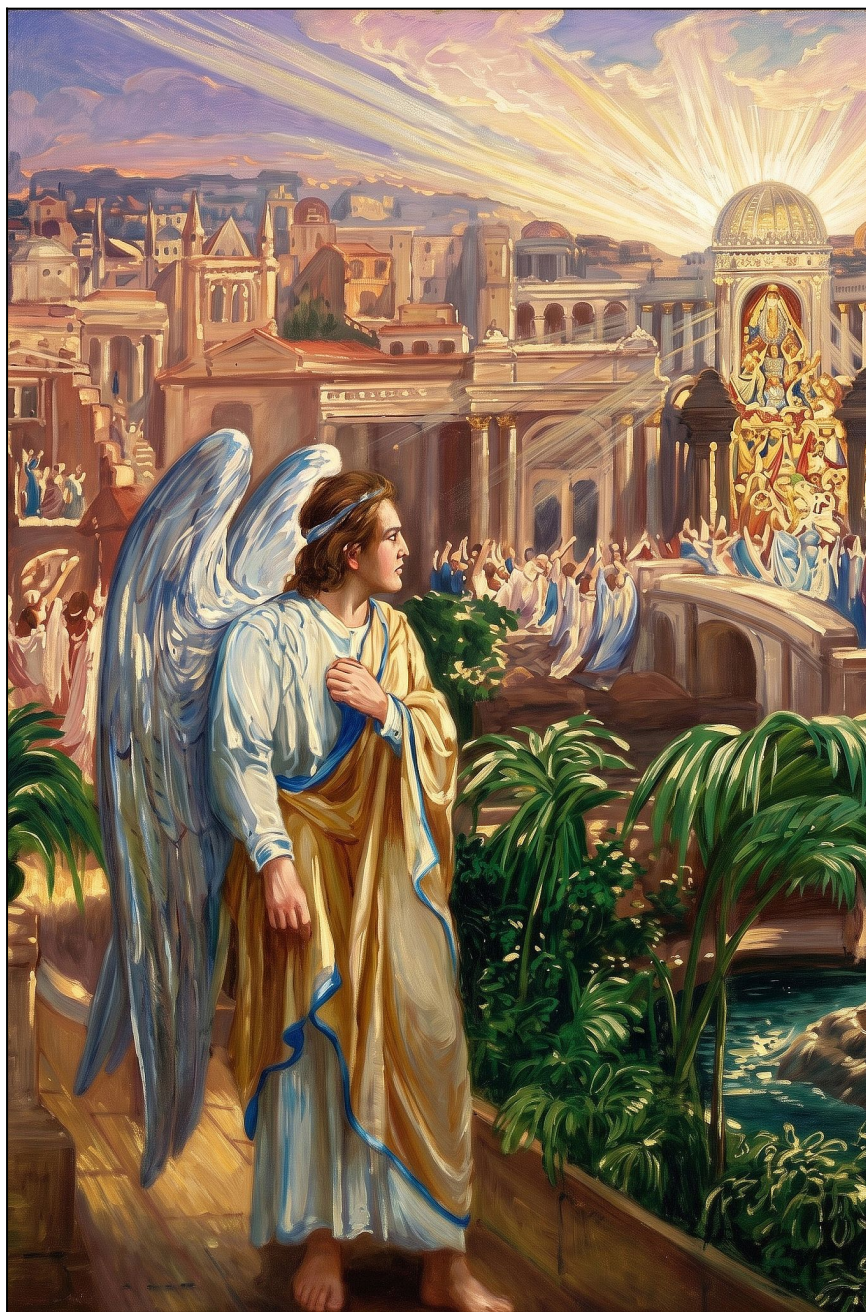
Thus, by saying and doing, Jehovah instructed His people. Their task was to listen and look, and then say and do according to the positions adopted by the master Plan-maker, and infinite Source. I will appeal to these witnesses in the strongest possible terms as I bring the requirements of gospel order closer in their application to ourselves. God calls us to attentively listen to His words, and to look closely at what He is doing, and then to follow exactly where He leads the way.

It is possible that, in this movement, there will be some who will want to dispute these principles. I appeal to all such as Peter appealed to the church in his day, to stop looking at your own ideas and theories, and to fix your gaze on what the Lord has done and is doing in the matter. If we will determine to always do that, it will as certainly end all disputation as it did in the apostolic church, and that would be lovely, for it would create the conditions for the falling of the latter rain.

The Original Conflict in Heaven

If Lucifer had been careful to look and listen, and then worked in strict harmony with Jehovah's system of kingdom-building, there would never have been any need for the King of the universe to have convened that great meeting in heaven, nor would there ever have been the rebellion with its incredible harvest of suffering, death, and destruction.

There was no secret about the way in which God was building His kingdom both in heaven and throughout the universe. Everyone could see for themselves that God's only begotten Son was the mighty, all-sufficient Connector through whom they received every blessing from the eternal Source, God the Father. Furthermore, the system had operated in flawless perfection for a duration of time unknown to us, to the untarnished blessing of every creature throughout the infinite reaches of the kingdom. It was all so perfect that there was not the slightest justification for complaint. It was impossible to improve on the system. It was absolute perfection.



Lucifer plotting against Gospel Order

Yet Lucifer dared to challenge the ways of God, to claim that the divine kingdom-building methods were faulty, and to demand that they be modified. He would do away with the existing format in which all things flowed from the infinite Source to every creature through the one Connector, Immanuel, and would install himself in the place of the Son of God. He became determined upon this even though he did not have the qualifications or the capacities to fill the position he coveted.

Yet, so skillfully were his arguments formulated, and so persuasively were they presented that one third of the angels were convinced his cause was just and accordingly accepted him as their leader, while the remainder did not escape being affected to quite a remarkable degree and to the point where, even though they did not surrender their loyalty to God, they had some serious doubts about the entire controversy. It was not until Christ sacrificed himself on Calvary that the loyal angels were totally delivered from Satan's sophistries.³

So, to avert the impending crisis, God called the angels together to reinforce with His words what He had forever done and would ever continue to do. It should be carefully noted and forever remembered that God took a totally uncompromising stand in regard to the issue. He came in unqualified support of His Messenger—the Word, Immanuel. He did not make the slightest concession to Lucifer, nor did He support his views in any way whatsoever.

It will be found as these studies proceed, that God is utterly predictable and totally reliable when it comes to the stand He will take whenever the position of the messenger of His appointment is challenged. It does not matter when or where He is called upon to act, He will make no space for any who violate gospel order; for any who seek to build the kingdom in any other way than His. If people would realize that to fight against the messenger

³ See *Behold Your God*, Chapter 4, "The Character of God and the Ending of the Great Controversy."

whom the Lord has called, is to fight against God himself in a battle which they can have no hope of winning, they would never undertake the conflict.

This is not because He has arbitrarily decreed that it shall be that way, for God does not travel down the track of despotism. Rather, it is because there is no other system by which a kingdom of such beauty and sinless perfection could be established and operated. Satan and men have tried all the alternatives. One appraising glance at any or all of the others is enough to convince every honest soul that in them is no future. It is enough to assure us that the principles on which they are constructed are corrupt and self-destructive.

When once the comparison is made, it will be seen that God's kingdom-building principle is definitely not the best of several options, but rather the only choice which works eternally. History is proving this fact, for every kingdom constructed by powerful and gifted men has failed, or is in the process of dying.

None but the mind of the Infinite could have ever devised the divine order which prevails in His government. Therefore, in it is not a single thread of human devising; there are no suggestion boxes in heaven, nor in God's kingdom on earth, when it is being built according to the Pattern formulated by the Most High.

But, why are we so concerned with the fall of Lucifer in these studies on the divine order or the principles of God's kingdom-building? It is because those who would regain Paradise must overcome on the very point where Lucifer and his followers failed! What they rejected, we have to accept! What they refused as the guideline for their lives, we must make the operating principle of ours!

Where they would not look at what God was doing, and listen to what He was saying, we must both observe and hear, and then build as He builds!

The Application to Our Time

And what does all this mean in specific terms? It means quite a number of things, the first of which we will now consider.

Lucifer's rejection of the divine order manifested itself in his refusal to submit to the system whereby the Almighty communicated all life and light through a single messenger, namely Immanuel, to the exclusion of all others.

That means that our acceptance of the divine order will be manifest in our doing the very opposite from him by being submissively willing to accept God's action in communicating His life and light through a single messenger to the exclusion of all others.

I have found that whenever I have sought to teach these vital principles, there are fears generated that I am trying to exalt the contemporary messenger to equality with Moses or even Christ himself. Those who lay this charge demonstrate by so doing that they have entirely missed the point. It is not a question of each messenger being equal in power, knowledge, capacity, and so on, for that can never be anyway. What we are discussing is the operational principle common to all messengers, be they great or small.

To call for men to accept one person as the messenger, is a tough test to impose on sinful humanity. This is because Lucifer embedded in each human being his spirit of rebellion against God's order and thus this rebellion is all around us.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1114:

Rebellion and apostasy are in the very air we breathe. We shall be affected by it unless we by faith hang our helpless souls upon Christ. If men are so easily misled, how will they stand when Satan shall personate Christ, and work miracles?

When Lucifer turned to his own ways in preference to God's, the very spirit of rebellion fixed itself within him, so that he became rebellious by very nature. When he persuaded angels and

men to follow him, he infected them with the same evil spirit from which emanates an atmosphere powerful in its influence upon others.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 339:

Every soul is surrounded by an atmosphere of its own—an atmosphere, it may be, charged with the life-giving power of faith, courage, and hope, and sweet with the fragrance of love. Or it may be heavy and chill with the gloom of discontent and selfishness, or poisonous with the deadly taint of cherished sin. By the atmosphere surrounding us, every person with whom we come in contact is consciously or unconsciously affected.

When we understand that the spirit of rebellion is present in every person not yet born again, and remains to some extent in the human nature of those even who are, and that each person is surrounded by an atmosphere charged from what he is, it will not be difficult to believe that:

Rebellion and apostasy are in the very air we breathe,
—and that:

We shall be affected by it unless we by faith hang our helpless souls upon Christ.

Usually the mere suggestion that the Lord will communicate His light through one messenger is enough to chill many with fear, despite the obvious fact that this is what the Lord is doing and has done over and over in the past. In making this statement I am not ignoring the fact that in the Apostolic church God spoke through many messengers as He will again do during the coming loud cry, for which there are very good reasons. We will examine those reasons later.⁴

Apart from those who are fearful of the idea, are others who find in themselves a natural resistance to the plan, but, in view of the prevailing spirit of rebellion which surrounds us in the very air we breathe, this is to be expected. Do not be at all surprised as

⁴ See Chapter 17, "The Extension of Gospel Order Through Redemption."

you read these words, if you find that they generate a feeling of evil foreboding in you. This is quite normal, though quite unacceptable, for such a feeling arising in the face of such beautiful truth is indicative of the need for deliverance from some very wrong ideas and theories.

It is also very usual for fear to possess us when the Lord calls for an advance. Again and again, to obey the Lord seems to invite danger, loss, and even death. The threat is so real that it requires living faith to follow where the Lord leads the way. An excellent example of this is found in the crossing of the Red Sea.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 290:

God in His providence brought the Hebrews into the mountain fastnesses before the sea, that He might manifest His power in their deliverance and signally humble the pride of their oppressors. He might have saved them in any other way, but He chose this method in order to test their faith and strengthen their trust in Him. The people were weary and terrified, yet if they had held back when Moses bade them advance, God would never have opened the path for them. It was “by faith” that “they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land.” *Hebrews* 11:29. In marching down to the very water, they showed that they believed the word of God as spoken by Moses. They did all that was in their power to do, and then the Mighty One of Israel divided the sea to make a path for their feet.

The great lesson here taught is for all time. Often the Christian life is beset by dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before and bondage or death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, “Go forward.” We should obey this command, even though our eyes cannot penetrate the darkness, and we feel the cold waves about our feet. The obstacles that hinder our progress will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Those who defer obedience till every shadow of uncertainty disappears and there remains no risk of failure or defeat, will never obey at all. Unbelief whispers, “Let us wait till the obstructions are removed, and we can see our way clearly;” but faith courageously urges an advance, hoping all things, believing all things.

The cloud that was a wall of darkness to the Egyptians was to the Hebrews a great flood of light, illuminating the whole camp, and shedding brightness upon the path before them. So the dealings of Providence bring to the unbelieving, darkness and despair, while to the trusting soul they are full of light and peace. The path where God leads the way may lie through the desert or the sea, but it is a safe path.

In fact, the path where God leads the way is the only safe path though sinful humanity will never recognize it as such, but then, only those who are prepared to lose eternal life, will put any trust in the messages received from their human natures.

It is the specific purpose of these studies to show just how the Lord is leading so that we might put away all fear, come into unity of belief and practice on gospel order, and thus clear the way for the reception of the latter rain.

At this stage, there are probably more questions, objections, and problems arising than there have been answers given. That is to be expected in a presentation designed to lay down the essential basic principles first, while the seeming contradictions are left till later. This has always been the way in which we have come to understand the great themes the Lord has given to us. So, for the time being, please do not be concerned by statements which seem to deny the truth being developed here. Instead, go to work with all your might to understand the foundation principles of the subject. If you do this, the seeming contradictions will lose their power to be problems.

4. On Earth, As It Is in Heaven

Messenger and News Review, May 1989

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 36

Gospel Order, Part 4

IN THE last chapter, the point was made that, in order to qualify for our place in heaven, we have to pass the same test exactly as that which Lucifer failed since he has implanted within all of us his disposition to rebel against God's ways. It was truthfully stated that that test centered on the issue of the position of the Messenger of God's appointment. Instead of his being content to fill the place Jehovah had appointed him, the covering cherub rejected the principles by which the Almighty was building His kingdom, and sought to usurp the position of God's Son for himself.

So it was that the manifestation of the great rebellion was revealed in the devil's refusal to accept God's appointment of one Person, namely Immanuel, to be the sole channel through whom all light and life was to flow from the Creator to His creatures.

For the devil to be tested on this arrangement, it had to exist in heaven as a real-life situation, and it did. This is not to say that the Lord put it there in order to test Lucifer, for, neither before the fall nor afterwards does God tempt either men or angels. Instead, He had formed His government as the only way by which the universe could be satisfactorily managed. It became a test to the covering cherub only when pride had blinded his eyes so that he lost faith in both the system and its Creator.

From this it must be concluded that, in order for the human family to be tested on the selfsame issue so as to determine which of its members shall qualify for admission to heaven, the same divine principles and procedures must be in operation down here on earth as are in force in heaven.

This means that the Lord will choose one messenger only in a given time or place and will channel through that one instrument,

the light for that generation in a specific geographical area which could be the entire world or any limited part of it. The messenger's responsibility might be confined to one nation and he might or might not have a contemporary or more in other lands, by whom he is quite likely unknown.

Let it be kept in the front of our minds so that it shall never be forgotten, that it is God himself and not His messenger who arranges the plan. The man of God simply goes where he is sent and speaks what he is given to declare.

From the point of view of those who follow the heaven-sent light, the important point is that the person through whom the Lord sends His light to them wherever they might be, is the messenger through whom they are to receive the truth for their time and place. Thus they are tested to see if they will receive the light from the Lord through the channel of His choice, or whether they, like Satan, Adam and Eve, Miriam and Aaron, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, King Saul, and many, many more, will reject the divine order in preference to their own ways.

Let it be stressed in the strongest possible terms, that we are not presenting a plan of human devising designed to exalt the messenger, but one formulated in the mind of the Infinite for the perfecting of the saints and the finishing of the work. I trust that, before you reject these propositions, you will carefully consider the evidences and arguments which are to follow. Your eternal life depends upon it.

It has been stated that it is essential for us to face and pass the test which Lucifer failed. To accomplish this, the some testing situation in principle must be established down here as it was in heaven, and so it has been established over and over again.

But once again, it is the truth that the Lord himself does not set up test situations as such.

James 1

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God, for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He himself tempt anyone.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1094:

What is temptation? It is the means by which those who claim to be the children of God are tested and tried. We read that God tempted Abraham, that He tempted the children of Israel. This means that He permitted circumstances to occur to test their faith, and lead them to look to Him for help. God permits temptation to come to His people today, that they may realize that He is their Helper.

Therefore, if the Lord did not establish the test situation to tempt anyone, even though it has proved to be a trial which but few have been able to overcome, He must have had another valid reason for putting the same kingdom building procedures into operation on this earth as are employed in heaven.

He did. It all lies in the fact that the Lord knows and accepts only one system of kingdom-building while He leaves to men and devils the futility of constructing according to any alternative method. If the almighty Creator were to decide not to build on this earth as He had built in heaven, how would He build on earth; to what alternative system could He turn which would produce the glorious perfection required to restore the kingdom to its full working order?

The answer is that He would have nothing to which to turn, no kingdom building principle and procedure which would build the only Paradise acceptable to Him. With God, it is His way or none at all, and rightly so. For Him to work to establish any other way would be the betrayal of himself and His people. This we need to truly understand and appreciate.

So it was that God set up on this earth as He had opportunity from time to time, kingdom structures which were reproductions of the sovereignty established in heaven itself. This can only

mean that, as surely as God appointed one Person in heaven through whom to channel all the light to His creatures, so, from time to time, and from place to place, He has chosen one person on this earth through whom to speak His messages. This does not mean that Immanuel was bypassed or ever will be. The light flowed through Him as before, and then through the single messenger of God's choice.

His doing so is the expression of His will in direct opposition to the will of Satan and his followers. Naturally, the Lord is most anxious that we be numbered on His side with Him, and accordingly has taught us to pray that He set up His kingdom on earth just as it is set up in heaven. The instruction to do so is contained in the model prayer which Christ taught His disciples. How many times that prayer has been repeated without the petitioner realizing what he was really asking when he uttered the words:

Matthew 6

¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Let us look at those words more closely, for I am sure we need to understand them better than we ever have before, so that, when we use those words in prayer, we will comprehend the significance of that for which we are praying. Expressed in more detail, these words are saying:

“We pray that Your kingdom be established on this earth in the same way and by the same principles and procedures as it is in heaven. This means we are asking that, just as the Almighty channels all His light through the one messenger in heaven, He will do the same on earth. Enable us to accurately identify the messenger of your appointment, and give us the grace to submissively receive your light through your chosen servant.”

Whether you have realized it or not, that is what the words mean when you pray,

Matthew 6

¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

You have been asking the Lord to once again set up a one-man messengership on the earth as He has done over and over in the past. Therefore, it is a prayer which can be sincerely prayed by those alone who are in harmony with the divine order.

To establish the point that it is the way of the Lord to appoint and speak through one person, we have but to follow the vital rule of looking at what the Lord has done and said, together with what blessings came to those who worked in harmony with what He did and obeyed what He said. We should also observe and beware of the fate of those who neither followed nor obeyed.

So, with the immense advantage of hindsight, we will turn to Bible history to look closely at what God has done, and to listen to what He said. Then our lives will be patterned accordingly. Keep it in mind that we have to do much better than did the movements of the past, and much better than we ourselves have been doing, if we are to receive the latter rain and see the work finished. Gospel order must be understood and established among us. God's kingdom must be built on earth exactly as it is in heaven. His will must be done below as it is above. When it is, we shall marvel at the power of the church and its prosperity.

The Patriarchal Period

The beginning of this survey must be found in the patriarchal period which extended from Adam to Jacob, and covered a period of 2315 years. It is an era about which we do not have a great deal of information, but there is enough given us to reveal that the divine order was faithfully implemented and maintained by those who were faithful to God.

Unfortunately, there was a fearful falling away from following the Lord until by the time the ark was ready for loading, there were only eight souls disposed to obey the Lord's command, as

expressed through the patriarch Noah, and enter the vessel of safety. But, all along the way, there had been the mighty and faithful patriarchs who preserved God's living truth in the midst of the prevailing apostasy.

These champions of righteousness were the oldest men alive at the time in which they lived, and filled the offices of both king and priest. As kings, they ruled the righteous according to the divine principles of kingdom-building, while, as priests unto God, they were not only the ministers of the sacrificial system, but were the channels through whom the Lord communicated His light to the people.

To qualify for this office, a man had to outlive his father, for unless a king abdicates, he remains on the throne until His death. That has been the law of kingship both in the world and in the church, even as it is in heaven. In heaven, of course, death never overtakes anyone, so that up there, a position can be lost only by vacating it, as Satan did.

Between Adam and Jacob, there were, during 2315 years, just thirteen men, including Enoch, who outlived their fathers, and thus qualified to be kings and priests.

They were men of giant intellect and incredible spiritual power, but this did not enable them to arrive at a knowledge of the truth simply by employing their marvelous capacities to do so. It was therefore through them and not from them that the Lord transmitted His truth to the people, as it is written:

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 405:

Through patriarchs and prophets He revealed His truth to His people.

This revelation of the way in which God communicated the messages needed at any given time, confirms that the divine order was in force during the patriarchal period. The patriarch was the messenger of God to his generation. When he died, the eldest son who survived him, filled the office.

Adam was the first king and priest and, in true gospel order format, taught his children what the Lord had taught to him.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 82:

For nearly a thousand years Adam lived among men, a witness to the results of sin. Faithfully he sought to stem the tide of evil. He had been commanded to instruct his posterity in the way of the Lord; and he carefully treasured what God had revealed to him, and repeated it to succeeding generations. To his children and children's children, to the ninth generation, he described man's holy and happy estate in Paradise, and repeated the history of his fall, telling them of the sufferings by which God had taught him the necessity of strict adherence to His law, and explaining to them the merciful provisions for their salvation. Yet there were but few who gave heed to his words. Often he was met with bitter reproaches for the sin that had brought such woe on his posterity.

Jacob was the last of the patriarchs, the king-priests through whom the Lord worked to build His kingdom on earth even as it is built in heaven. In this work, the Lord was severely handicapped by the enslavement of His people in Egypt, until He was finally able to deliver them from their cruel bondage.

By setting them free from their servitude, He was able to begin building His church on earth, as He had built it in heaven. That He was not entirely successful was due, not to any deficiency on His part, but to the deep-seated resistance within His people to the establishment of gospel order in the movement. The Lord would not, and did not compel them to build after the divine pattern, for compulsion is not found in gospel order. He left each person free to choose on which side he would stand.

The Calling of Moses

We will now look carefully at what the Lord actually did in the building of His kingdom when He emancipated His people, lead them to the Promised Land, and settled them in that country. We shall be looking to see if the Lord did in fact build His kingdom

on earth as He had built it in heaven, and we shall find that this is precisely what He did do.

We have seen how that, in heaven, Immanuel had been appointed by God to be the one-man messenger through whom the Almighty would channel all His light to every creature in the universe. Therefore, we would expect that as He set himself to the task of building His kingdom on this earth, He would select one messenger through whom to channel all the light needed by His people at that time. This is precisely what He did do.

Moses was the man of God's choice, and this appointment was made known both to the elders of Israel, and to Moses while he was living in the palace.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 245:

The elders of Israel were taught by angels that the time for their deliverance was near, and that Moses was the man whom God would employ to accomplish this work. Angels instructed Moses also that Jehovah had chosen him to break the bondage of His people.

We are now looking at what God did, even as they had to back then. The Almighty personally selected Moses for the work and He informed both Moses and the elders of what He had done.

In the light of the beautiful truth that the Lord acts only from impeccably righteous principles, and that His kingdom-building procedures are eternally the same, what He did in the appointment of Moses, was the only course He could have taken. Otherwise, that is, if He was not bound to act only in perfect righteousness, He could have done something quite different. For instance, He could have come down and counseled with the elders, and then directed them to nominate a number of promising candidates for the office. Then He could have directed them to cast lots to determine the one best fitted for the position.

But, if He had done that, He certainly would not have built His kingdom on this earth as He had built it in heaven. Therefore,

there was no possibility of His doing the work by these procedures.

Another unrighteous option would have been for Him to have selected, not just the one, but a number of men to be the channels through whom He would instruct, guide, and govern the people. But, once again, that would have been for Him to have built the church on earth by a different method than the one He uses in heaven. This He could not, and would not do.

Nor did Moses propose to the Lord that he be given the task of leading Israel from their subjugation by the Egyptians to a new home in Canaan. The choice was made by God without His consulting with either Moses or the elders.

When the angels informed Moses that he was the chosen one, he did not resist the will of God as he was later to do at the burning bush. Instead, he organized his life in such a way as to be ready when the time came. This highly commendable attitude was marred by his misconception of God's character and way, which led him to expect deliverance to come by force of arms.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 245:

Angels instructed Moses also that Jehovah had chosen him to break the bondage of His people. He, supposing that they were to obtain their freedom by force of arms, expected to lead the Hebrew host against the armies of Egypt, and having this in view, he guarded his affections, lest in his attachment to his foster mother or to Pharaoh he would not be free to do the will of God.

When Moses made the terrible mistake of slaying the Egyptian as a call to Israel to revolt, and nothing came of his expectations, he would naturally have felt convinced that he had destroyed any possibility thereafter of his fulfilling the mission to which he had been divinely called. It was now up to the Lord, he believed, to select a replacement for the work.

In adopting these convictions, he demonstrated a further ignorance of God's character common to the majority of God's follow-

ers. It is the notion that, when a messenger of the Lord falls into grievous sin as most have, that person disqualifies himself from any further occupation of his position.

There is no question about its being a very, very serious thing when the Lord's chosen servants commit grievous sin for whatever reason, but it is also a great error to conclude that the Lord will remove His messenger from his divinely appointed office because he has fallen into sin, or made a terrible mistake. Of course, if the sinning messenger refuses to repent of his sin, then he will separate himself from God, from the believers, and from his position.

The Desire of Ages, p. 826:

Those whose course has been most offensive to Him He freely accepts; when they repent, He imparts to them His divine Spirit, places them in the highest positions of trust, and sends them forth into the camp of the disloyal to proclaim His boundless mercy.

When God met Moses at the burning bush and called upon him to take up his life work, it was not an accidental meeting. The Sovereign Ruler of the universe had directed matters that day so that the shepherd would be alone with his Maker, for it was Moses who was to be called and no one else. If the Lord had planned to lay the work on more than one person, He would have arranged for them all to have been there to receive their commissions together, but only one was called, because, according to the principles of gospel order, one man was to be the channel through whom the Lord would communicate His light to the people.

Moses demonstrated once again that he was not submissively surrendered to the principles of the divine order, for, whereas the Lord would call him alone, he insisted that he was not qualified to do the work all by himself. This led to the commissioning of his brother Aaron to go with him to do the talking.

The addition of Aaron to the work does not mean that God's kingdom-building procedures had changed, or that He had compromised. The truth is that Jehovah never fights for His rights, with the result that He is obliged to permit some things which He would never have done or put there himself.

Therefore, the appointment of Aaron was occasioned by the unbelief of Moses, just as were the seventy elders later, and was not in harmony with the principles and procedures of gospel order. It was adding to the kingdom-building system an element which should never have been there. It was a mingling of the false with the true, and could not but introduce serious trouble eventually, as it did.



God calls Moses at the Burning Bush

5. Lessons from the Work of Moses

Messenger and News Review, June 1989

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 37

Gospel Order, Part 5

A Word from the Editor

What I wrote in the *Editorial* for the May *Messenger*, was misunderstood by at least one reader. It was thought that I was stating that gospel order requires that we lay aside all study books and tapes apart from those which record the messages delivered through the present messenger even to the exclusion of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

I would never see light in such an extreme position. I have ever advised you not to accept what I teach without taking it to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy for yourselves as did the noble Bereans, to make certain it is the truth.

Furthermore, there is the need to be conversant with the revelations God gave through His messengers in the past such as Martin Luther, John Wesley, William Miller, Ellen White, E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones.

But, what I am concerned about is the dissipation of our time and energies in the study of that which is not present truth. We have more than enough to do than to be chasing after anything, even if it is truth, which does not have a direct bearing on the work to which God has called us. It is time we clearly understood through which channels the Lord will send His light, so we can safely ignore all the rest.

THE last chapter closed with our eyes fixed on what God was doing at the burning bush where He was calling Moses alone to be His instrument to deliver Israel from Egypt, and bring them to the Promised Land. With the greatest of care, Jehovah had chosen the meeting place, the timing of it, and the person to be met there, without the subject of His choice having the least premonition of the coming event.

Had He intended that the task be carried out by a number of leaders, the Lord would have arranged for them all to have been present at the burning bush to collectively receive their commissions. But, while He could have easily arranged for as many men and women to be there as He might have chosen to be in attendance at that spot and point of time, He brought only one man to this meeting place, and appointed that one man to the position.

By following these procedures, God was setting up His kingdom on earth exactly as it was in heaven. There was to be one man as the messenger through whom God would channel all the light to His people, just as there ever had been but the one Connector in heaven. Once the light had been revealed through Moses, it was to be carried by a multitude of busy workers who, in the divine plan of kingdom-building, were to carry the truth revealed to them by God through Moses, to every nation on the earth. Thus the Lord would build His kingdom on this earth as it is built in heaven.

The Reluctance of Moses

But Moses was not then quite willing to pray:

“Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven,”

–nor:

“Your will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.”

When God declared to the humble shepherd that He was the God of almighty power who had revealed himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and who had now come to deliver His people through him, Moses immediately began to protest his hopeless unfitness for the task. He argued:

Exodus 3

¹¹ Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?

God responded by declaring what He would do to make the work completely successful. The elders of Israel would believe that he was in fact the Lord’s messenger, and would obey God’s commands as given through him.

But Moses continued to resist the Lord’s will, so, with incredible patience, the Lord continued to call him, even going so far as to work miracles in his presence and on his person. Finally Jehovah said to him,

Exodus 4

¹¹ Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord?

¹² Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.

That ought to have finally settled what should have been settled at the very beginning of the conversation, and would have been had Moses been fully persuaded on the principles of gospel order. But, even now, after all the declarations by God, and the manifestation of His power in the miracles performed, Moses still refused to accept his commission, but said:

¹³ O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomsoever else You may send.

It is not uncommon for the man or woman whom the Lord has chosen, to be very reluctant to accept the position of the messenger of the Most High. More than Moses have shrunk from the position and finally accepted it only when they feared to do otherwise. None have lightly undertaken the work, for they have been very decidedly aware of something of the awesome responsibilities involved, and they see their own insufficiency for the task ahead. I believe that it is more difficult for the person whom the Lord has chosen to be His messenger to accept himself in that role than it is for the people to accept him as the messenger.

The principles of gospel order require that when a man is called of God to fill a position, under no circumstances is that man to refuse the work to which he is thus called. If he does, it will most certainly be at the cost of eternal life, and will result in great loss to the Church and the world. But why would someone who is called, manifest such reluctance to accept his calling? It is because he is not prepared to accept the divine order, and build the kingdom on this earth as it is built in heaven.

This lesson Moses also had to learn. But, at the time of his commissioning, he had not come into full harmony with the message on gospel order which required him to accept himself as the sole

messenger of God to His people. He kept insisting that the work was too much for him alone, and that the people would find this principle too hard to accept.

So it was that the Lord had to accept the best that Moses was willing to offer, something short of the perfect and complete implementation of gospel order. Aaron was called to stand by Moses' side and work with him. If, without protestation, Moses had wholeheartedly moved in harmony with the divine system of kingdom-building, Aaron would never have been chosen, a move which would have spared Israel a great deal of terrible grief.

Because of his position next to Moses, Aaron was the one in whose charge the camp was left when Moses was away on Sinai. Due to the serious weaknesses in his character, he very badly mishandled the crisis which boiled up in the making and worshipping of the golden calf. Many thousands lost their lives as a direct result. Later again, he was involved with his sister, Miriam, in an attack on Moses' position. It was a blatant betrayal of the principles of gospel order, and serves to confirm the fact that anything and everything in God's church which is not done according to the principles of gospel order, can only be productive of serious trouble, needless delays, grave losses, and deepening apostasy.

Therefore, we need to guard against any departure from the strictest observance of gospel order with the repugnance which it deserves. We need to be convinced that the latter rain will never fall on a people who are not faithfully practicing the principles and procedures of the divine order. We must learn the vital necessity of praying with intelligent understanding:

Matthew 6

¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Even though God had given Aaron to Moses to silence his objection that he had largely forgotten the Egyptian language, the Lord did not change His principle of speaking through one mes-

senger, for the Lord did not speak through both Moses and Aaron. God spoke through Moses, and Moses spoke through Aaron, which was hardly a very efficient system of communication. But the Lord used it as the nearest to His ideal then available.

God said to Moses in regard to the position and work of Aaron:

Exodus 4

¹⁵ Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do.

¹⁶ So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God.

Exodus 7

¹ So the Lord said to Moses: See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet.

² You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall speak to Pharaoh, that he must send the children of Israel out of his land.

So, God's prophet was Moses, and Moses' prophet was Aaron. God delivered His messages to His prophet, Moses; and Moses then communicated the same messages to Aaron who then addressed them to the ones concerned.

One Channel of Communication

It is important that no one overlook the important fact that, in establishing the system on this earth which limited His communications to passage through only one person, God had acted without consultation with any man. He had determined in His infinite wisdom and absolute authority that that was the way it was to be. The people from Moses down to the least person in the ranks, had no option but to accept the plan as it came from the Lord, if they wished to remain a part of the work of God. There was absolutely no space for any human devisings or modifications whatsoever, for He is God and not man who determines how the kingdom shall be built.

Those who were not prepared to study the system Jehovah had established until they clearly understood it, and then worked in perfect harmony with it, were classified by the Almighty as rebels, and were committed to destruction. Far more than we have been prepared to do in the past, we must pay the closest attention to the systems and procedures the Lord has established, and work in strictest harmony with them.

So it was that throughout the confrontations with Pharaoh which eventually ended with the proud ruler's release of the Jews, God communicated all His instructions through the one man, Moses, who in turn spoke through Aaron.

The same pattern continued as they departed Egypt, crossed the Red Sea, and eventually reached Mt. Sinai. All messages from God to Israel were transmitted through His appointed messenger, Moses, by which repeated, consistent, and predictable actions, God had iterated and reiterated that that was His way of building His kingdom.

Think of the implications of this divinely instituted arrangement so far as the rising of any other aspirants to messengership were concerned! It would mean that anyone who arose with the claim that he or she was a companion messenger also with light direct from the throne of grace, could only be classed as a deceiver, for the Lord had made no place for additional messengers. The message carried by such a person could have come only from himself, and so could not be the truth. The Almighty would never send such a messenger. Therefore, such a person could only be a self-sent messenger who could be nothing but a curse to the cause. Lucifer became just such a self-sent messenger and look at what a curse to the cause he became.

God was the Leader, Not Moses

Yet, despite the clarity with which God's actions could be viewed, Israel proved to be slow learners if learners at all. When difficulties and their attendant sufferings overtook them, they openly demonstrated their inability to see that it was not Moses but God

himself who was leading them. They were unwilling to accept and work in harmony with the principles and procedures of gospel order, by which they were to obey every word which the Lord spoke through Moses.

Thus, when they came to the bitter waters at Marah, and felt their lives were threatened for want of fresh, pure water, they vented on Moses, the fury born of their disappointment.

Exodus 15

²⁴ And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

But why should they complain against Moses? It was not he who had brought them to this place. It was God who had made all the plans, given all the commands, and had supplied the power necessary to make the incredible venture the amazing success it was proving to be. Had there been any justified murmuring—as there certainly was not—it should have been directed against their divine Leader, and not against His earthly spokesman.

Think of the implications of charging Moses with having been the one who brought them into this situation. This was to attribute to him the power to deliver them from Egypt without fighting a war, without any bloodshed whatsoever; the power to turn back the waters of the Red Sea, and to position the guiding cloud in the sky and control its daily movements. No one could reasonably deny that such powers belonged alone to God, and that their being where they were was attributable to the work of the Omnipotent One, and to none other.

But, incontrovertible as such powerful and visible evidence was, it did not overcome the murmurers' determination to direct their faultfinding against the fallible, visible, human agent rather than against the Almighty who sent him. They thought within their hearts that they were merely warring against a man like themselves—a course in which they saw no sin—whereas in fact they were in rebellion against the Most High.

Let all such not delude themselves, for to criticize the messages from the King of kings at the point where they issue from the divinely chosen and appointed messenger, is no different from making a direct attack on God himself. Jehovah certainly regards the matter in this light and has repeatedly warned that:

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 54:

God speaks through His appointed agencies, and let no man, or confederacy of men, insult the Spirit of God by refusing to hear the message of God's word from the lips of His chosen messengers. By refusing to hear the message of God, men close themselves in a chamber of darkness. They shut their own souls away from vast blessings and rob Christ of the glory that should come to Him, by showing disrespect to His appointed agencies.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 97:

If you reject Christ's delegated messengers, you reject Christ.

Nothing could be more serious than to reject Jesus Christ, for, to do so, is to cut one's self off from the only Being through whom eternal life can be given to us. And yet, this is effectively achieved whenever anyone rejects Christ's delegated messenger. To those who do take this step, it seems but an inconsequential act, for they believe that they can find the messages of present truth direct from God for themselves without having to receive it through a messenger. More than once, people have said to me:

"I do not need to read the writings of anyone for whom the claim to messengership may be even truthfully applied. I have the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Whatever message may be brought, it is in those books, and, under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit, I can just as well find it for myself as receive it through some fallible messenger."

I have made it a point to watch the results of the study put forth by people who take this stand of rejecting God's messenger. I looked to see if they kept pace with the light as it advanced under the teaching ministry of the appointed messenger, for I knew that if the principles which have been laid down in these mes-

sages are true, there was no hope of their receiving through any other channel, the messages of present truth without which we cannot be prepared to receive the latter rain.

On the other hand, if they did keep pace with the advancing light, and more particularly, if they got ahead of us, then this could only mean that I do not understand the principles of gospel order, am walking in deadly error, and am therefore in very serious trouble.

But, never once have I found anyone who rejected the principle of receiving the light according to the way God has chosen to build His kingdom, make any further progress in their understanding of present truth. Instead, I have seen them go into confusion and more often than not, return to the church or the world from which they previously had separated. Let all take heed of the warning found in the words quoted above, for they are true and cannot be changed.

These words were written as a solemn warning to the church officials and those who followed them when from 1888 on, the Lord sent a message of wonderful power and beauty to the Adventist people. We know the tragic details of the lamentable attitude adopted by the leaders then, and let us pray that we shall not act toward the messenger of God's appointment as they did back there, nor as the Jews did throughout their entire history.

In laying out these principles, in the verification of which I ask you to observe the positions adopted by the Lord at all times, I implore you who read these words to understand that I am not the author of these ideas, for I did not devise gospel order. It was formulated in the mind of the Infinite, and I simply write to you what the Lord has revealed to me and directed that I pass on to you. Therefore, if you find a disposition to complain about some aspects of the case, do not criticize the messenger. Instead, direct your charges against the Most High—if you dare!

God Reiterates His Leadership

Twice more before they reached Mt. Sinai, the travelers accused Moses of having led them into a situation in which there was no life-sustaining food or water. The first occasion was after they had left behind the sweet waters of Elim. Their food supplies were diminishing, and they could see no prospects for replenishment in that arid wasteland.

Exodus 16

² Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

In response, God declared that He would send the manna every morning except on the Sabbath. In the process of conveying this information through Moses and Aaron, the Almighty appeared in majestic power in the hovering cloud which had guided their daily movements.

⁹ Then Moses spoke to Aaron, Say to all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the Lord, for He has heard your murmurings.

¹⁰ Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked towards the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.

There was a very definite reason for this impressive display of the divine power and Presence. It was an effort on God's part to teach them to follow the system of kingdom-building which He was building on earth even as He had built it in heaven. He wanted them to know that Moses was the one through whom He would speak, and no other! He wanted them to fully understand, accept, and work within the framework of this truth as it is written:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 295:

A splendor such as they had never witnessed symbolized the divine Presence. Through manifestations addressed to their senses, they were to obtain a knowledge of God. They must be

taught that the Most High, and not merely the man Moses, was their Leader, that they might fear His name and obey His voice.

The second occasion for murmuring after they had left Elim, was at Rephidim where there was no water for the encampment. Again, despite their promises and renewed dedications of faithfulness to the Lord, they accused Moses of having led them to this desperate plight. In response, the Lord directed Moses to strike the rock, whereupon a sparkling stream gushed from the rock, after which they never again wanted for water.⁵

Then came the cruel and cowardly attacks by the Amalekites who slew those who straggled behind because they were too old or weak to keep pace with the multitude. Joshua was sent to fight the Amalekites. The battle favored the Israelites so long as Moses held his hands high above his head, but swung against them when through weariness, they were lowered.

The Support of the People Is Required

To solve this problem, Aaron standing on one side, and Hur on the other, gave him the support he needed to keep his hands continually upraised, until the Amalekites were convincingly defeated. By this means the Lord sought to teach them that, while Moses was His messenger, he could not do all the work resulting from that office, but needed the help and support of the people. This support role would not make them to be companion messengers, but helpers of the messenger. They were not to stand next to him holding their own arms up, nor were they to hold one arm in the air while using the other to support Moses' arm.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 299:

As Aaron and Hur supported the hands of Moses, they showed the people their duty to sustain him in his arduous work while he should receive the word from God to speak to them. And the act of Moses also was significant, showing that God held their destiny in His hands; while they made Him their trust, He would fight for them and subdue their enemies; but when they should

⁵ See *Exodus* 17.

let go their hold upon Him, and trust in their own power, they would be even weaker than those who had not the knowledge of God, and their foes would prevail against them.



So it was that, all the way from the burning bush to Mt. Sinai, with unvarying consistency, the Lord spoke to His people through the one messenger, Moses, even as, up in heaven, He spoke with the same consistency through the one messenger, Immanuel. He demonstrated that He would build His kingdom on earth even as it is built in heaven; that He would execute His will down here even as it is executed in heaven.

At Mount Sinai

We shall now find that nowhere was this more convincingly declared and demonstrated by God than at Mt. Sinai. However, one event took place there which seemed to declare that the Lord himself tried to set aside the system of the one-man messenger-

ship, in order for Him to establish direct communication with the people generally. In awful majesty, the Lord spoke the ten commandments in the hearing of all the people. It was for them a terrifying experience.

Exodus 20

¹⁸ Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off.

¹⁹ Then they said to Moses, You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

²⁰ And Moses said to the people, Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin.

²¹ So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.



It seems that the people themselves were now in close harmony with the divine plan to speak to them only through Moses, a result achieved by the awesome manifestation of the Law-Giver on Mt. Sinai. They called upon Moses to speak to them, and not God. But the issue was not over messengership, but over who should

be their Mediator, a role which only Christ could fill. Neither Moses nor any other man living in sinful flesh upon this earth, could ever be the Mediator between God and man. That the issue was over who should be their Mediator, is confirmed by the following paragraph:

Selected Messages, book 1, p. 238:

The proclamation of the law of ten commandments was a wonderful exhibition of the glory and majesty of God. How did this manifestation of power affect the people? They were afraid. As they saw...

Exodus 20

¹⁸ ...the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, [they] removed, and stood afar off.

¹⁹ And they said unto Moses, You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

They desired Moses to be their mediator. They did not understand that Christ was their appointed mediator, and that, deprived of His mediation, they would certainly have been consumed.

An argument put to me to support the idea that the Lord works through more than one messenger at the same time, was based on the claim that God spoke through Miriam, Moses' and Aaron's sister, in the song of triumph sung after the Israelites had been delivered from the Egyptians at the Red Sea. But it was not the song of Miriam, but of Moses. That is how it will be titled when sung by the 144,000 on the sea of glass. It was and ever will be a song of praise to God for His mighty deliverance of His people.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 288-289:

Jehovah alone had brought them deliverance, and to Him their hearts were turned in gratitude and faith. Their emotion found utterance in songs of praise. The Spirit of God rested upon Moses, and he led the people in a triumphant anthem of thanksgiving, the earliest and one of the most sublime that are known to man.



Miriam leads the women of Israel in singing the Song of Moses

There was no violation of the divine principle of messengership here. It was through His chosen messenger, Moses, that the inspired message of this song was conveyed to Israel. Miriam simply caught up the message thus revealed through the messenger and led in the singing of it.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 288-289:

Like the voice of the great deep, rose from the vast host that sublime ascription. It was taken up by the women of Israel, Miriam, the sister of Moses, leading the way, as they went forth with timbrel and dance. Far over desert and sea rang the joyous refrain, and the mountains re-echoed the words of their praise —“Sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.”

Search as you may, you will never find the Lord building His kingdom differently on earth from what it is in heaven. His will here is the same as it is there.



6. Gospel Order Confirmed at Sinai

Messenger and News Review, June 1989

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 38

Gospel Order, Part 6

GOSPEL order was not something which the Lord introduced to the Israelites as a temporary measure while they grew in spiritual stature to the place where they could handle a more sophisticated organizational structure. If it had been, then Mt. Sinai, the place of destiny where the Lord spelled out His holy law of which gospel order is a part, would have been the place to make the changes, but none were made there.

On the other hand, if gospel order was the eternal provision for the building of the kingdom both in heaven and on earth, then Mt. Sinai was the place to confirm that, as it most certainly proved to be.

At Mt. Sinai, God was faced with several classes of people:

1. The mixed multitude,
2. Those Hebrews who were fairly low in faith,
3. Those whose faith was more mature, and
4. Those of varying degrees in between.

Aaron, Miriam, Joshua, and Hur are examples of more mature faith. But the unchanging God spoke one law and one system of government to all of these people. He does not operate from different principles for different classes of people. In fact, concerning the young in faith, He knows that the very best time to establish His abiding truths is when the believer is freshly in the message.

Therefore, at Mt. Sinai, He continued without change to teach the same message on gospel order as He ever had.

There were a number of ascents made by Moses to the top of the mount. Always they were for the purpose of receiving light from the Lord for the people. Sometimes he went alone, on other occasions with Joshua, Aaron and his two sons, Nadab and Abihu,

and the seventy elders. But, on every occasion whether others had gone up with him or not, he alone entered into the direct presence of the Lord, and to him alone were given the messages to be conveyed to the people waiting below.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 303:

Soon after the encampment at Sinai, Moses was called up into the mountain to meet with God. Alone he climbed the steep and rugged path, and drew near to the cloud that marked the place of Jehovah's presence. Israel was now to be taken into a close and peculiar relation to the Most High—to be incorporated as a church and a nation under the government of God. The message to Moses for the people was:

Exodus 19

⁴ You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to me above all people; for all the earth is mine.

⁶ And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Moses returned to the camp, and having summoned the elders of Israel, he repeated to them the divine message. Their answer was,

⁸ All that the Lord has spoken we will do.

Thus they entered into a solemn covenant with God, pledging themselves to accept Him as their ruler, by which they became, in a special sense, the subjects of His authority.

Again their leader ascended the mountain, and the Lord said unto him,

⁹ Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever.

When they met with difficulties in the way, they were disposed to murmur against Moses and Aaron, and accuse them of leading the hosts of Israel from Egypt to destroy them. The Lord would honor Moses before them, that they might be led to confide in his instructions.

After this the Almighty spoke forth the awesome requirements of His holy law, followed by various details in regard to the keep-

ing of that law, which details were delivered to Moses who, in turn, was to inform the people of them.

Then, a short time later, the Lord directed Moses to ascend the mountain in company with others, but made it very clear that only Moses was to come into the Lord's presence.

Exodus 24

¹ Now He said to Moses, Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar,

² And Moses alone shall come near the Lord, but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with him.

Next, Moses went up with Joshua. But Joshua did not go with him into God's presence. For six days, Moses waited patiently before his dedicated personal spiritual preparation prepared him to hear the Lord's words.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 313:

For six days the cloud covered the mountain as a token of God's special presence; yet there was no revelation of himself or communication of His will. During this time Moses remained in waiting for a summons to the presence chamber of the Most High. He had been directed, "Come up to me on the mountain and be there," and though his patience and obedience were tested, he did not grow weary of watching, or forsake his post. This period of waiting was to him a time of preparation, of close self-examination. Even this favored servant of God could not at once approach into His presence and endure the exhibitions of His glory. Six days must be employed in devoting himself to God by searching of heart, meditation, and prayer before he could be prepared for direct communication with his Maker.

Upon the seventh day, which was the Sabbath, Moses was called up into the cloud. The thick cloud opened in the sight of all Israel, and the glory of the Lord broke forth like devouring fire.

Exodus 24

¹⁸ So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and

forty nights.

The forty days' tarry in the mount did not include the six days of preparation. During the six days Joshua was with Moses, and together they ate of the manna and drank of "the brook that descended out of the mount." But Joshua did not enter with Moses into the cloud. He remained without, and continued to eat and drink daily while awaiting the return of Moses, but Moses fasted during the entire forty days.

During those forty days, and the second forty which followed soon after, a tremendous amount of light was communicated to Moses to be passed on by him to the people when he should return to them. The concise record of what was shown to him on the mountain is preserved in *Exodus* 25-31, 35-40.

This is an extremely brief account of what was revealed to the Lord's messenger on behalf of the people. To gain some idea of how brief, one has but to consider that the scriptural record, which we have in the Bible, can be comfortably read in half an hour or less, whereas it required eighty days to impart it all to Moses. Just try to estimate the amount of printed pages which would be needed to record all that was revealed to the man of God during almost three months of concentrated, unbroken, inspired education in the very presence of the Most High who was his personal Teacher for the period.

Not only did he learn the details of both the design of the sanctuary and of the services to be conducted in the building; he was taught the spiritual significance of everything connected with the tabernacle, the priests who were to serve therein, and the ceremonies themselves. In immeasurable power and indescribable beauty, he saw the glory of the gospel as the living power of Omnipotence to save from sin, and to restore the lost creation to its original perfection. His soul must have been transported in reverential awe and joyous delight as these pristine truths opened to his marveling mind.



Moses returns from speaking with God on Mount Sinai

None of this was given to him for his edification and salvation alone. All he received was imparted to him to be given to the people—the Jews first, and then, through them, to every person on earth until, in the plan of God, everyone had truly learned to serve the Lord. Moses was the messenger, the channel of communication between God and man, the divinely ordained means whereby the light of truth should reach the people.

But, and this is quite a vital point, the Lord did not unfold before Moses all the truth which can be learned. No revelation was given them, for instance, of the battle of Armageddon, the mark of the beast, the one hundred and forty-four thousand, and other themes related to the events to transpire during the closing days of the great controversy.

Instead, in His infinite wisdom and perfect knowledge of their needs, He imparted to them through Moses that which was needed by them for that time and place. In other words, He taught them Present Truth. It was their sacred responsibility to confine themselves to the areas of study presented by God through the messenger. That was more than sufficient to keep them fully occupied throughout their lifetimes without their exploring areas into which the Lord had not led them.

The messenger of course, is not required to personally carry the light to every person worldwide. The task would be impossibly large for one man to accomplish. Furthermore, if that were the plan, it would deprive those who hear and accept the truth from sharing in the blessing of teaching it to others.

In God's order, there is only one messenger through whom He will communicate present truth until that messenger's lifework is ended as was Moses' just before the Jordan's crossing. During his messengership, his responsibility was to be the messenger to the leaders.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 343:

All these directions were carefully recorded by Moses, who communicated them to the leaders of the people.



They in turn were to teach the people, who, under the leadership of the priests and elders were to be messengers to the world.

Thus, in God's kingdom-building structure, there are to be many workers and many messengers, but there is to be only one primary messenger through whom the Lord makes the initial revelations of present truth. All the other light bearers must receive the truth from God through that one messenger.⁶

Let us now look closely at what God did at Mt. Sinai to see if He continued to build His kingdom on earth as He had built it in heaven. What do we clearly find? What did God do versus what He might have done?

⁶ The situation during the early and latter rains will be discussed later.

If it had been possible within the framework of His righteous principles—which it certainly would not have been—He could have given audience to a succession of devout and capable men among whom He could have apportioned the truths He desired the people to learn.

- One of them could have been appointed to specialize in teaching the basic gospel;
- Another, the spiritual meaning of circumcision which was their signature to the everlasting covenant;
- Another, the role of the daily services in the continuous work of the reformation;
- And to another, the meaning of the yearly service.

This is one thing which He could have done, but He did not. Multiple messengers were not a part of the divine kingdom-building procedure, for which He had determined that there should be only one primary messenger, and that all the other messengers were to receive the light from the infinite Source through that chosen one.

Some may object that, if this were truly so, God would be showing partiality, that He had a favorite son upon whom He lavished privileges and honors withheld from all the rest. They would contend that it was an arrangement which could only generate pride in the one so blessed, and would provoke envy in all the others.

These are the very arguments which Lucifer raised as he rebelled against the divine order up in heaven, and initiated the long, dark record of human suffering, destruction, and death. The very fruit of these propositions is more than sufficient to expose their miserable nature, and to turn us from them forever. Yet strange though it be, so embedded is the spirit of rebellion in human nature, that there is a powerful disposition, even among Christians, to perpetuate this rebellion by seeking to build God's kingdom other than according to His ways.

Such arguments impeach the wisdom and love of the Creator; it infers that He is more interested in serving His own interests than He is in building a kingdom of righteousness and perfect peace. This charge is wholly and only malicious and untrue. God is so infinitely loving that He does nothing for himself. All that He does is for others, and is the best which can be done for them.

The fact is that God did select one man through whom He imparted all the present truth for that time. He did not call multiple messengers, nor even a companion-messenger. That is the simple, incontrovertible, unalterable fact of the case. We have no safe or reasonable choice other than to accept the fact whether we understand it or not. No one can deny that. Anyone who attempts to do so puts himself in an impossible situation.

Think of the implications: If God was not the one who planned the whole thing, then who did? It would have had to have been an ambitious Moses. He would have had to have determined that, by whatever means, he would so influence and control the Almighty that the position would be reserved to him alone. It would mean that, at the burning bush, Moses would somehow in his crafty scheming, have succeeded in calling down the Almighty before whom he would give a convincing performance of mock humility until he was finally installed in the position which he had wanted all along.

It would mean that the Lord's witness of Moses that he was the meekest man who ever lived on the earth was a monstrous lie, a key part of the gigantic conspiracy between God and Moses to unfairly exalt the latter. It would mean that Jehovah had given His almighty power to support this evil farce in the descent of the plagues on Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the miracles of provision and protection they experienced along the way, and the special endorsement given to Moses at Sinai.

It would mean that Moses was so powerful that he could actually control the Omnipotent one against His will and contrary to His principles. Such an idea is preposterous.

So then, if you find the actual fact difficult to accept, consider the impossibility of the alternative.

It was God alone without any reference to the “wisdom” of the elders or to the judgment of Moses, who selected His servant, spoke and worked through him to the exclusion of all others, and kept him securely in his position until he died.

It is true that God’s giving Moses such a privileged position afforded him an opportunity to become proud as Lucifer had. But this is a danger which faces every Christian no matter how lowly or exalted his station might be. Just so soon as we become the recipient of some heavenly gift, and are blessed with a position, the danger of pride is there, but there is no need to yield to the temptation.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 332:

No temptation or trial is permitted to come to him which he is unable to resist. God has made such ample provision that man need never have been defeated in the conflict with Satan.

The life of Moses clearly proves this truth, for, through forty years of being the only person through whom the Lord communicated the messages of life and light to His people, he never lost his meekness, but rather grew stronger in that grace as the years passed by. So it can be with every one of us, and we have no one to blame but ourselves if it be otherwise.

It is also true that envy can spring up in the hearts and lives of others even as it did in Lucifer as he stood daily in the very presence of the God of the universe. This danger is so real that every person should be on guard against it. Watch for its manifestation in yourself and be prompt to dismiss it from your life through the saving power of divine grace the moment you detect the least evidence of its infiltration.

While the danger is as constant as it is real, the tempter does not have the power to force you to become envious. Keep your destiny in Christ’s hands, not the devils.

But why fear that what the Lord does shall be productive of evil? Learn to understand and believe that, if we would make a full and lasting escape from evil, we must pay close attention to what the Lord does, and then work in total harmony with Him. Our part is to obey without hesitation. We are to play our part in building the kingdom on earth as it is built in heaven. It is long past time to quit trying to do the right thing in the wrong way.

I am very impressed with the fact that not only did God himself work in strict and utterly predictable obedience to the principles and procedures of gospel order as He had formulated and established them, but He took every opportunity to lead His people to be equally as strict and predictable in their love for and obedience of the divinely ordained order.

This involved declaring His disapproval of their disposition to charge Moses with being the one who was the cause of all their troubles, and upholding His faithful servant in such a way as to powerfully influence the people to see and accept Moses in the position where the Lord had installed him. So it was that, when they came to Mt. Sinai, the Lord specifically announced to Moses that He would so convincingly endorse him in the presence of the people, that they would know that the Lord had appointed him to his position, and that the words he delivered to them were the very words of God himself and were as authoritative as if the Lord had spoken them directly to the people. So it is written:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 303:

Again their leader ascended the mountain and the Lord said unto him,

Exodus 19

⁹ Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever.

When they met with difficulties in the way, they were disposed to murmur against Moses and Aaron and accuse them of leading the hosts of Israel from Egypt to destroy them. The Lord would honor Moses before them, that they might be led to confide in his instructions.

It is so tragically disappointing that Israel was so quick to forget the lessons the Lord so patiently and faithfully taught them. When awed by the manifestations of God's personal presence, the spirit of rebellion within them was quelled for the moment, but the impressions were never lasting. Just as soon as the pressure of temptation came upon them they reverted to their rebellious ways.

But, are we better than they? Does God find that He has to teach us the lesson but once after which it never needs to be repeated, or do we find ourselves ever slipping back as did the ancient Jews?

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 293-294:

Many look back to the Israelites, and marvel at their unbelief and murmuring, feeling that they themselves would not have been so ungrateful; but when their faith is tested, even by little trials, they manifest no more faith or patience than did ancient Israel. When brought into straight places, they murmur at the process by which God has chosen to purify them. Though their present needs are supplied, many are unwilling to trust God for the future, and they are in constant anxiety lest poverty shall come upon them, and their children shall be left to suffer. Some are always anticipating evil or magnifying the difficulties that really exist, so that their eyes are blinded to the many blessings which demand their gratitude. The obstacles they encounter, instead of leading them to seek help from God, the only Source of strength, separate them from Him, because they awaken unrest and repining.

Therefore, we must become established on the present truth, gospel order, so that we cannot be moved.

7. Not Our Way, But God's Way

Messenger and News Review, July 1989

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 39

Gospel Order, Part 7

A Word from the Editor

It is the absolute truth that our God is not a despot or a tyrant. He is not a ruler who exercises absolute power oppressively or brutally. Yet, at the same time He requires the strictest obedience to the laws He, in His infinite wisdom, has formulated. He does not call for this in order to exalt himself, but so that His kingdom can grow and flourish to the advantage and blessing of every citizen in it. He is a benign ruler who knows what is best for His people.

Gospel order therefore must be obeyed to the very letter. This cannot be done, unless by diligent study of the subject with God for our Teacher, we thoroughly acquaint ourselves with the subject. We must very carefully and thoroughly study what God did and is still doing until His principles of operation are clearly seen and truly understood.

If we really desire the falling of the latter rain, we shall not brush this subject aside as being inconsequential. We shall not be content with a casual knowledge of these vital principles, nor will we relegate them to a low point on the scale of our interests. We shall dedicate ourselves to the most faithful and consecrated establishment of them in our lives.

When this is done, the Lord can and will work mightily for His people, the latter rain will fall, and the end will speedily come.

IN OUR study of the method whereby God consistently communicated His messages through one messenger during that person's lifetime, we need to remind ourselves that it is not a matter of whether we favor or disfavor the procedure. We are to be concerned only with what the Lord has decreed, and we are to realize that we are left with no safe choice other than to follow His ways. You may summon all the arguments against the principle of one-man messengership you can put together, but it will take only one sincere look at God's attitude toward these procedures to remove every objection. It is not our way but His which must be followed in our worship of Him and service to Him. The Lord really tried to make this clear to ancient Israel.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 360-361:

God designed to teach the people that they must approach Him with reverence and awe, and *in His own appointed manner.*

He cannot accept partial obedience. It was not enough that in this solemn season of worship nearly everything was done as He had directed. God has pronounced a curse upon those who depart from His commandments, and put no difference between common and holy things. He declares by the prophet:

Isaiah 5

²⁰ Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness!...

²¹ Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

²³ Who justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away justice from the righteous man!

²⁴ ...because they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Let no one deceive himself with the belief that a part of God's commandments are nonessential, or that He will accept a substitute for that which He has required. Said the prophet Jeremiah,

Lamentations 3

³⁷ Who is he who speaks and it comes to pass, when the Lord has not commanded it?

God has placed in His word no command which men may obey or disobey at will and not suffer the consequences. If men choose any other path than that of strict obedience, they will find that...

Proverbs 14

¹² ...its end is the way of death.

I believe that there is a decided tendency for humans to pay service to the idea that perfection of procedure is not nearly so important as sincerity of motive. To them, the faithful presence of the latter will more than compensate for any deviations in the former.

There is a certain measure of truth in this, but only when the light on a particular truth is not yet shining. When the darkness in those areas has been dispelled, and there is no excuse for not knowing the procedures which the Lord has set down, then, no matter how genuine our motive may be, or how sincere, it is nothing short of willful contempt to fail to implement God's com-

mands. The point is that, even though the individuals could be prepared to successfully rise with the just in the resurrection, ignorance of God's ways will not produce that proficiency which will enable God to finish the work through them.

Never was the need to know, understand, and put into practice every command of the Lord, greater than it is now that we are entering upon the final effort to achieve what no other church on earth has so far accomplished—the building of the eternal kingdom. There is only one way in which that kingdom can be built—God's way. Otherwise, all the sacrifice you may make, even to the giving of your life itself, combined with all the sincerity and dedication you may bring to the building, will build instead that hideous structure which is always the product of attempting to build God's kingdom, man's way—Babylon the Great, the abomination of desolation, the mother of harlots, and desolations of the earth.

This is why every movement called by God to be the enemy and destroyer of Babylon has ended up becoming Babylon, and the friend of all those Babylons which achieved their status ahead of her. They have insisted on building God's kingdom, man's way. Thereby, while confidently believing that they are destroying Babylon, they are in effect establishing and strengthening her.

But, while movements have consistently failed to work in harmony with the plans drawn up by the divine Architect, God, with contrasting consistency, has adhered with impeccable perfection to what He has revealed His kingdom-building procedures are.

Personally, I have been deeply impressed with the way He has uncompromisingly stood by those men and women whom He has appointed to be His messengers, and continued to transmit His light through them alone on the one hand, and how totally He aligned himself against those who rejected His messengers on the other. Never has a person whom the Lord has appointed to be His messenger, whether with or without the prophetic gift, had to fight to preserve his or her position. All that such messengers had

to do was to busy themselves with delivering the messages the Lord gave them to transmit to the people, while leaving the Almighty to protect their position for them until their work was done. Never once has the Lord failed to do so most effectively.

One thing among others is sure. If you reject the principle of the one-man messengership, and support the idea of others sharing the role of primary messenger, you will be pitting your puny strength against the infinite might of Omnipotence. Such is a struggle you can never hope to win. Instead, you will have placed yourself where you are completely cut off from the flow of light and truth, and will walk with the people of God no more. It will be you and not the messenger who will lose your position. One has but to look back over the brief history of this movement to see how true these words are.

Let us go back again to the forty years during which Moses was the messenger of God. During all that time, Jehovah communicated all His light and the revelation of what He would have Israel do, through Moses exclusively.

Lest some extract a wrong impression from these facts, let it be understood that this does not mean that the people never did any study for themselves, nor that insights into the message revealed through Moses, never came to them. They needed to study very deeply, faithfully, and continuously into that which the Lord gave them through His messenger. As they did so, the Lord opened their eyes to see new things in the message they had failed to catch the first time they heard the teaching. But, what they were not authorized to do was to lay aside the truths conveyed to them through Moses, while they tried to seek out truth for themselves by going to God directly in search of the light. In addition to this, they were also not to develop new companion messages to be taught alongside of the message God was already giving through His messenger.

Protection from Apostasy

There are records of the attempts made by some to bypass the messenger, or otherwise develop companion messages. The results have always been a disaster, although those involved, instead of seeing it for what it is, imagine they have been liberated from the bondage of light coming through a particular messenger, and now have the freedom to go directly to God for themselves. They utterly failed to understand that the moment they depart in the least particular from God's way of kingdom-building, they commence the erection of Babylon.

Of these, Satan was the first, the greatest, and the father of all those who, since then, have been deceived by his specious lies. It will now be demonstrated from the Scriptures that every one of these defectors from Satan to the present time, would have been saved from their fate if they had retained faith in, and worked according to the principles of gospel order, and had therefore continued building God's kingdom His way.

The enjoyment of this protection from apostasy depends on being convinced of certain facts, and the conclusions which must arise from them. Firstly, here again are the facts:

1. God is the supreme Ruler of the universe who has formulated the laws which govern the operation of His kingdom. These laws are of equal validity on earth and throughout the universe, as they are in heaven.
2. No created intelligence has ever had, or ever will have, any say in the formation of these divine laws. We are to accept and obey them just as the Lord decreed them.
3. God himself obeys His laws to impeccable perfection, and requires the same quality of perfection from us.
4. In respect to the laws governing gospel order, He declared and demonstrated that He will speak His messages through one messenger only to the exclusion of all others so long as that messenger's divinely designated period of service shall

continue. Then the same system continues through the next messenger chosen by the Almighty.

In the case of Immanuel, the Everlasting Father specified that His messengership was from the eternity of the past to the eternity of the future. In the case of Moses, it was from the burning bush until he died. Upon his resurrection, he resumed his duties as a divinely appointed messenger, this time to the dwellers in the universe who were eager to learn more of the mystery of salvation.

The Desire of Ages, p. 19:

Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages.

Later in this series we will study the work of messengership which will be the ministry of the redeemed in the earth made new, and which role commenced for Moses when he was resurrected and taken to heaven. The beautiful revelation of this work is provided in the identification and ministry of Melchizedek.

That will come later, for, at this stage it is essential that we understand how the facts listed above, if accepted and obeyed, will preserve us from apostasy.

If we believe these facts because we have absolute faith in the truthfulness, integrity, justice, and wisdom of the God who originated them, we will positively know that He will build His church by transmitting the light of truth through one primary messenger.

Therefore, once you have identified that messenger, you will know that it will be pointless to expect new messages to come through any other channel until the present messenger's appointed period of duty has expired, upon which event you will patiently wait on the Lord until He supplies a replacement.

Following On, Step by Step

Furthermore, you will confine your study to those areas designated by God through His messenger, and will also guard against trying to open those areas faster than God is through His messenger. Thus we avoid running ahead of the Lord, particularly when a new message is in the process of unfolding. The Lord in His infinite wisdom knows what we need to study in order to be fitted to meet the responsibilities He has laid upon us. He does not partly fill that need, but sends everything which is required. Receiving only that which comes through the Lord's appointed channel very simply and neatly solves a difficult problem:

“What are the truths which should now be studied by God's people in preparation for the imminent crisis?”

“What shall be included and what omitted?”

“What is essential now, and what must be left till later in this life or even heaven?”

These are vital and important questions, for no one has the time or the energy to study every truth which is available in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. There is not a man upon the earth who can tell from himself what should be studied and what should be left. God alone has the answer which is:

“Study whatever I send through the messenger and discard all else no matter how appealing and attractive it may be. Remember that Eve thought the forbidden fruit was most attractive to the sight and pleasant to the taste.”

It is all simply a question of whether or not we truly rest in faith in God, whether we truly believe that the Lord will provide all we need, nothing less, and nothing more, without our needing to search out what we think we might require. Thus the true Christian can rest in perfect peace all the time.

It may be a serious blow to the pride of some to be faced with the realization that we cannot make any contribution to the message by searching out companion messages. But then, neither

does the messenger. He is but a pipeline through which the stream flows. Nothing is searched out or originated with him. For instance, during those eighty days in God's presence, Moses did nothing else but look and listen, and thereby understood what the Lord desired the people to know, without himself making the slightest contribution to the message whatsoever.

Christianity is a revealed religion which cannot be known in any other way. God is the Source of the revelation which passes through His Messenger Immanuel, and then through the primary messenger on earth such as Moses who, in turn, passes it on to the people.

Let me now sum up the main point of what has just been presented: In view of the fact that the Lord communicates His message of present truth to the church only through His chosen channel, and no one else, it absolutely and positively must follow that any new message which comes to us otherwise than through the instrument of His choice, is not from God, and we do not need it any more than we need a dose of deadly poison. Likewise the messenger who brings it is not from God, is therefore a self-sent messenger a positive curse to the cause. Invariably, when the message such people bring is allowed to develop, it is recognized as deadly error by those who, in their loyalty to the Lord, are led and enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

When this principle is understood, accepted, and acted upon by the final remnant, the door will be securely closed against those who come in to unsettle the flock, draw away disciples after themselves, and establish error in our minds. What a blessed relief that will prove to be!

A Seeming Contradiction

Of course, as we have learned during the study of other great themes such as the character of God, there are seeming problem statements which appear to totally repudiate the principle of the Lord confining himself to a single messenger, even though that is

what He has actually done again and again. One such statement reads as follows:

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 414:

God has made His church a channel of light, and through it He communicates His purposes and His will. He does not give one an experience independent of the church. He does not give one man a knowledge of His will for the entire church, while the church, Christ's body, is left in darkness.

This statement is a warning to a man who had been a spiritualist, and apparently was claiming to be in possession of light independent of the church. The instruction here given was not about messengership, but about having a spirit of independence, of believing that the entire church was in darkness, while he alone had a true picture of the church's condition. Obviously, the Lord does not leave the church in darkness, while He gives His truth to some independent.

What then does He do to correct a situation in which the church is losing its way? He sends a chosen messenger—an Elijah, a John the Baptist, a Messiah—to proclaim to the entire church its need of revival and reformation. Thus, instead of working independently of the church, He comes very close to His people in love, ministering His truth to them through His own chosen messenger.

We know that other statements will arise which could be interpreted in such a way as to appear to nullify the principles being discussed in these studies on gospel order, but when seen in their correct settings, they will be no problem.

The Fall of Lucifer

We will now turn to the sad fall of Lucifer to see how gospel order would have saved him from rebellion and ruin. As we have clearly seen, in heaven, there was only one being through whom every ray of light, every message of instruction, every revelation of the divine character, and every expression of the will of the Deity was channeled to the inhabitants of the universe through a

single Messenger, and that was Immanuel, the only begotten Son of God. That is an indisputable fact.

This does not mean that Christ personally delivered the message at all times to every angel, though there were occasions when He did. But there were also times when He used helpers to convey the message on His behalf. This procedure was used in the Garden of Eden when Christ sent His angels to teach Adam and Eve, and again when He sent out His disciples on missionary work. Therefore, any message which did not come from God through Immanuel, was not of God or from God, and that was sufficient, though not the only reason to immediately discard it.

And that is what, without hesitation, Lucifer should have done. He would have known for certain, especially after the great council in heaven, that these ideas throbbing in his now hyperactive mind certainly did not come to him through the divinely appointed Messenger, the only Begotten Son of God. Now then, if he had made it the inflexible rule of his life to accept nothing that reached him without passing through the channel designated by the Lord, he would have rejected these ideas and notions as the deadly error which they were, and would have been totally saved from rebellion and eternal death.

But, in the blindness which he had brought on himself because he rejected gospel order as the inflexible rule of his life, he believed that to accept only that which came through Immanuel meant his submission to a restricted, limited way of life in which he would be denied access to vast stores of knowledge, and would be forced to accept a low level of literacy. He considered that he was threatened with intellectual bondage from which he professedly would deliver all those who followed him. He proclaimed that:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 37:

If this prince of angels could but attain to his true, exalted position, great good would accrue to the entire host of heaven; for it was his object to secure freedom for all.

Now then, without question, the human mind is easily frightened with the same thought. The prospect of accepting only the light arriving through one particular channel, is viewed as the imposition on them of a restriction of liberty and the denial of research into so many fascinating and exciting subjects. This is especially so when the instrument is not a shining, sinless, immortal angel, or, better still, the Son of God himself, but is a poor, weak, human, clad in sinful flesh just like themselves. Therefore, it is difficult for God's people to make it the inflexible habit of their lives to accept only that which comes through the divinely appointed channel.

It is vital that a clear distinction be made between the pure message and the defective channel through which it is communicated. While it is necessary for the messenger to live an exemplary life, it must not be forgotten that the pressure of temptation upon him is much greater than that experienced by those who do not have the same burden to bear. While this can never be an excuse for sin, most messengers called of the Lord have unfortunately stumbled and sinned, but the message they bore remained untainted by this, nor did the Lord dismiss them.

In view of these facts, when the messenger is overcome by temptation usually springing from the unbelief which is the child of discouragement, how should the believers relate to the situation? They should not form their own opinion as to whether or not he or she should step down. They should look steadfastly and intently on God to see how He is relating to the matter. If He continues to channel His light through the fallen one, then the believers must continue to accept it from God through him as before. They must maintain the habit pattern of irrevocably receiving the light through the medium God is using to bring it to them.

But, while it is true that appearances strongly suggest that those who do resolve to irrevocably establish such a habit pattern are doomed to a life of restricted liberty and the atrophy of their intellectual powers, the opposite in fact is true. We are assured of

this because the word of God says so, and because Jesus proved it was.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 19:

In all things He brought His wishes into strict abeyance to His mission. He glorified His life by making everything in it subordinate to the will of His Father.

Christ when on earth had developed incredible physical, mental, and spiritual powers, a very vital factor in the development of which was His total submission to His Father's way of kingdom-building. On the other hand, those who believe in Satan's argument that submission to the system of receiving that alone which comes through God's appointed channel is to shrink and sink into enslavement, demonstrate that the very opposite is true. Their vaunted path to glory, intellectual achievement, and power proves to be only a dream, never a reality. Never was this more dramatically and convincingly demonstrated than when a boy of twelve proved to be far more than a match for the most highly educated minds in Israel.

You may then dismiss those clinging fears that, when you institute in your lives the irrevocable habit of studying only that which the Lord sends as present truth, you will thereby suffer deprivation and stultification, and would miss out on receiving messages of which you would not want to be kept in ignorance. Instead, you can joyously anticipate the highest development of every faculty and power with which the Creator has endowed you. You will be blessed to find that you will be the head and not the tail, the first and not the last, and will lack nothing of the needed truths from which those who do not build according to gospel order, have cut themselves off. Then you will testify,

“Oh! How I love the divine order!”⁷

Then, with even keener anticipation you can look forward to the happy day in the earth made new when the following words

⁷ *Psalm 119:97.*

will be fulfilled;

The Great Controversy, p. 677-678:

There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.

All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar—worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God's handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creations and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator's name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed.

And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise.

Revelation 5

¹³ And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in

them, I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.

There is nothing in those words to indicate that the building of His kingdom will result in your being stunted and limited, but rather, under the divine tutelage you shall find unlimited opportunities for the highest development of every power of your beings. But, those alone will inherit such joy and bliss who live by the principles of gospel order both now and through eternity.



By following Gospel Order, the life and talents of Matthew were greatly enhanced during his life on Earth, and will continue growing into eternity.

8. Lessons from the Fall

Messenger and News Review, July 1989

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 40

Gospel Order, Part 8

WE HAVE seen how that, if Lucifer had been immovably committed to receiving only that which was channeled to him through the divinely appointed Messenger, Immanuel; if he had been unswervingly dedicated to God's kingdom-building principles and procedures; and if he had patterned his life according to gospel order; he would have been fully preserved from falling into transgression, and earth would have been saved from the horrors through which it has passed.

It is now time to consider how that, if Adam and Eve had done what Lucifer should have done, they too would have been spared the loss which they suffered, and would not have become the means whereby the earth was marked with ruin. Let us now review their story in the particular light of their betrayal of gospel order, and their failure to build God's kingdom on earth as it is built in heaven.

So far as God was concerned, the same principles were in force on earth in the Garden of Eden as prevailed in heaven. God was the infinite Source and Immanuel was the sole Primary-Messenger, and the angels were His helpers, or secondary-messengers. To Adam and Eve, as to every other created intelligence in the universe, every ray of light from the Father flowed through the only begotten Son of God. All that came through Him was precious, needed light, and could be trusted for its absolute reliability and integrity. As surely as they knew that the truth was coming to them through God's personally appointed Messenger, they were to know they could absolutely trust to be light and truth that which came to them through this Agency, while every thought, notion, idea, suggestion, or message which came to them through any other medium, could only be darkness and error.



Adam and Eve were instructed and warned by Angels and by Christ

It was a beautifully simple organization offering total security to the original inhabitants of this earth, and all who should follow them. All they had to do was to work according to this arrangement.

Instruction Given to Adam and Eve

To make quite certain that there was no weak element in the divine provision for their safety and development, they were personally introduced to their Messenger, Immanuel, the Messenger with whom they held communion...

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 50:

...with no obscuring veil between.

They were also introduced to the angels who, as Immanuel's helpers, were to tutor the holy pair in the things they had learned from God through His Messenger, the Only Begotten of God. Wonderful were the fields of study which He opened to their admiring gaze whether He did this personally and directly or through His helpers.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 50-51:

The holy pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels, and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between. They were full of the vigor imparted by the tree of life, and their intellectual power was but little less than that of the angels. The mysteries of the visible universe—"those wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge" (*Job 37:16*)—afforded them an exhaustless source of instruction and delight. The laws and operations of nature, which have engaged men's study for six thousand years, were opened to their minds by the infinite Framer and Upholder of all. They held converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secrets of its life. With every living creature, from the mighty leviathan that plays among the waters⁸ to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam, Adam was familiar. He had given to each its name, and he was acquainted with the nature

⁸ *Psalm 104:26.*

and habits of all. God's glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, "the balance of clouds,"⁹ the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night—all were open to the study of our first parents. On every leaf of the forest or stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and air and sky, God's name was written. The order and harmony of creation spoke to them of infinite wisdom and power. They were ever discovering some attraction that filled their hearts with deeper love and called forth fresh expressions of gratitude.

So long as they remained loyal to the divine law, their capacity to know, to enjoy, and to love would continually increase. They would be constantly gaining new treasures of knowledge, discovering fresh springs of happiness, and obtaining clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the immeasurable, unending love of God.

So they were personally acquainted with the divinely appointed Messenger, with no excuse should they fail to recognize Him or His appointed helpers when they visited them. This meant that more than sufficient provision had been made to enable our first parents to distinguish between God's channel of communication and any impostors who might present themselves to the holy pair to claim their attention and support.

But there was another messenger in circulation who made the greatest claims for himself, while skillfully and maliciously hiding the fact that his propositions led downward to destruction. In love and mercy, Immanuel sent His angels to testify to Adam and Eve of the real character of the fiend, the sad history of his fall, the nature of his temptations, the place where those temptations would be brought to bear upon them—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—and of the horrifying effect of his message both on them and their posterity.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 52:

Our first parents were not left without a warning of the danger that threatened them. Heavenly messengers opened to them the history of Satan's fall and his plots for their destruction, unfold-

⁹ Job 36:16.

ing more fully the nature of the divine government, which the prince of evil was trying to overthrow. It was by disobedience to the just commands of God that Satan and his host had fallen. How important, then, that Adam and Eve should honor that law by which alone it was possible for order and equity to be maintained.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 53:

The angels warned them to be on their guard against the devices of Satan, for his efforts to ensnare them would be unwearied. While they were obedient to God the evil one could not harm them; for, if need be, every angel in heaven would be sent to their help. If they steadfastly repelled his first insinuations, they would be as secure as the heavenly messengers. But should they once yield to temptation, their nature would become so depraved that in themselves they would have no power and no disposition to resist Satan.

The giving of the warning was more than was needed, for the adherence to the principles of gospel order was all that was required to save them from the deceiver. This is how it would have worked for her total protection from Satan: From Immanuel, the one true Messenger had come the instruction to Eve not to wander from her husband's side. This directive was carried to her by the angels who were acting under the orders of the Messenger. Therefore, the command was as authoritative as if God had personally addressed himself to them, and was to be implicitly obeyed.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 53-54:

The angels had cautioned Eve to beware of separating herself from her husband while occupied in their daily labor in the garden; with him she would be less in danger from temptation than if she were alone. But absorbed in her pleasing task, she unconsciously wandered from his side. On perceiving that she was alone, she felt an apprehension of danger, but dismissed her fears, deciding that she had sufficient wisdom and strength to discern evil and to withstand it. Unmindful of the angels' caution, she soon found herself gazing with mingled curiosity and

admiration upon the forbidden tree. The fruit was very beautiful, and she questioned with herself why God had withheld it from them.

To be an effective means of protection, and the procedure by which the kingdom is to be built, God's instructions given through Immanuel must be obeyed without question or hesitation. Any disobedience or even the approval of it in one's self or another, is to introduce a different order than that which has been established by the divine authority, and will destroy the kingdom rather than build it.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 52:

The law of God is as sacred as God himself. It is a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, the expression of divine love and wisdom. The harmony of creation depends upon the perfect conformity of all beings, of everything, animate and inanimate, to the law of the Creator. God has ordained laws for the government, not only of living beings, but of all the operations of nature. Everything is under fixed laws, which cannot be disregarded. But while everything in nature is governed by natural laws, man alone, of all that inhabits the earth, is amenable to moral law. To man, the crowning work of creation, God has given power to understand His requirements, to comprehend the justice and beneficence of His law, and its sacred claims upon him; and of man unswerving obedience is required.

So then, if Eve had lived by the gospel order principle of strictly obeying the messages from the Messenger rather than referring to her own "wisdom," she would have quickly sought out her husband as soon as she realized she was no longer with him, and thus would have remained on safe ground. The moment she acted on the basis of messages from within herself, she made herself to be the messenger in the place of Immanuel which was to make herself God in the place of God. In that moment, she stopped building God's kingdom on earth as it is built in heaven, and commenced the erection of Babylon,

Revelation 18

² ...a habitation of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!

Revelation 17

⁵ ...the mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth.

At the Tree

Once before the tree, Eve was confronted by the other messenger, the self-sent one, and what a curse to the cause he has more than proved to be. Now, what should Eve have immediately done to ensure her instant and total protection, for, even though she should never have been at the tree, she could still have escaped unscathed? She should have recalled the principles of divine order and then acted in harmony with them by taking flight from the perilous place. Then, as she fled from that dreadful spot without waiting to hear so much as a single proposition from this other messenger, she would have said, as much to herself as to the devil:

“Gospel order has not changed. There is still but one Messenger sent of the Lord; only One who is the channel of light and truth, only One to whom I will listen, and this is not He, nor one of His helpers. All others come to me with a message of darkness and death, and I will not stay to have my mind besmirched and clouded with their deadly sophistries.”

Had she done this, there was no hope of her being seduced by Satan. She would have returned to her husband’s side, unscathed by the experience, leaving the serpent in a terrible rage of disappointment and defeat. Let us treat him in the same way today.

It is time that we become emancipated from the idea that we must be familiar with what is being taught by various voices around us so as to be certain that we are not in ignorance of any truths which may be in circulation. Like Eve, we tend to feel confident that we have...

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 54:

...sufficient wisdom and strength to discern evil and withstand it.

I have heard this philosophy being expressed by leaders in the Adventist church. While candidly admitting that the modern Protestant writers produce books in which “truth and error” were mixed, they expressed the confidence that they could detect and reject the latter, while receiving the spiritual blessing contained in the former.

Time has proved that their confidence was as misplaced as was Eve’s. It has developed that those who advocated the idea that they could safely study the works of religious authors who belonged to churches which had flatly rejected the third angel’s message, have become themselves rejecters of the third angel’s message in verity, and are not numbered among those who have embraced these living truths.

As Eve was bidden not to stray from Adam’s side, so we have been warned that...

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 61:

The fallen denominational churches are Babylon.

We have been called upon as was she, to...

2 Corinthians 6

¹⁷ Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord.

Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.

¹⁸ I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.

How can we possibly expect to find living truth unmixed with the poison of deadly error in the teachings of those whom the Lord identifies as Babylon, the deadly enemy of God and His people! If we make the appalling mistake of so disregarding the principles of gospel order as to seek light from these false messengers, we can be sure that we shall walk in darkness, and will join with

the builders of Babylon, rather than being a part of that company who shall build God's kingdom on earth as it is built in heaven.

Unmixed Truth

Many, if not all of you will testify that books by Babylonian authors on spiritual themes are neither in your libraries, nor are ever opened by you for the reasons enunciated here. That is excellent so far as this takes you in your rejection of messengers who do not qualify under the principles and procedures of gospel order. But, before we rest satisfied that we are fully obedient to these ideals, let us draw the line a little closer.

All who have studied these lessons should now be convinced that the Lord transmits His light only through those messengers whom He has chosen for the task. Therefore, there is no need to research every teacher who comes with a message. All that needs to be done is to know which of them all is the one through whom the Lord is or has transmitted His light, and pay no attention to the rest. Simply determine the answer to the question:

“Who is God's appointed messenger today, and who were His messengers in the past?”

For instance, the Lord has informed us through His servant, Sister White, that Elders Waggoner and Jones were His messengers called by Him to proclaim the most precious message of righteousness by faith. Sister White apparently did not share the role of messenger of this particular light at this time, but was assigned the work of endorsing the message and the messengers.¹⁰

Despite the fact that these two men alone had the vital message of the hour and had been commissioned of God to teach it, at the successive General Conference sessions starting in 1888 and continuing for some years thereafter, much of the time was given to

¹⁰There are very good reasons for there being two messengers at this time instead of the usual one. For the same cause, there were at least twelve primary messengers during the period of the former rain, and the indications are that there will be even more during the latter rain. The reason for this are discussed in Chapter 17, “The Extension of Gospel Order Through Redemption.”

other speakers who did not have the divine endorsement of messengership as did Elders Waggoner and Jones. So then, to be in line with gospel order, what should have been done at those meetings? On the basis of the Lord's announcement, which was confirmed by undeniable supporting evidences, as to the divinely appointed position of the two messengers, the assembled delegates and their leaders should have fully and without any doubt or question, accepted those men as the ones with the message for the hour. Then they should have given them all the time allocated for Bible studies, while every person at the conferences should have humbly and prayerfully devoted themselves to receiving the light from God through these two men.

Then, when each had become well versed in the wonderful light and had made it to be his personal, living experience by his own intensive and prayerful study, each was to go forth in his individual field of labor as secondary-messengers or helpers of the primary-messengers, to repeat to the people what the Lord had revealed to them through His messengers. No one was to even think of studying with the idea that the Lord would give him an additional message.

What a different history would have been written of the 1888 period if the principles of gospel order had been correctly understood, fully accepted, and faithfully implemented in that decisive time! We certainly would no longer be in this sinful world.

Confining ourselves to that which the Lord sends through His appointed messenger does not mean that we discard the Spirit of Prophecy and the Bible, while reading only those books in which are published the actual writings of the messenger. To do that would be a fanatical, extreme, and unprofitable position to adopt. What it does mean is that we are to remain within the subject matter to which the Lord, through the messenger, has directed our attention. Firstly, we are to study the message itself as it comes through the messenger until we really know it and hopefully can teach it to those who have never heard it. If this is done,

it will be found that the divine Teacher, the Holy Spirit, will give you added beautiful insights into the message as He leads you through the Scriptures.

But, whatever we do, we must never study with the idea that God will give us another distinct message to be added to those of the primary messenger. Nor is it necessary to study only the contemporary messenger, for there is a line of authenticated messengers whose messages can be studied with safety and profit. I think of those leading Protestant reformers whose work as messengers was endorsed by the Lord through the Spirit of Prophecy.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 598:

The Waldenses, John Wycliffe, Huss and Jerome, Martin Luther and Zwingli, Cranmer, Latimer, and Knox, the Huguenots, John and Charles Wesley, and a host of others brought to the foundation material that will endure throughout eternity.

Due allowance must be made for their living in an age of great spiritual darkness so that they could not see all that we can see today, but what the Lord sent through them was the truth, and those who accepted the truth sent through them, found salvation.

To them can be added William Miller, Charles Fitch, Samuel Snow, Hiram Edson, Ellen White, and Elders Waggoner and Jones. I am not saying that we have to go back through all the messengers of the past. Do so only if the Lord guides you that way.

In determining whose messages we shall study, the guiding gospel order principle is to confine ourselves to those messengers who were specifically called of the Lord, given their message by Him, and sent forth at His command to enlighten the people. Look for men who thus build the kingdom on earth as it is built in heaven. By so operating according to the principles and procedures of gospel order, we shall be building the kingdom of God in harmony with the Lord. Then, and not before, the latter rain will fall.

9. Redeeming the Failures of the Past

Messenger and News Review, August 1989

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 41

Gospel Order, Part 9

A Word from the Editor

There is a marked tendency for the children of men to follow the same procedures in their determination to fulfill the divine purpose of ending the reign of sin, as prevented their fathers from entering the heavenly Canaan. We seem to get stuck in a groove which keeps on bringing us back to the same starting point. We seem to think little of strict compliance with the divine principles of kingdom-building, while we rest satisfied that sincerity, sacrifice, and dedication compensate for any deficiency in gospel order. Then, when this behavior pattern fails to bring success, instead of questioning whether we have worked to build the kingdom strictly according to God's ways or not, we consider our ways too sacred to question, and console ourselves with the notion that we just did not work hard enough.

Let us stop right here and now and, under the ministry of the Holy Spirit, make the most thorough examination of ourselves to see if in fact we do actually understand the principles and procedures of gospel order, and are laboring in harmony with them.

Then, if every member will faithfully do this, we will get out of the fateful groove which has channeled every previous movement into failure, and we will be victorious and successful at last. Always remember that it is the Lord who makes the rules for the triumph of His cause.

God's Way Is Not a Limitation

IN THE last chapter, we looked at the protection provided by refusing to listen to any but God's authenticated messengers and their divinely appointed helpers, and by confining ourselves to those areas of study presented by God through His messenger.

Some may question this as an infringement of their liberties, feeling instead that they should have total freedom to study as widely as they wish without any restrictions being imposed upon them. Let all such remember that it is the teacher, not the student, who determines what shall be included in a course of study. It may be further argued that at least the student can choose the courses he will take, even if he has no say in the content.

But again this is not so, for he is obliged to select the courses which will fit him for his chosen profession. For instance, in the case of a person who wishes to practice architecture, the teachers declare in effect,

“Yes, we will teach you to be an architect. To fit you for that, we the teachers, have designed a course which will qualify you for that work. We have defined the subjects you will study, the practical assignments you will do, and the written papers you will submit. The course is so intensive that, for the next five years or more you will have time and energy to give to nothing outside of your assigned study program.”

In like manner,

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 478:

God is the Teacher of His people.

When we choose to be trained as Christians, He offers only certain courses, the ones which will qualify us to be His instruments to victoriously engage in the final battle, and then to find our places reserved in heaven. It is not given to us to determine the study program. God has already done that, and He delivers the lessons through His appointed messenger when and where He sees fit. It is our responsibility to receive those studies and really concentrate all the powers at our command on the most thorough learning of these truths.

Our choice is limited to accepting God as the Teacher, and taking, in the order He gives them, the courses which He has designed to fit us to do our assigned part in the great controversy, and to fill our place in heaven.

If we find that there is in us a feeling of rebellion against being organized in this way, it will help us to see our need to gain the victory over this problem, if we remind ourselves that it is the Lord who has formulated gospel order, not the messenger through whom He has sent the message explaining it. Therefore, it is against the Almighty that we would be in revolt.

Remember too, that when the Almighty called that great meeting in heaven to...

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 36:

...set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained toward all created beings,

–Lucifer rebelled against God’s declaration that he could only receive light through Immanuel. He complained that his “previously unrestricted liberty” had been terminated, and that now he was confined and deprived.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 37-38:

The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer, who, it was claimed, was also entitled to reverence and honor. If this prince of angels could but attain to his true, exalted position, great good would accrue to the entire host of heaven; for it was his object to secure freedom for all. But now even the liberty which they had hitherto enjoyed was at an end; for an absolute ruler had been appointed them, and to His authority all must pay homage. Such were the subtle deceptions that through the wiles of Lucifer were fast obtaining in the heavenly courts.

There had been no change in the position or authority of Christ. Lucifer’s enmity and misrepresentation, and his claims to equality with Christ, had made necessary a statement of the true position of the Son of God; but this had been the same from the beginning. Many of the angels were, however, blinded by Lucifer’s deceptions.

Likewise in these presentations of gospel order, nothing is being changed. Rather, only a statement is being made of the divine order as it has been from the beginning. Let us be careful then, not to arise with the complaint that there is now being introduced a restriction of our personal liberties, for there is no more truth in this charge, than there was when Lucifer made it in heaven a long time ago.

What is being done here is the very careful and responsible presentation of gospel order in which I seek to present it exactly as

God formulated it, ever bearing in mind that this is the declaration of the principles and procedures by which God's kingdom is built in heaven, and by which alone it can be built on this earth. If we refuse to accept these principles, there is nothing else for us but to embrace the ways of Babylon, the procedures by which God's kingdom would be destroyed. We need therefore to be thoroughly conversant with and converted to the divine order to ensure that the Lord's kingdom will be built and will abide eternally.

Turning Away from False Messengers

The principle contained in gospel order of refusing to even listen to those messengers who do not have the divine credentials, is strongly supported in God's commands to His children. Consider the chapter in *Early Writings*, 123-125, entitled "False Shepherds." A false shepherd is a false messenger, a spiritual descendant from him who awaited Eve at that fateful spot in the Garden. Such are to be treated as Eve should have related herself to the wily serpent bent on her seduction.

The first three paragraphs in the chapter describe the character of these unprincipled claimants to messengership, and the evil nature of the course they had followed. Then in the final three paragraphs, we are plainly told how to relate to them. Here are the last three paragraphs. Consider them well, and implicitly obey the counsels given therein.

Early Writings, p. 124-125:

The different parties of professed Advent believers have each a little truth, but God has given all these truths to His children who are being prepared for the day of God. He has also given them truths that none of these parties know, neither will they understand. Things which are sealed up to them, the Lord has opened to those who will see and are ready to understand. If God has any new light to communicate, He will let His chosen and beloved understand it, without their going to have their minds enlightened by hearing those who are in darkness and error.

I was shown the necessity of those who believe that we are having the last message of mercy, being separate from those who are daily imbibing new errors. I saw that neither young nor old should attend their meetings; for it is wrong to thus encourage them while they teach error that is a deadly poison to the soul and teach for doctrines the commandments of men. The influence of such gatherings is not good. If God has delivered us from such darkness and error, we should stand fast in the liberty wherewith He has set us free and rejoice in the truth. God is displeased with us when we go to listen to error, without being obliged to go; for unless He sends us to those meetings where error is forced home to the people by the power of the will, He will not keep us. The angels cease their watchful care over us, and we are left to the buffetings of the enemy, to be darkened and weakened by him and the power of his evil angels; and the light around us becomes contaminated with the darkness.

I saw that we have no time to throw away in listening to fables. Our minds should not be thus diverted, but should be occupied with the present truth, and seeking wisdom that we may obtain a more thorough knowledge of our position, that with meekness we may be able to give a reason of our hope from the Scriptures. While false doctrines and dangerous errors are pressed upon the mind, it cannot be dwelling upon the truth which is to fit and prepare the house of Israel to stand in the day of the Lord.

The counsels, warnings, and promises contained in this statement are all very clear, and harmonize with the principles and procedures of gospel order. The statement opens with the acknowledgment that each of the other groups has a little truth, a fact well known to God's children, for we are well aware that all the various religions, be they Christian or otherwise, contain some truth. Even the professedly Christian Roman Catholic Church teaches some very beautiful truths, and, verbally at least, upholds certain very high moral standards.

Some conclude from this that it is wise to search out these truths and collect them from wherever they may be found so as to be certain that we come behind in nothing. I am sure that those

who offer this logic, are not aware of the awful indictment they level against God, for they are charging Him with so inadequately revealing His truth to them that they are forced to scavenge among the errors of the fallen churches in the hope of getting a little here and there. I am certainly grateful that the God whom we serve can do and has done much better for us than that.

The remainder of the first sentence in the paragraph under consideration certifies that He has. We are happy to be assured that all the truths which the others individually have are collectively held by that church which has been called out of Babylon, and which is being prepared for the coming day of God. These fortunate and much blessed people do not need to go searching for truth among any of the other movements, for they have all the light which can be found in this way already. An added bonus lies in the fact that God's communications to us are given to us un-mixed with error.

But, better still, He has revealed to His church truths which none of the others either know or are able to understand. Furthermore, if and when He has any new light to communicate, He will transmit it to His people directly, thus removing any need for them to listen to any other messengers than those He has sent.

Having made such complete provision for their enlightenment, what is God's attitude to any searching His people might make among the other different movements. Does He say:

“While I have so adequately provided for you that there is nothing to be gained by your seeking elsewhere for truth, I do not mind if you do?”

Can you imagine God's expressing such ideas to Eve in Eden? Far from it, for He understands far better than we do, the deadly danger of listening to any other messengers than the ones He sends. His command is to be separate, to attend none of their meetings, and to stand fast in the liberty wherewith He has set us free. God is displeased with us when we go listening to error. He

will not protect us, for the angels cease to watch over us, and we are left to the buffetings of the enemy to be weakened and darkened by Satan. We are warned that we have no time to waste listening to the false messengers.

We tend to think of the false shepherds as being those who are teaching obvious error, but we need to understand that this test comes much closer to home than that. For instance, whenever a false teacher arises from among us, he will claim to be a true shepherd. In the early stages of his arising, he will profess total agreement with the message the Lord has sent, and will recognize the messenger through whom it was sent. Thus he will appear to be a genuine messenger sent by the Lord to complement the message already given, and to correct certain “errors” which he claims are present in the message.

However, what he is will soon become apparent, for we have the promise that the same Holy Spirit who elects a true messenger, at the same time informs the church of what He has done. A. T. Jones expresses this comforting truth for us in these words:

It should be repeated, that it may not be forgotten, that every responsibility in The Church is the direct gift of God by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

And the membership of The Church, by the Spirit are to be able to recognize the gift upon the individual and accordingly to recognize that individual in the place and work in the church for which the gift has prepared him. *Acts 13:2-4; Acts 6:3-5.*¹¹

There are a number of tests to be applied to confirm or deny the messengership of any one who rises up to proclaim a message among us, but the presentation and explanation of these belong to a later portion of these studies.

For the moment, we emphasize how important it is that we confine ourselves to the messages coming from the Lord through the messenger of His appointment. Those who understand and

¹¹ *Lessons from the Reformation*, p. 109.

operate by the principles involved will find perfect protection from the devil's devious temptations, and will be more than conqueror in the battle with evil.

Already we have seen how that Lucifer and our first parents would all have been saved from destruction if they had but adhered to the procedures of gospel order. When they did not, they had no hope of surviving the hour of temptation.

This introduces the thought that every deviation into sin has been due to the disregard of the principles of gospel order. This is but another way of saying:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 657:

Every failure on the part of God's people is due to their lack of faith,

—for, no one can live out the principles of gospel order except they do it by faith in God, in His messengers, and in the system.

The Failure at Kadesh Barnea

By way of confirmation, let us consider one or two examples of this, the first of which will be the tragic debacle at Kadesh-barnea, where, to sum up in a few words what happened, it was a case of repeatedly ignoring the Lord's messenger, while they acted on the messages which came from within themselves. This was a blatant disregard of gospel order in which the messenger principle of divine communication is so vital a part of the system. Those people, in replacing obedience to the Lord's communications with themselves as the guides, made themselves to be the messengers, which was but to make themselves God in the place of God.

When they arrived at Kadesh-barnea, the Lord communicated His instructions to them through His messenger, Moses, as He had consistently done ever since He had established Moses in this position. The message was:

Deuteronomy 1

²¹ Look, the Lord our God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.

These words were spoken to them after an eminently successful journey from Egypt had brought them to the very borders of the Promised Land. Now they were poised to come into possession of their inheritance, but would do so only if they moved forward in strict obedience to the principles and procedures of gospel order. To do so required them to know who the Lord's messenger was, what the message was which had come from Jehovah through that messenger to them, and to be fully persuaded that they must seek no other messenger than the one appointed by God whether he spoke to them directly, or through his helpers. If they were very careful to ensure that these steps were being faithfully followed, they would be guaranteed total protection from apostasy, and complete success in their invasion of Canaan.

There was no problem knowing who the divinely appointed messenger was, for the Lord had repeatedly declared this in the clearest of terms. Moses was the messenger of God. There was no need to question his credentials, for it was very clearly evident that Jehovah had not withdrawn his commission. He was definitely the voice of God to the people and would remain so until just before his death.

The certainty of knowing that Moses was the messenger made it a simple matter to positively identify the message from God which applied to their time and situation. Having arrived at the place where they needed further instruction as to where to go and what to do, they were advised by God through His messenger, Moses, that they were to forthwith proceed to the actual possession of the promised land.

There was only one thing they should have done and that was to obey the directive which had come from Jehovah through His messenger, Moses, while, at the same time, rejecting all messages

from any other source, through any other channel. Had they done that, they would have acted according to the principles and procedures of gospel order and would have been absolutely protected against failure and defeat.

But in the presence of the messenger, and in the face of the message which came through him, they turned to another message from a different source altogether, a procedure on their part which was completely out of gospel order, and one which would be attended by fearful consequences.

The acceptance of this other message by everyone of them is recorded in these words:

Deuteronomy 1

²² And everyone of you came near to me and said, Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and the cities into which we shall come.

It is important that we truly understand that what they did was a serious rejection of gospel order which could never build the kingdom of God nor any part of it. Just as, in the Garden of Eden, Eve listened to a voice which was not commissioned by God to bear messages from Him to His people, so the Israelites at Kadesh-barnea turned their attention to a voice which did not have God's hallowed commission to convey messages on His behalf.

The message which asserted itself at Kadesh-barnea came from the people themselves.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 387:

...it was proposed *by the people* that spies be sent up to survey the country.

So surely as a message emanated from themselves, and they accepted and acted on that message, then just so surely did they make themselves to be messengers whether they could see that they had or not.

There are those who will come to us with a message purportedly from the Lord, but who will disclaim being messengers. Therefore, it is important that each believer understands the basis on which a person is identified as a messenger. Once that is determined, then, if he proves to be a messenger, there follows the need to identify the source of his messengership. We must know whether it comes from the Lord or Satan, whether it is for the church or otherwise.

If we have cause to think that a certain individual comes to us as a messenger, but denies that he or she is a messenger, do not accept this disavowal for an instant, but look further, though not with a critical or judgmental spirit.

If you find that the person concerned is writing out studies and circulating them among the believers in the movement, then be sure he or she is a messenger, no matter what that one may “humbly” claim for or deny about him or herself. Often messengers will begin their ministry by quietly circulating their letters and literature followed by personal visitations. Sometimes, they do not even write anything. Instead, they visit around among the believers, particularly at the camp meetings, while claiming that they merely seek fellowship, and the opportunity to share what the Lord has given them. Be not deceived. Even if these people are not really aware of what they are doing, they are still messengers, and must face the test to determine whether they are sent by the Lord or not.

At Kadesh-barnea, not only did the Israelites make themselves to be messengers, but far worse, in doing so, they replaced God and His messenger with themselves. The message from within themselves became their guidance, whereas the message which alone should have been their instruction, was completely ignored and forgotten. They went further than to make themselves gods together with God, for they gave themselves the pre-eminence above God.

Thus they substituted the ways of Babylon for the ways of the Almighty. In their lives, they had abandoned God's kingdom-building procedures, to establish in their place the principle by which Babylon professedly builds the kingdom of the Lord. There was no hope of their continuing with the construction of the divine kingdom under these circumstances, for they had disqualified themselves for this work.

Had they adhered strictly to the principles of gospel order, their next step would have been the cleansing of Canaan from the presence of the heathen either by their conversion or by their expulsion from the land. But that became impossible, and God was left with no option but to turn them back to the desert until they had all perished. In the light of their miserable fate, let none consider gospel order to be a light matter. Instead, let each one realize the need to thoroughly understand the principles involved, and never permit any relaxation of that vigilance which is needed to detect and reject the subtle intrusion of Babylon's ways.

It is evident that the children of Israel did not understand the true nature of their actions, did not perceive that they were casting aside gospel order, and did not know that they were disqualifying themselves from any further participation in the building of God's kingdom. In their eyes, their actions were highly commendable. Were they not eager to possess the land in fulfillment of God's will? Were they not making a proposition for the "wise" survey of the land before undertaking the invasion of enemy territory? Were they not God's true children, His very special people?

If their thoughtless disregard of gospel order had been pointed out to them, they might have responded in good-natured protest:

"What is all this appeal to work strictly by these rules and fussy procedures? Our zeal, dedication, enthusiasm, and faith are so vigorous, wholehearted, and sincere that they more than compensate for any failure to live up to the divine order! God looks

upon the heart, not upon the outward actions, and having the right motive is what really matters with Him.

Let anyone who would seek to thus justify his slackness in regard to gospel order, take another look at what happened at Kadesh-barnea. From such a careful, prayerful inspection he will realize that God does not excuse the disregard of gospel order, nor will He build His kingdom by any other than the correct procedures. This is not because of any arbitrary decree on His part, but because there is no satisfactory alternative.

A further impressive lesson to be learned from Kadesh-barnea is the awesome responsibility resting on the messenger to instruct the people in the principles and operation of gospel order. It is his solemn duty to declare the message from heaven irrespective of whether it is what the members are prepared to hear or not, and no matter how much they may impugn his motives by charging him with protecting his position.

When we look at how God worked to explain Immanuel's position, we can know what to expect on earth. God gave Immanuel the authority and duty of explaining Immanuel's position. And Lucifer, the father of all false judgments and reasoning, represented Immanuel as self-protecting. He felt threatened and rejected God's way of explaining the matter. Let no one take up his misguided reasoning and come to his fate.

Concerning the duty of God's messengers to speak only what God gives them and to direct the people to look at what God has done, we have already seen how Peter spoke up in the great council in Jerusalem, where he directed the attention of the delegates to what the Lord had done in giving the Holy Spirit to believers from the Gentile world. He argued that if the Lord had made no distinction between the Jew and the Gentile—how could they? His well chosen words by which he called on those men to observe gospel order, served to reverse the direction into which the council was heading, and saved the movement from early apostasy. It was a great moment in church history.

But Moses appears to have missed his moment of opportunity. When the people presented their message to him on the borders of the promised land, he was pleased to receive a message which did not come from God. Looking back to the event from near the close of his earthly life, he described his reaction as follows:

Deuteronomy 1

²³ And the plan pleased me well; so I took twelve of your men, one man from each tribe.

The very last thing which should have been was for the messenger of God to have been pleased with this complete setting aside of gospel order. The message and the actions for which it called did not bear the divine credentials, for it did not come from the infinite Source, nor did it come through the one appointed channel through which alone every message from God could come. The gospel order fact was that any message which did not come through Moses was to be labeled false.

At this point, the significance of Moses' expressing pleasure over the proposition from the people to send in the spies, must not be overlooked. What Moses said in approval of the plan did not come from God through him, but only from him. Thus, the messenger of God can never be held up as being infallible, for he can speak from himself without reference to God as did Moses, the mighty man who had talked with God face to face.

It is obviously essential that the believers in Jesus shall be able to know what comes from God through the messenger, and what comes only from the latter should this ever be the case. They will know, if they thoroughly test the teachings by the Scriptures. Moses should never have been pleased with the plan, nor should the people have been influenced by his approving pleasure. If they would have used the previous directives from the Most High to test both their plan and the approval of it by Moses, they would have found both to be false.

Responses such as the following should have been common among the people when the idea was proposed to them.

“It sounds like a wonderful plan, but did it come from the Lord through the Lord’s ordained messenger, Moses?”

“No, we have a different message coming through him by which we are directed to proceed with the invasion immediately. There was no mention in those instructions of spies being sent in first.”

“Then,” should have come the immediate, positive, and resolute response, “if it came not by the divine order, that is, from God through His ordained channel, we will absolutely have nothing to do with the plan.”

That is the response which Eve should have given in the Garden and which would have saved her and the human family from the unspeakable woes which, in consequence, have overtaken them! Just think of what the blessed results would have been for ancient Israel if that had been their fixed attitude back at Kadesh!

Being required to put their faith in a human messenger was a serious test of faith. It was then, and it still is today. But the witness of history clearly and convincingly testifies that, every time the people of the Lord obeyed His messages transmitted to them through His chosen messengers, they and the church prospered. But, every occasion in which God’s children paid heed to the voice of any messenger other than the one bearing the divine credentials, they met with disastrous defeat, incredible loss, and extended delays in the onward progress of the work.

These facts are so self-evident that they can be very easily verified by anyone who undertakes a survey of Bible history. I would encourage all to make such a study for, the better we know and understand the events of the past, the better we can become established on the principles which will protect us from making the same appalling errors of judgment. It must never be forgotten that...

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 31:

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.

Therefore, we need to be continually reminding ourselves of all the Bible stories, so that the way the Lord has led His people in the past shall never be forgotten. We are so prone to forgetfulness of these very things, while human nature is so ready to assert itself instead. Notice again, how easily the Israelites at Kadesh set aside the message from the Lord directing them to proceed with the invasion immediately, and replaced the divine counsel with a message from within themselves.

I wish and pray that all who study gospel order will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to see the peril in which we daily stand, and to mount a perpetual guard against being falsely led. The danger is deadly and ever present. There is not an instant of time in which we can afford to relax and feel that we are secure. When we see that the mightiest of men such as Moses and Elijah could and did fail badly in this very area, we will understand something about the high standard of vigilance which must be maintained if we are to stand without falling.

Some may seek shelter in the fact that God forgives those who slip and stumble even as He forgave Moses and Elijah, both of whom are already in heaven, but, let none overlook the fact that every time we fall into sin, even though we are freely forgiven, we do not escape the penalty of our transgression unscathed.

Please remember that we are the generation to whom the opportunity has come to succeed where all the rest have failed. Therefore, we must overcome where they failed, for we cannot afford to repeat their errors. Nothing less than perfection of procedure and behavior will satisfy the needs of the occasion—the finishing of the work. Let us rise to the total consecration of building God's kingdom on earth as it is built in heaven. Let gospel order be fully established and implemented.

10. A Deeper Look at Kadesh-Barnea

Messenger and News Review, August 1989

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 42

Gospel Order, Part 10

THROUGH forty expectant days, the Israelites awaited the return of the twelve who had been sent in to survey the land, confident that they had done the right thing, and sure that, in consequence, they would soon inherit their promised possession.

But, under what a delusion they looked forward to what they believed would be a very happy event, but which, under the prevailing circumstances, could only be a mammoth disappointment as it certainly proved to be.

The simple facts of the story are known to us all. When the men returned, they firstly spoke in glowing terms of the fertility, productiveness, and desirability of the land but followed this with a report of the mighty physique, belligerent nature, and warlike capabilities of its defenders. They ended up by declaring to all the listening people:

Numbers 13

³¹ We are not able to go up against this people, for they are stronger than we.

³² And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature.

³³ There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.

With that the people became furious in their disappointment, and openly charged God with having brought them to this place in order to slay them, their wives, and their children. They then called for the appointment of a leader to successfully return them to Egypt, and despite the words of faith and encouragement from Joshua and Caleb, prepared to stone them. They would have com-



Caleb encourages the people to trust God

mitted these dreadful murders but for the direct intervention of the Lord. By their fearful wickedness, they had placed themselves where they had no protection from immediate destruction, and God was on the edge of departure from them as is evidenced by His declaration to Moses:

Numbers 14

¹¹ And the Lord said to Moses: How long will these people reject me? And how long will they not believe me, with all the signs which I have performed among them?

¹² I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.

Moses mightily interceded for the people in response to which the Lord was able to continue His protection of them, even though it was now impossible for them to enter the Promised Land.

The incredibly tragic state to which they descended was but the natural outworking of their setting aside of gospel order, and demonstrates very convincingly how great is the potential for evil which is resident in rebellion against the divine order. Let us trace the development of the problem from the point where they proposed to send the spies to discover what lay before them until, forty days later, they were giving vent to insane unbelief. When they came to Kadesh-barnea, the Lord simply said,

Deuteronomy 1

²¹ Go up and possess it [the land].

Faith in that word, the One who sent it, and the one through whom it was sent, required immediate, unquestioning obedience to that word, and the total rejection of any other suggestion or proposition whatsoever. They needed to step forward by faith in the same way as they had at the crossing of the Red Sea where no one proposed any counter ideas or plans emanating from within themselves or any other source. Consider again their act of faith in walking down to the very edge of the water even though no path opened before them until they entered the sea.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 290:

It was “by faith” that “they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land.” *Hebrews* 11:29. In marching down to the very water, they showed that they believed the word of God as spoken by Moses. They did all that was in their power to do, and then the Mighty One of Israel divided the sea to make a path for their feet.

Let none miss the truth which is revealed at this point. At the Red Sea,

...they showed that they believed the word of God *as spoken by Moses*.

At Kadesh, they showed that they did not believe the word of God as spoken by Moses. Without a doubt, they thought they believed, for they did not question the fact that they were soon to enter the Promised Land, but, like so many before and since, they did not understand what constitutes true faith. True faith is manifested in unquestioning obedience such as they themselves had exercised at the Red Sea. True faith, which is the only kind the Lord can accept, admits no other proposition whatsoever. In the exercise of true faith, there is not so much as a single thread of human devising.

When Israel came to Kadesh-barnea, they faced a very subtle temptation which they proved unable to recognize as temptation. No sooner had the word of God come to them through Moses, than they were faced with an alternative word, the one from within themselves.

That which made the word from within themselves so seemingly harmless on the one hand and attractive on the other, is that it was the expression of the same dedicated purpose as was resident in the message transmitted by God through Moses—namely possession of the Promised Land. They fell for the delusion that, as the end result to be achieved is God’s will in both cases, the procedures must be equally righteous and acceptable both to God and themselves.

But this is definitely not so. In gospel order, the divine system of kingdom-building, the end never justifies the means. God's kingdom can be built only by God's ways and none other. At the Red Sea,

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 290:

The people were weary and terrified, yet if they had held back when Moses bade them advance, God would never have opened the path for them.

At Kadesh-barnea, they did hold back, and the Lord never opened the way into the Promised Land for them. During the ensuing forty years, every one of them perished in the desert.

It is a rule of life that we will all act out the directives of that in which our faith is placed. Therefore when Israel went ahead with the plan to send twelve spies into Canaan, they thereby demonstrated that their faith lay in themselves and not in God. They would attempt to build the kingdom their way.

Except for those men of true faith, Caleb and Joshua, the tribal representatives who went in to survey the land were all filled with faith in themselves, not in God. Therefore, they had no choice other than to measure the enemy by themselves. From that standard of measurement, they quite rightly saw that they had no hope of taking the land. Their foes were giants; they were puny by comparison.

It was the same situation which later faced Israel when Goliath called for a champion to fight him. King Saul was the most likely person to go to war with the giant, but, when he measured himself against the mighty Philistine, he dismissed from his mind any thought of undertaking a mission so rash.

There were some valiant warriors in Saul's army, men to whom Israel might well look to end the humiliating challenge of their enemy, but each of these could do no better than to measure the giant by themselves. They looked at his height compared to theirs. They saw the size of his sword, the length and weight of

his terrible spear, and the power in his muscles. They had no doubts about the speed of his movements, and the accuracy of his deadly spear thrust. They absolutely knew that any encounter with this man would be so weighted in his favor, that they would have no hope of emerging as the victors.

When David arrived, he did not make the mistake of measuring the Philistine against himself, but instead, assessed the proud challenger against the Lord Almighty. In the light of that comparison, how small and feeble the enemy appeared, and with what confidence the faith inspired shepherd could go out to war with him. Though he had but a sling and five small stones, it required but one fifth of this potential to bring the mighty one down.

But, like King Saul, the spies, as they traversed the land promised to them, continually measured the mighty ones in the land by themselves. There was no other way in which they could have done it after turning from the way of faith at Kadesh, for he who loses faith in God and His ways is left only with faith in himself. That is what had happened to the spies and the people who had commissioned them.

So, when they used the only standard of measurement now left to them, namely, themselves, they were quite correct when, under those conditions, they concluded that the enemy was more than a match for them. They spoke the truth when they said:

Numbers 13

³¹ We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we...

³³ There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak come from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.

There is only one condition when God's people are stronger than the enemy and that is when they make God their trust. This is a truth with which we must be aware, for the knowledge of it will save us from many a defeat, while clearly explaining the de-

feats which we do experience. Nowhere is this truth expressed better than in these words:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 299:

And the act of Moses also was significant, showing that God held their destiny in His hands; while they made Him their trust, He would fight for them and subdue their enemies; but when they should let go their hold upon Him, and trust in their own power, they would be even weaker than those who had not the knowledge of God, and their foes would prevail against them.

That is a very sobering thought especially now that we understand how easily we can transfer our trust from God to ourselves while remaining confident that there has been no change; while still sure that we are fully trusting in Him and His word. How Israel responded to the word of God through His ordained messenger, Moses, at the Red Sea, is a clear picture of what it means to make God our trust. Study that story again and again until the principles of gospel order there upheld, and its procedures there carried out, become your established way of life.

On the other had, what Israel did at Kadesh-barnea should also be the subject of our deep and searching study so that we come to see with great clarity how subtle, deceptive, and powerful is the temptation to transfer faith from the Almighty to ourselves so that we no longer work with the Lord in the building of the kingdom on the earth even as it is built in heaven.

When the Israelites at Kadesh were confronted with the direct results of their abandonment of gospel order by neglecting to receive the Lord's message through His delegated messenger, they should have realized that something was wrong, that they had stepped out of line somehow. They ought to have recognized the fact that they needed to stop right where they were, discover where they had departed from the Lord, and give themselves over into the loving hands of their Saviour to be changed in spirit, attitude, and procedure to the place where they could again work with the Lord in building His kingdom.

But they were not interested in even seeing their need to be changed. Their faith was in themselves, not in God. Therefore, they saw themselves, not as being in the wrong, but as the ones wronged. In their view, it was God and His messengers who needed to repent and change. As an expression of their total dissatisfaction with the divine order, they determined to publicly and officially reject God's messenger and appoint one of their own.

Numbers 14

⁴ So they said one to another, Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.

There was now willful murder in their hearts, and they were about to execute Caleb and Joshua when the Lord interposed. Then was pronounced the awful sentence by which they were all condemned to death in the desert. The ten unfaithful spies perished immediately, with the rest following in their turn till there were no survivors.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 391:

The ten unfaithful spies, divinely smitten by the plague, perished before the eyes of all Israel; and in their fate the people read their own doom.

The evidence that they had incurred God's decided disapproval of their spirit and behavior caused them to compose themselves to a considerable extent. When this was achieved, the Lord could again reestablish gospel order to the point where He could again speak through His messenger to the people, but not to the point where they would implicitly obey the instruction thus given.

But they appeared to repent, for they mourned over their fate and even confessed that they had sinned.

Numbers 14

³⁹ Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly.

⁴⁰ And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the Lord has promised, for we have sinned.

There was a time when there was a command to go up and possess the land, but that message had been canceled. Therefore, to obey it now would not reinstitute gospel order, but would rather continue its being set aside. If they had been truly repentant, they would have sincerely confessed their grievous sin, would have humbly sought the Lord's pardon, and would have wholeheartedly consecrated themselves to obeying every message Jehovah would send through His messenger. They would have been most careful thereafter to reject any message which came from within themselves.

In His great mercy, the Lord, through Moses, told them plainly that the expedition would not succeed, but by their insistence on following out the message from within themselves, they sallied forth to engage the enemy. Thus they showed their continued disregard of gospel order and their determination to build God's kingdom their way, even though such cannot be done.

11. Faith in God's Way

Messenger and News Review, September 1989
Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 43
Gospel Order, Part 11

A Word from the Editor

Gospel order is a very sensitive subject and there is good reason for this. It brings us into touch with the very heart of the great controversy, the central issue of which is the question of total submission of each created being to his appointed position in the structure as God has formed it.

This does not mean the enslavement of men and angels as Satan charges, for God, in His infinite wisdom, knows just where to position each individual so that he can enjoy the greatest possible fulfillment.

It requires faith on the part of every subject in the kingdom to believe that this is so, and, while this faith remains unblemished by the slightest shadow of doubt, each will be delighted to fill his appointed position, and the universe will be flooded with happiness.

Unbelief first germinated in Lucifer, the one who stood nearest to God, and who, because of his superior knowledge compared with all the other created beings, ought to have been the very last to lose faith.

It was through the decline of active, living confidence in God, that angels and men were separated from the kingdom. Only by the recovery of that lost faith will the lost kingdom be restored.

On Earth, As in Heaven

WE HAVE been looking at the identical procedures employed by God to establish His kingdom both in heaven and on earth. In heaven, Immanuel was the messenger, while on earth during his allotted time span, Moses occupied the same position, but under Christ.

However, there are two seemingly logical conclusions which must never be drawn from these facts. The first is the thought that Moses took Immanuel's place by God's transferring His position to Moses.

Nothing could be farther from the truth, for there was absolutely no change in Christ's position whatsoever. He remained as He ever will, the Messenger of the Most High. No man, including Moses, could approach unto the Almighty, or receive anything from Him, except through Christ.

That which the supreme Ruler did in appointing Moses his position and work, was not to transfer Immanuel's position to an earthly, human messenger, but to extend it by repeating on earth that which He had structured in heaven. This duplication does not mean that Moses could receive his messages directly from the Father as Christ did, but always from the Father through and only through Christ, the Only Begotten of the Father. Thus, the Father sent His light to man only through Christ who, in turn, channeled it only through Moses to the people, from the time Moses was eighty till just before his death. In Joshua, the principle of operation continued.

The important point is that by designing the kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, the two kingdoms are not two but one. Every principle of government, every operational procedure, and every relationship binding the King of kings to His subjects is common to both dominions.

Therefore, those who have achieved a behavior pattern wholly acceptable to God in the kingdom on earth, will find themselves fully trained to dwell as perfectly fitted citizens of the kingdom in heaven when they duly arrive there. He who on this earth has learned to receive heaven's messages through the man or woman of God's choice, will experience no difficulties fitting into the divine structure in heaven where he will be called upon to receive God's communications in the same manner. He will not find himself in rebellion against the divine order as did Lucifer.

The Desire of Ages, p. 331:

As through Jesus we enter into rest, heaven begins here.

But woe to him who cannot endure coming to God through the divinely appointed channel. He who refuses to love gospel order, will find his place, neither in the church on earth nor in heaven, but with Satan, the arch rebel.

By his total rejection of gospel order, Satan is the great scatterer, but through the eventual universal establishment of gospel order, God gathers all things together in one wonderful unity

which produces the unspeakably joyful fellowship that is the bliss of heaven.

A Limited Role

I hope that it is understood that we are not extending gospel order to the point where we go through the messenger to obtain forgiveness of sins, or to him to learn what our individual duty is. There was a definite distinction in the camp of Israel between Moses' role as the messenger, and the priests' work of dealing with the sin problem, even though the specifications for the ministry of the priests had been transmitted through Moses. Once it had, and he had passed on the light, his responsibility was discharged, for it was not a one-man movement in which the one man does everything. Never, for instance, do you see Moses ministering in the sanctuary making atonements for sin.

Nor did God give to either Moses or the priests the knowledge of where each person in the camp was to work for the Lord, except where a person was to be a close and direct helper, and then usually not until the time came for that person's work to begin.

So then,

- If an Israelite needed to better understand the Lord's message, he listened to Moses;
- If he needed cleansing from sin, he turned to Christ, not through Moses, but through the priests in the sanctuary; and
- If it became truly necessary to know where he was to labor for the Lord, then he asked his divine Head through the Sabbath Rest principles.

So it remains to this day.

- If you seek the knowledge of present truth, then study what the Lord has sent through His messenger;
- If you need atonement for sin, then, provided you have learned the power of acceptable confession from the mes-

senger, go to your Saviour directly for yourself for this blessing; and

- If you lack the knowledge of where you are to labor for the Lord, then do not ask the messenger, for he has almost certainly not been told. In this case you must ask the Head for yourself as you were taught in the Sabbath Rest message.

The other conclusion which must never be drawn is that when I refer you to the position and work of Moses as an illustration of the principles and procedures of gospel order, I am by inference exalting the present messenger to equality of power, character development, nearness to God, integrity, strength of faith, moral power, and so forth with the mighty man of faith, Moses.

Permit me to gently advise you in unequivocal terms that if that is the impression you get, you have missed the point, if not entirely, then almost so.

What I have been presenting to you so far is the principle and operation of the divine order wherein the Father communicates His light through His chosen messenger. The messengers will differ from each other so much that no two will be alike in every respect, but the principles which shape their work for God are common to them all.

Moses

There is for instance a vast difference between the mighty spiritual stature of Moses who, over two occasions, literally spent eighty days in the very presence of Christ, the Almighty God, and came down the mountain with face so radiant that the people could not look at him; and the messenger of today. No one should have the least difficulty in seeing that.

Moses was probably the mightiest messenger ever employed by God to build the kingdom on earth as it is built in heaven. Behold the incredible humility and spirit of Godlike, loving self-sacrifice which he manifested when on two occasions he refused to accept fatherhood of a great nation to replace Israel whose gross misbe-

havior had unfitted them to even live, and who had been such an exasperating trial to the great man of God.

The first occasion was at the golden calf when...

Exodus 32

⁹ ...the Lord said to Moses, I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people!

¹⁰ Now therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.

Moses immediately began to intercede for Israel even though to successfully plead for them meant that he would continue to be burdened with this volatile, unruly, ungrateful, faithless, unbelieving, dangerous, and exasperating multitude which seemed to continually demonstrate a determination to drive Moses to despair rather than to encourage him.

What a different history it would have been had they all understood, believed in, and faithfully lived the principles of gospel order. If only they had respected Moses as the messenger of God, there never would have been the ever recurring murmuring, strife, and bloodshed, which marred their journeyings. Just think of how different and how much better things would have been.

To be relieved of them was temptation enough to step back and let the Lord permit the pestilence to wipe them out, but there was the added proposition that Moses should replace Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as the head of the family through whom the Lord would accomplish the work of redemption. Then, instead of being called, "The children of Israel," God's people would be known as "The children of Moses." For a man who loved the cause of God as single-mindedly and as ardently as Moses did, a higher honor than this could hardly be imagined, yet, in his immense love for Israel, he never for an instant permitted any personal considerations to have the least influence on him whatsoever. Instead, he interceded for them with a divine love and importunity which few ever even begin to know.

Exodus 32

¹¹ Then Moses pleaded with the Lord his God, and said: Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?

¹² Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to your people.

¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.

The drama was repeated after they came to Kadesh-barnea, the story being recorded in *Numbers* 14:11-25. Again, God spoke in terms of leaving the Israelites to their well deserved fate, and again Moses pleaded for them with all the ardor, intensity, and importunity he had manifested in the first encounter.

This proves that the first intercession had not been an impulsive love response to the situation, but had been the manifestation of the presence in him of the enduring, unchangeable love which has its source in the heart of the Infinite.

If it had been but an impulsive movement on his part, he would have had second thoughts in the meantime, for, during the period between the two threats to Israel's existence, he had suffered much through their perversity and base ingratitude, tempting him to regret his taking up their part on the first occasion.

Human beings strongly motivated by love and sympathy, will often make great sacrifices for another person, provided they are confident that there will be a satisfying response on the part of the one for whom they pay the price. When the expected appreciation is replaced by ingratitude and shameful behavior, the benefactor who is motivated by less than the pure love of God, will

find himself declaring that he will never assist such a person again.

But Moses was charged with divine love, that mighty principle which loves regardless of how the recipient of that love responds. It was for this reason that he reacted the second time, exactly as he had done the first time. That which happened in the meantime made no difference whatsoever.

There is so much more that could be written about the illustrious character of Moses, the messenger of God,¹² but this is enough to make the point that when comparing messengers, no two are identical, but when it comes to the principles by which they are to operate, there are no differences.

Many Counselors, One Messenger

An argument which some may raise against the principle of one-man messengership, is based on the wise words of King Solomon who said:

Proverbs 11

¹⁴ Where there is no counsel, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.

Most certainly in the multitude of counselors there is safety, but this does not mean that the same is true of a multitude of messengers. A counselor and a messenger are in two different roles, both of which may or may not be invested in the one person. For instance, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, was definitely a counselor, not a messenger, while Moses was a messenger and a counselor.

If the Scripture is to be understood to mean that in the multitude of messengers there is also safety, why did the Lord go against His own word by so often employing a single messenger instead of using a multitude of them? God does not operate contrary to His own word by which we are required to live. There-

¹² PP Editor's note: Fred did not know at the time of writing (September 1989), that in one and a half years the life of Moses would in fact be opened up in much greater detail. See the book, *Gabriel*.

fore, His own example teaches us that the law which declares that in a multitude of counselors there is safety, is not saying at the same time that in a multitude of messengers there is safety. Let the distinction between these two positions be kept clearly in mind.

Jeremiah

To understand this better, consideration needs to be given to the role of the messenger. It needs to be seen that he is nothing more or less than a spokesman for God, a communicator on behalf of the Most High, a channel, or a pipeline. Absolutely nothing originates with him, nor is he authorized to modify, edit, enlarge upon, or in any way whatsoever change that which the Lord has given him to transmit to the people. Jehovah's instructions to Jeremiah made this very clear when the young man was commissioned to be the messenger of the Most High:

Jeremiah 1

⁷ Do not say, I am a youth: for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.



The divinely stipulated specifications for Jeremiah's ministry were not special to him, but are the same for every messenger called by the Most High. They are to go only where and to whom the Lord sends them, and they are to repeat only what the Lord gives them to say. Read the book of *Jeremiah* and you will find that all the way through the message is prefaced by the words: "Thus says the Lord." Never once will you read, "Thus says Jeremiah."

Balaam

You will find the same to be true of all the prophets. They went forth only where the Lord sent them, to declare only what the Lord had revealed to them. This rule found an exceptionally forceful application in the experience of Balaam. There was a time when this story puzzled me, for I thought that God had taken arbitrary control of the apostate prophet, forcing him against his will to bless Israel when he had come to curse them. But now I understand what really took place.

What happened was that Balaam, who had been a prophet of the Most High, understood the operational principles of messengership, and the fact that only God had the power to pronounce a curse which would be effective. Therefore Balaam knew that he must go to Balak as the Lord's messenger dependent on the Most High to use him as the instrument through whom the curse was to be directed against Israel. Accordingly, Balaam sought the Lord's participation in the plan to destroy Israel, but Jehovah refused to send Balaam as His servant, so Balaam sent the king's emissaries home without him.

But the king would not accept Balaam's rejection of his plea for help, and so sent a second delegation to woo the avaricious apostate prophet who still understood that he could successfully curse Israel only if he went as the messenger of the Lord. His only hope of doing that lay in his persuading the Almighty to change His mind, but this was to hope for the impossible. If only Balaam had understood and lived by the principle that no man is to ever at-

tempt to change God or His word, he would have saved himself much woe indeed.

When Balaam finally went to Balak, it was as the messenger of God that he went. This is how he wanted it to be and told Balak that he could speak only what God gave him, but the problem for him lay in the fact that messengers of God cannot choose what they shall speak on God's behalf. They can only speak the words which the Lord has chosen to give them—not their own, unless they rebel.

So, under these conditions, when Balaam opened his mouth to speak, expecting the Lord to speak through him as His messenger, the Lord accepted the invitation and spoke through him that which He chose to reveal, and not what Balaam wanted him to. No compulsion was involved, nor was there need of it. The scheming prophet had looked to God to speak through him and He did, warning him beforehand that blessings, not cursings would be pronounced over Israel.

Well might we marvel that the Lord could speak through such a man at all, but He certainly did in a most remarkable way. The glorious truths uttered by God through Balaam were marvelous revelations of God's wonderful purpose of grace to be accomplished through the church. They come to us charged with life-giving comfort, hope, and inspiration.

It is worth considering that if the Lord could and did transmit such pure and beautiful truth through an apostate prophet, then we have no cause for concern over the accuracy and reliability of the light He has sent through His faithful messengers, men and women who, though they may have sinned even grievously, have never apostatized from the truth.

Faith in God, Not in Man

But note with care that only that which comes from God through the messenger is that on which reliance can be placed. Whatever he speaks from himself must always be suspected. This is one rea-

son why the believers must study the message for themselves as did the noble Bereans to see if the teachings have in fact come from God through and not merely from the appointed channel.

The experience of Balaam emphasizes the important truth that the messages which come through those whom He uses as His messengers have their source entirely and only in the Omniscient One. Man makes no contribution to the fund of knowledge whatsoever. We are to receive it all as a revelation from the mind of the Infinite,

Colossians 2

³ In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Education, p. 13-14:

The world has had its great teachers, men of giant intellect and extensive research, men whose utterances have stimulated thought and opened to view vast fields of knowledge; and these men have been honored as guides and benefactors of the race; but here is one who stands higher than they. We can trace the line of the worlds teachers as far back as human records extend; but the Light was before them. As the moon and the stars of our solar system shine by the reflected light of the sun, so, as far as their teaching is true, do the world's great thinkers reflect the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. Every gleam of thought, every flash of the intellect, is from the Light of the world.

But note with care that only that which comes from God through the messenger is that on which reliance can be placed. Whatever he speaks from himself must always be suspected. This is one reason why the believers must study the message for themselves as did the noble Bereans¹³ to see if the teachings have in fact come from God through the appointed channel, and not merely from himself.

¹³ Acts 17:10-12.

12. No Place for Human Devising

Messenger and News Review, September 1989

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 44

Gospel Order, Part 12

God Makes the Rules, Not Man

WHEN the Lord instituted gospel order as the means whereby His kingdom was to be built both in heaven and on the earth, the fact that all light, truth, and knowledge come from the Infinite One, had to be a part of the operational principles and procedures. That means that neither the messenger through whom the light is revealed, nor the people to whom the truth is manifested, formulate the rules of gospel order. God alone is the lawmaker, and all just and righteous laws enacted by men are but the laws of God as revealed to men. So it was when Israel was being built as God intended it should be.

The institution of oppressive and unjust laws of course is not inspired by God. The men who make them desire to exploit their fellowmen to their own advantage.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 603:

The government of Israel was administered in the name and by the authority of God. The work of Moses, of the seventy elders, of the rulers and judges, was simply to enforce the laws that God had given; they had no authority to legislate for the nation. This was, and continued to be, the condition of Israel's existence as a nation. From age to age men inspired by God were sent to instruct the people and to direct in the enforcement of the laws.

This principle was as much in force in Moses' day as in the time of Samuel and all the other messengers, as is proved in the building of the sanctuary in the desert. Israel's earthly leader was a man of giant spiritual and intellectual stature, with capacities for deep penetration into those divine mysteries which had been revealed to him, yet he was strictly not permitted to participate in the slightest degree in the design of the sanctuary—that building and its attendant services in which God's way is to be found.

God's unequivocal instruction to him was:

Hebrews 8 [also Exodus 25:40]

⁵ See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.

The Desire of Ages, p. 208-209:

When Moses was about to build the sanctuary as a dwelling place for God, he was directed to make all things according to the pattern shown him in the mount. Moses was full of zeal to do God's work; the most talented, skillful men were at hand to carry out his suggestions. Yet he was not to make a bell, a pomegranate, a tassel, a fringe, a curtain, or any vessel of the sanctuary, except according to the pattern shown him. God called him into the mount, and revealed to him the heavenly things. The Lord covered him with His own glory, that he might see the pattern, and according to it all things were made.

As the various workers devoted strength, skill, and time to the work, they had to continually ask the messenger what the plans and specifications were. In response, never once could Moses say,

“I have decided that it should be thus and thus, or so and so.”

All he could ever do was to say:

“The Lord declared to me that this is the way in which it is to be constructed.”

He could add nothing, nor take anything away. There were to be no modifications whatsoever. All had to be done exactly as God had stipulated and in no other way but that.

The Papal Counterfeit

When this principle of operation is seen to be the way by which alone the Lord will build His kingdom, the immensity of Babylon's pride, and the depth of her apostasy becomes visible.

Since she is the clever counterfeit of the real, we must expect to find that she has a messenger who purports to stand between God and the people, namely, the Pope of Rome. But, instead of ex-

clusively being the voice of God to the people, they claim for him the power to modify the word of God according to his ideas of what that word should be. Here is that claim in writing:

The pope is as it were God on earth, only ruler of the faithful in Christ, greatest king of all kings, holding fullness of power, to whom has been entrusted by the all-powerful God the government of the earthly as well as the heavenly kingdom.

The pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, explain, or interpret even divine law.¹⁴

This is a truthful statement of the position and authority attributed to the pope of Rome by the papal system. We know that this is what they believe because of their use of this teaching to justify their enforcement of Sunday observance throughout their dominions. A typical example of this reads as follows:

The Jews' Sabbath, or Day of Rest, was Saturday, kept sacred because God at the creation rested on the seventh day and because they wished thus to commemorate their deliverance from Egypt. The Church, using the power our Lord gave her, altered the observance of the Sabbath to the observance of Sunday, to commemorate our Lord's resurrection on Easter Sunday and the descent of the Holy Ghost on Whitsunday. There is evidence in the New Testament (*Acts 20:7*; *1 Corinthians 16:2*) that the apostles were beginning to observe Sunday as a day of worship as well as Saturday; but the apostles made no law on the matter, and the full transfer from Saturday to Sunday was a gradual process, under the authority of the Church. Those Christians who believe in the Bible and the Bible only must have some difficulty in explaining why they keep Sunday holy and not the Sabbath.¹⁵

Of course, we must expect Babylon to spread confusion by making statements which deny their real position and make it ap-

¹⁴Ferraris, *Prompta Bibliotheca*, 6:27, 29. Venice 1772.

¹⁵*The Catechism Simply Explained*, p. 84 by Canon Cafferata, published in London, England, for Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., Publishers to the Holy See. Revised Edition 1954.

pear that they have and practice the truth. Here is an example of her confusing policy:

The Pope has no authority to invent a new doctrine. He is not the author of revelation, but only its interpreter and expounder. He has no more authority to break a divine law or to distort an iota of Scripture than you or I; his function is to hand down unchanged the deposit of divine truth to all generations of men.¹⁶

Thus with remarkable accuracy, the papacy has spelled out the role of and the limitations on a divine messenger such as the pope is claimed to be, but, it is one thing to know and proclaim the truth; it is something else to practice it. Bear in mind that to know the principles governing the building of the kingdom, and to profess to be loyal to them, while actually doing the very opposite, is blatant, inexcusable hypocrisy.

If these specifications of what the papal messenger may and may not do, were in fact the true position of the papacy, then she could never have claimed to have changed the Sabbath commandment. Instead of handing “down unchanged the deposit of truth to all generations of men,” she has done quite the opposite, leaving us with no doubt as to which of her conflicting statements we are to regard as being the expression of her real position.

As I consider the hypocrisy of the papacy, I am made to be much aware of the fearful peril of falling into the same trap. Many in Babylon are very sincere, but are deceived by the system. I see as never before, the critical necessity of clearly understanding the principles and procedures of gospel order, and strictly obeying them to the very letter. Always remember that it is God who makes the rules, not man, even if that man is the messenger. All the messenger is to do is to communicate the light the Lord has given him to transmit to the people.

¹⁶ *The Faith of Millions*, by John A. O'Brien, page 111, 1974 edition, published by Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., Huntington, Indiana, U.S.A.

The Treasure in Earthen Vessels

That is seldom easy, for the message to be borne does not pave the path to popularity, but threatens persecution, rejection, and even martyrdom. Jonah perceived that the message he was commanded to proclaim to the Ninevites was the last thing they wished to hear, so he took off for Spain, which was as far in those days as a person could get from Nineveh. But the Lord cut off his carefully planned escape, and, for the second time, sent him to Nineveh.

We all need to realize how serious and responsible a matter it is to be the Lord's messenger. God will not be trifled with. When He reveals His truth to His servant, He requires it to be passed on to the people just as He gave it with nothing either added or taken away, whether the listeners respond positively or otherwise. It is therefore most important that those to whom the message is sent, lose sight of the human instrument, and concentrate on the fact that the message is from the Almighty.

Always bear in mind that a distinction must be made between the message of divine origin and quality, and the faulty, human instrument by which it is imparted to the people. We tend to expect God's messengers to be physically strong, perfectly healthy, very attractive, and quite immune to temptation to sin. Like the nobleman who came from Capernaum to Cana to request the healing of his son, but whose...

The Desire of Ages, p. 197:

...faith faltered when he saw only a plainly dressed man, dusty and worn with travel,

–we too tend to be disappointed and even put off by the outward appearance, and even the behavior of the messenger.

The life of Christ warns against the danger of making this tragic mistake, for He came without what we might regard as being the advantage of physical attraction. In fact He was physically unattractive due at least in part to the incessant persecution suffered during childhood, youth, and early manhood, and as a result

of the harrowing experiences which brought Him to the point of dying on the mount of temptation. Foreseeing this, the Lord through Isaiah prophesied of Him:

Isaiah 53

¹ Who has believed our report? and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

² For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.

³ He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

God expected them to look beyond the outward appearance of the Saviour until they saw the peerless attraction of the living beauty in the message which He carried. Those who did this and thereafter remained faithful to what they saw, obtained eternal life, while those who attempted to match Christ's outward appearance with their preconceived expectations of Him forfeited their place in heaven.

As the Messenger of God, Christ had to operate by the same principles, and labor against the same handicaps as every other messenger who has been called of God. Therefore, He is the perfect Example for all messengers, no matter how well or badly they are received. For some of the Lord's spokesmen, the task is more difficult than for others, and one of those of whom a great deal was demanded was the youthful Ellen Harmon.

Just think of her situation, the conditions under which she had to operate, and the kind of messages she had to bear when she began her ministry. It was an exceedingly tough assignment. In the first case, she was but a girl of seventeen when she was given her first vision, at a time when women were far from being liberated. Decades were yet to pass before women won the right to vote. At such a time, for a young woman to stand before adults including strong-minded men, and deliver a message purportedly

from the Almighty, was a daunting task. Some would call it terrifying.

Add to that the delicate state of her health, her natural timidity, and the disfigurement caused by being hit by that stone, and you have a set of conditions under which no one would want to be a messenger. It takes a high level of courage to surmount great obstacles when in good health and physical fitness, but it is very difficult to find that fortitude when both sick and physically weak.

But this was not all that she had to overcome in order to be a faithful messenger. Having suffered much physically through being hit so severely in the face with that stone, having passed through the emotional trauma of being rejected by her former brethren and sisters in the Methodist Church, having passed through unspeakable disappointment when Christ did not come as expected, and having known the misery of ridicule and contempt being added to her frustrated hopes, she found it extremely difficult to bear any message to individuals which would cause them pain. In consequence, she began to modify the messages so as to reduce the element of suffering for those to whom the message was addressed.

But the Lord, in a most convincing manner, soon showed her how faithful she had to be in delivering the messages just as the Lord gave them to her, with nothing added or subtracted, no matter how forbidding the assignment might be. He showed her how He viewed her attitude and actions and what the dreadful consequences would be. It was a frightening revelation from which she emerged with the lesson truly learned. Here is her account of what took place. As you read it, please remember it was a weak, sickly girl between seventeen and nineteen who is speaking in these words:

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 73-74:

It was a great cross for me to relate to the erring what had been shown me concerning them. It caused me great distress to

see others troubled or grieved. And when obliged to declare the messages, I would often soften them down, and make them appear as favorable for the individual as I could, and then would go by myself and weep in agony of spirit. I looked upon those who had only their own souls to care for, and thought if I were in their condition I would not murmur. It was hard to relate the plain, cutting testimonies given me of God. I anxiously watched the result, and if the persons reprov'd rose up against the reproof, and afterward opposed the truth, these queries would arise in my mind: Did I deliver the message just as I should? Could there not have been some way to save them? And then such distress pressed upon my soul that I often felt that death would be a welcome messenger, and the grave a sweet resting place.

I did not realize the danger and sin of such a course, until in vision I was taken into the presence of Jesus. He looked upon me with a frown, and turned His face from me. It is not possible to describe the terror and agony I then felt. I fell upon my face before Him, but had no power to utter a word. Oh, how I longed to be covered and hid from that dreadful frown! Then could I realize, in some degree, what the feelings of the lost will be when they cry:

Revelation 6

¹⁶ Mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

Presently an angel bode me rise, and the sight that met my eyes can hardly be described. Before me was a company whose hair and garments were torn, and whose countenances were the very picture of despair and horror. They came close to me, and rubbed their garments upon mine. As I looked at my garments, I saw that they were stained with blood. Again I fell like one dead at the feet of my accompanying angel. I could not plead one excuse, and longed to be away from that holy place. The angel raised me to my feet, and said: "This is not your case now, but this scene has passed before you to let you know what your situation must be if you neglect to declare to others what the Lord has revealed to you. But if you are faithful to the end, you shall eat of the tree of life, and shall drink of the river of the water of life. You will have to suffer much, but the grace of God is suffi-

cient." I then felt willing to do all that the Lord might require me to do, that I might have His approbation, and not feel His dreadful frown.

One might be tempted to feel that God in this situation was a hard employer, that He was requiring too much of a frail, delicate young teenager, who was being called upon to bear more than a strong man could face, but we know too much about His character to believe that. It was a great kindness on God's part to reveal sin to her as He viewed it. Well would it be for all of us if we could see our sins as He sees them especially if such a view led us as speedily to the same repentance.

It must also be understood that any work which the Lord gives us is much too much for any human being alone to accomplish whether that person be the weak Ellen Harmon, or the mighty Elijah. God's work can be done only by the strength which is in Him, and it is more than adequate for the weakest as it is for the strongest. Therefore, the physical weakness of Ellen was irrelevant. It was the power of God that mattered.

However, her experience is introduced here to demonstrate how heavily the responsibility rests upon the messenger to declare nothing less nor more than the message the Lord gives him irrespective of how it is received by those to whom it is sent.

The Great Controversy, p. 609-610:

The Lord gives a special truth for the people in an emergency. Who dare refuse to publish it? He commands His servants to present the last invitation of mercy to the world. They cannot remain silent, except at the peril of their souls. Christ's ambassadors have nothing to do with consequences. They must perform their duty and leave results with God.

13. The Danger of Self-Exaltation

Messenger and News Review, September 1989

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 45

Gospel Order, Part 13

SO FAR, we have seen something of the faithfulness with which the Lord expects us to work by the principles of gospel order, and we can be assured that, as we continue with our personal study of this theme, we shall be ever more deeply impressed with the vital nature of this subject and the need for its full and speedy implementation.

If what I have presented is indeed the truth, we must expect to find the Almighty really standing by His appointed messengers, especially when their enemies are attacking the principles and procedures of gospel order. For that matter, every attack on God's faithful messengers is an attack on gospel order.

I must say that I have been deeply impressed with Jehovah's absolute loyalty to, and unequivocal support of those who have been appointed by Him to the position of messenger. Whenever the gospel order issues are challenged, He takes no compromising position, does not leave His servants to defend themselves, and does not extend to those attacking the system the slightest shadow of support. Instead, He classifies them as rebels, His enemies, and withdraws all of His protection from them. Thus abandoned, the rejecters of truth at times have speedily perished as in the cases of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, or nearly so as with Miriam and Aaron. In more modern times, they become separated from the movement, where they steadily lose their hold on the truths they once espoused, and walk in ever deepening darkness.

The more one studies those confrontations over the issue of gospel order which are recorded in the sacred writings, the more one realizes that the rebels are not really at war with the messenger, but with God himself. Yet they look upon themselves as being totally loyal to God and His truth, even though they are in fact His worst enemies. They labor under the power of a fatal decep-

tion so strong and all convincing that they are unable to recognize the true nature of their rebellion, or to discern the warnings signaled from the wasted lives of those who have previously challenged the divine order and failed.

As we all know, the very first time such a challenge was mounted was at the initiation of the rebellion by Lucifer against the Lord's divinely appointed messenger, Immanuel. This is a story which we all have studied at least once before, but which calls for repeated examination from different points of view. Right now, we will concentrate on the attitude of the Father, and the stand maintained by Him when the crisis developed. As we do this we will quickly see that the Almighty was wholly in support of Immanuel's position and work, and as wholly against Lucifer's claims.

The rise of that unholy ambition in Lucifer which led to the development of rebellion in him, was a gradual affair which stole on him as imperceptibly as the growth of a plant.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 35:

Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation.

Self-exaltation is one of the manifestations of pride, which leads those who succumb to this temptation to be discontented with their assigned position while coveting the higher places occupied by others until, there being no more higher places, the ambitious one rules over all. No man or woman upon this earth has yet achieved such a goal. Excepting those who are truly in Christ, all have striven for it whether they realize it or not for such is the nature of sin. The results have been varied. Some have had their hopes crushed at the very beginning by others who, stronger than they, have used them as rungs on the ladder to their own success. Some become the heads of great business companies, others dictate to whole nations, while the ultimate target common to all is world domination.

But, God in His infinite love and unlimited wisdom, has never designed that one man shall rule over all the rest. To each He has assigned a position where that individual can make the best contribution possible toward the blessedness of every created being within the sphere of his influence. It is not God's intention that each person shall be forever limited to a fixed level of achievement, for the entire kingdom of God is forever growing. Constantly, every subject of the divine sovereignty is to attain to new heights of achievement and excellence. No one in heaven will have just cause for boredom and frustration.

Thus it will be that the divine order will effect the exaltation of every created intelligence, and will satisfy the divinely invested need to be ever advancing toward the highest levels which can be imagined and beyond. If this is so, why was it so wrong for Lucifer "to indulge the desire for self-exaltation"? Why was the Almighty so totally against his aspirations in this, when he was seemingly doing nothing more than exercising his God-given inclinations? Why did the Almighty so diligently protect the position of His Only Begotten Son against Lucifer's claims?

It was not, as Lucifer wickedly claimed, an example of favoritism, of granting preferential treatment to Immanuel at Lucifer's expense. Nor was there anything wrong with responding to the divinely instilled motivation to attain to the highest levels of excellence, provided there were no deviations from the divine laws which were perfectly designed to ensure unlimited progress for Lucifer and every other created being.

But what Lucifer wanted was a perversion of the divine plan stemming from discontent with his assigned position. This in turn was the evil outgrowth of his transferring from God to himself the full credit for what he was—the mightiest, the most talented, the best educated, the most beautiful of all created beings, and the occupant of the highest position available to anyone other than the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 35:

Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. And coveting the glory with which the Infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.

Now there were two positions in which Lucifer was involved—the one to which the King of kings had assigned him but with which he could no longer be content, and the one to which he aspired where he thought he would be content, but which it was impossible for him to occupy, because of two valid reasons. Firstly, the position was already adequately and competently occupied, and secondly, he lacked the qualifications essential to hold that position.

Critical to the success of gospel order is each believer's knowing the position the Lord has assigned him, and his being totally contented in that place and willing to remain there for eternity if that is God's will for him. All may make infinite advancement while forever remaining in their assigned position.

There is in fact no just and righteous alternative. God does not give us a choice of position, but designates the place at any point in time where alone we can best serve Him. So it was with Lucifer, and, when he was no longer prepared to serve the Lord in his appointed position, God did not offer him a second choice. He had to be fully, joyously, and gratefully content to fill his proper place, or there was none for him at all.

When Lucifer would not submit to gospel order, the only possible outcome was his resort to deception and the outbreak of violence. No wonder the Almighty who saw exactly what the unholy fruit would be, was so totally opposed to the arguments of the arch rebel, and so completely supportive of Immanuel.

14. Satan's Purpose to Restructure God's Kingdom

Messenger and News Review, October 1989

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 46

Gospel Order, Part 14

A Word from the Editor

One person voiced the thought that the message on gospel order is the same as Sabbath Rest, but taken up from a slightly different angle. It is true that certain basic principles are common to both, but, at the same time, there are vital differences with which we should be familiar.

In the Sabbath Rest message, God, through Jesus Christ, is the Plan-maker, Burden-bearer, and Problem-solver. When we have needs in any of these areas, we go directly to our Saviour to have these needs supplied. Jehovah does not appoint a human agent through whom He informs the believers of His plans for each one of them, or of His solutions to their individual problems. Each person must go directly to Christ on his own behalf in the practice of Sabbath Rest.

But when, according to the principles of gospel order, the time comes for the Lord to deliver a message to His people, and He has raised up a messenger for the purpose, no one can bypass the appointed channel and go directly to Christ for himself. All must receive the light through the agency God has established. If not, then what is the point of God's calling a messenger? Instead, a system should have been established by which every person is enabled to receive the message directly from the Source, in which case, every believer would be a primary messenger. But that is not the way it has been or is being done by the Lawmaker.

IN THE last chapter we began the study of the strength of God's uncompromising inflexibility in the face of any effort by anyone to modify His kingdom-building principles and procedures to the least degree whatsoever. We saw that His stand was not primarily in support of a person even though that Person was His own begotten Son, but because He cannot change the structure of His kingdom without destroying it. It was not a matter of family partiality or favoritism which led the everlasting Father to provide His Son with unlimited support, while as totally rejecting Lucifer's claims. Rather, it was His undimmed awareness that there is no satisfactory alternative for His way of building the kingdom.

In the meantime, all the other options have been tried on the proving ground of this earth, and each has been found to be totally self-destructive by those who have eyes to see the true out-working from cause to effect, while the spiritually unenlightened still cherish the idea that men will yet build a flawless world empire. But, despite his proud boastings, confident assertions, and assured predictions, Satan has never established a rival kingdom with the capacity to provide eternal life, unblemished happiness, and freedom from fear and want to every one of its citizens even though he has had more than enough opportunity to do so. On the contrary, time is daily proving more and more that the setting aside of gospel order is the source of every sorrow, conflict, suffering, and deprivation which can and cannot be imagined. In the light of these developments, God is more than justified in His inflexible stand against any changes to the principles and procedures of gospel order.

One would think that whenever a confrontation over God's kingdom building procedures arises, that the issues would be very straightforward and clear-cut, but, for most at least, it never is. There is a very important reason for this, one of which every Christian should be aware and thoroughly understand.

It is because, even though it can never be, Satan fully believes he is actually working to build up his version of what, in his judgment, God's kingdom should be. He knows perfectly well that he can never survive without God's continual occupation of His position as the infinite Source, the filling of which position was never the issue. Therefore, in his mind though never in fact, Satan is dedicated to the preservation of the kingdom, but restructured to accommodate his selfish, personal ambitions. Thus he is fighting to build God's kingdom, his way. He will not rest satisfied, until he has compelled God to institute the changes on which he is insisting. Fortunately, he will never achieve that unholy ambition, for Jehovah cannot submit to the devil's demands in the least. Therefore, the issue is not whether or not God's kingdom shall be built, but how it shall be built.

This fact is unknown to most, for it is generally believed that Satan is devoted to building an entirely separate empire distinctly his own from which base of operations, he aims to utterly destroy God's dominion, thus leaving him in the position of the undisputed head of the universe.

The utter destruction of the kingdom would be the only possible outcome of Satan's successfully implementing his kingdom-building procedures, but he does not want this to eventuate, for it would also mean his destruction. So, while he does not relinquish his destructive measures, the lying nature of sin has deceived him into believing that Paradise governed according to his policies can and will provide perfect bliss for all—eternally. Therefore, he devotes himself to building a place for himself in God's kingdom.

There is abundant evidence in the Scriptures revealing what the devil's objectives are, and how he intends to achieve them. These must be clearly understood by God's true people so that we will have an accurate grasp of what the issues really are.

Firstly, there is this statement:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 973:

He [Satan] declares he cannot submit to be under Christ's command, that God's commands alone will he obey. Good angels weep to hear the words of Satan, and to see how he despises to follow the direction of Christ, their exalted and loving Commander.

The Father decides the case of Satan, and declares that he must be turned out of heaven for his daring rebellion, and that all those who united with him in his rebellion should be turned out with him. Then there was war in heaven. Christ and his angels fought against Satan and his angels, for they were determined to remain in heaven with all their rebellion. But they prevailed not. Christ and loyal angels triumphed, and drove Satan and his rebel sympathizers from heaven.¹⁷

Note carefully the words:

¹⁷ Also found in *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 38.

He [Satan] declares he cannot submit to be under Christ's command, that God's commands alone will he obey.

This of course, is an impossible proposition, for no one, not even the brightest of the angels, as Lucifer was, can obey God while at the same time refusing to submit to Christ's command. Obedience to God involves the recognition of the Messenger, Christ, and total submission to the kingdom structure that absolutely nothing could come from God, the Source, except through Christ, the all-sufficient Connector. Therefore, in order to obey God, Lucifer had to be submissive to Christ.

We are not so concerned at this moment with what could or could not be done by Satan, as we are with what he thought he could, and proposed that he would do. He did not think in terms of leaving heaven or the kingdom, but of changing the structure. He declared that he would obey God, but demanded that Immanuel be deposed, and that Lucifer be able to approach directly to the Almighty without having to pass through the Messenger.

By this time in our studies it should be apparent that the Eternal Father does nothing at all except through a messenger. This was the law of kingdom-building in the very beginning, for it was through Christ that He created the heavens and the earth, as it is written:

Hebrews 1

¹ God...

² Has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed Heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.

John 1

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was in the beginning with God.

³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

The Desire of Ages, p. 20:

It was Christ that spread the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. It was His hand that hung the worlds in space, and fashioned the flowers of the field.

Psalm 65 [RV]

⁶ Who established the mountains by His strength.

Psalm 95 [ERV 1895]

⁵ The sea is His, for He made it.

It was He that filled the earth with beauty, and the air with song. And upon all things in earth, and air, and sky, He wrote the message of the Father's love.

Many more Scriptures could be searched out and quoted to verify that God poured out the gift of creation through His Messenger. That is, He did not do His creative work directly but always through His personally appointed channel. Thus the kingdom structure was put into operation at the very beginning of the creation, not as a temporary device, but as an eternal establishment.

It was by the setting aside of that structure that the darkness of the evil one overspread the earth. This imposed on God the responsibility of rebuilding the kingdom by offering salvation to the lost. To achieve this, He did not lay aside the procedures He had established in the beginning of the creation. To have done this would have involved His dismissal of His Messenger, and His doing the work himself directly.

But it is through Christ that salvation is made available to the perishing, and without Him in the place where God had positioned Him, no one could be saved.

- When God builds a new movement in the earth, He does it through a messenger such as Moses, Ezra, and Nehemiah.
- When He enlarges the movement, He works through a messenger as He did through Joshua, and Samuel.
- When He needs to warn His people, it is always through His messenger as in the ministries of Jeremiah and Isaiah.

- When He wants to send light to His children, once more it is through His messenger, such as E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 91:

The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones.

When He made preparations for the coming of the Messiah, He did that through a messenger too, namely John the Baptist.

Malachi 3

¹ Behold, [He said,] I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me.

Romans 10

¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

¹⁵ And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

All judgment will be undertaken through the Messenger, as will be the making of a new heaven and the new earth.

Thus God does nothing either in heaven or upon the earth except through His chosen messenger. This consistent procedure on His part is the revelation of His absolute faithfulness to gospel order, and of His recognition of only one way of kingdom-building. He has convincingly demonstrated that He will not deviate from this principle by so much as a hair's breadth, and has made it very plain that those who refuse to join with Him in love for and faithful implementation of His way will have no part with Him in His doing His will on earth as it is done in heaven. In other words, to reject gospel order, is to cut one's self off from salvation.

That is just what the devil did. He rejected gospel order and as certainly cut himself off from the eternal Father forever, though

he did not realize how serious his action was. In his revised plan for the restructuring of heaven's order, the devil planned for the Father to remain where He was as the supreme ruler of the universe, and the one to whom Lucifer saw himself rendering obedience as it is written:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 973:

He [Satan] declares...that God's commands alone will he obey.

Let me stress again that there is a difference between what Lucifer thought he could do, and fully intended to do, and what he was actually doing. We shall suffer confusion unless this distinction is kept in mind. For a very important reason and purpose we are studying what Lucifer planned to do by way of obedience to God.

Right now, we are establishing the point that Lucifer, in his own mind, did not intentionally set out to destroy the kingdom, but to restructure it. Had he dedicated himself to the destruction of God's creation, he would never have declared his determination to obey God alone, and he would never have resisted his expulsion from the heavenly courts, but would have been glad to leave in order to start another kingdom without God. But when the Almighty sentenced him to banishment, he and his followers fought with all their powers to stay in heaven.

Then there was war in heaven. Christ and his angels fought against Satan and his angels, for they were determined to remain in heaven with all their rebellion.

It could be argued that, while in the initial stages of his rebellion Satan was prepared to obey God alone, but once he was expelled from heaven and knew he could never return, he developed the settled determination to utterly destroy the kingdom, and renounced his willingness to obey God alone.

However, this is not true. Neither the issues of the great controversy, nor Satan's planned objectives have ever changed. Note the verification for this in the following statement:

The Great Controversy, p. 582:

From the very beginning of the great controversy in heaven it has been Satan's purpose to overthrow the law of God. It was to accomplish this that he entered upon his rebellion against the Creator, and though he was cast out of heaven he has continued the same warfare upon earth.

How did Lucifer go about his attempt to overthrow the law of God when the great rebellion began? What was the issue—the point of contention? Was it an argument over which day of the week was the Sabbath day? or what should the angels' diet be? or the perpetuity of marriage? It was none of these things directly and obviously. The issue under contention was submission to Christ as the Messenger of God to all creation. Lucifer came to the place where he could not bear to approach God nor receive all things from Him through Christ. So, he attempted to set aside the law of God by fighting to depose the divinely appointed Messenger, Immanuel, and by contending for what he supposed to have been his by right—the system whereby he could approach God directly for himself without using the Channel provided by the Lord. That is exactly how he went to work to set aside the law of God in the beginning of the struggle,...

...and though he was cast out of heaven he has continued the same warfare upon the earth.

It is the same warfare designed to achieve the same goals which the devil is continuing today. This is easily verified by listening to his voices in this present evil world. Where and whose are those voices today?

They are to be found everywhere, emanating from the mouths of every unbeliever in the world, but most especially from the fallen, denominational, so-called Christian churches which we have identified as the King of the North. These are the religious organizations dedicated to building God's kingdom—man's way, as distinct from the materialistic, atheistic forces in the earth who are devoted to building man's kingdom—man's way.

Apart from these two, there remains only one other—that illustrious company who are dedicated to building God’s kingdom on earth as it is built in heaven.

Of these three, the one which best expresses the ambitions of Satan is the King of the North, who is primarily Satan, and in the secondary sense, the fallen denominational churches otherwise known as Babylon as it is written:

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 61:

The fallen denominational churches are Babylon.

Satan uses atheism only as a convenience, something to which he resorts when the King of the North is so weakened as to be of little practical use at the moment. An example of this was the rise of atheism at the time of the French Revolution.

The Great Controversy, p. 268-269:

In many of the nations of Europe the powers that ruled in church and state had for centuries been controlled by Satan through the medium of the papacy. But here is brought to view a new manifestation of satanic power.

What then is the difference between this new power and the policies of the papacy which it replaced? It was that while the papists professed reverence for the Bible, atheism made...

The Great Controversy, p. 269:

...open, avowed war upon the word of God.

A survey of Bible history shows that only twice has Satan worked through an atheism which had risen to world dominating status. The first was in Moses’ day, and the second began with the French Revolution. The rest of history has been dominated by Babylonian forces, which will again be the form which the devil will use in the final showdown, for that is the voice which best expresses his unholy policies and ambitions.

THE KING OF THE NORTH DOMINATES HISTORY

For He Best Serves Satan's Purposes

Egypt in Moses' Day	Canaanites in Joshua's Day	Assyria	Babylon	Medo Persia	Greece	Rome	Papacy	Atheism in France	Final Force
King of the SOUTH	King of the NORTH	King of the NORTH	King of the NORTH	King of the NORTH	King of the NORTH	King of the NORTH	King of the NORTH	King of the SOUTH	King of the NORTH

THE KING OF THE NORTH seeks to build God's kingdom—man's way;

THE KING OF THE SOUTH seeks to build man's kingdom—man's way;

THE PEOPLE OF GOD build God's kingdom God's way—by adhering to the principles of Gospel Order.

**DIAGRAM SHOWING HOW MUCH MORE FREQUENTLY
THE KING OF THE NORTH RULED THE WORLD
THAN DID THE KING OF THE SOUTH**

Take everyone of the churches making up Babylon, and in none will you find any issue being contended over the sovereignty of God the Father. He is universally recognized in these religious bodies as the one to whom our allegiance is due. He is seen to be the Omnipotent One, King of kings and Lord of lords. None of these churches express any theology which, in their minds, is aimed at removing God the Father from His rightful place. Everyone of them is dedicated to building God's kingdom in the earth, and each really believes he will finally succeed. Everyone declares that he will obey God although, in actual fact, they break the law every day and teach others to do the same.

But they do not take their position in regard to the authority of God, nor make their commitments to obey, except as the expression of their master the devil. Therefore as surely as they recognize the unchangeable authority of the Father, and solemnly promise to obey Him, so does Satan. He is still saying...

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 973:

...that God's commands alone will he obey.

And as certainly as Satan's children who are the expression of his mind, thought, and action dedicate themselves to the building of God's kingdom, so the devil has done and is doing the same before them.

But, so that I shall not be misunderstood when pointing out these things, let me remind you again that we are looking at what the devil thinks he is doing, not at what he is actually doing. It is clear that in actual fact he is not committed to obedience to the Father, nor is he truly dedicated to the building of God's kingdom. Instead, he is devoted to its destruction. Though fully responsible for his own sad condition, he is nonetheless a product himself of sin's deceptive nature.

But, to return to what he supposes he is doing, and what he aims to do, it is clear that he is determined to force God to recognize him and those who follow him as having a legitimate place

in the universe. He is constantly striving to achieve this and will come closest to it in the final conflict when...

Daniel 11

⁴⁵ He shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain: yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

This is a prophecy of the King of the North, who in reality is Satan, making his final determined effort to install himself in that place in the kingdom which he considers is rightfully his. To understand this, let us look at the symbolism employed in the prophecy. The “glorious holy mountain” can be none other than the kingdom of God. This is deduced by the well-known fact that a mountain in Bible prophecy symbolizes a kingdom. The kingdom of Babylon, for instance, is represented as a destroying mountain.

Jeremiah 51

²⁵ Behold, I am against you [Babylon], O destroying mountain, who destroys all the earth, says the Lord.

²⁶ And I will stretch out my hand against you, roll you down from the rocks, and make you a burnt mountain.

In the prophecy of *Daniel 2*,

Daniel 2

³⁵ The stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

When the time came for the prophet to explain this mountain to the king, he declared it to be the symbol of God’s kingdom. He said:

⁴⁴ In the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

⁴⁵ Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has

made known to the king what shall come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.

The mountain or kingdom referred to in *Daniel* 11:45, is glorious and holy. Only one kingdom can answer to this description—the kingdom of the Most High God. It is between that glorious, holy kingdom and the seas that the King of the North will position his throne, his seat of power.

What do the seas represent? In the Bible prophecies of both *Daniel* and the *Revelation*, waters symbolize the peoples of the earth as it is written:

Revelation 17

¹⁵ The waters which you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.

This is why the four great beasts, the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the dragon, are seen to arise from storm tossed waters. How better could be pictured the emergence of the four great world powers of Babylon, Medo Persia, Greece, and Rome, than from among the war ravaged peoples of the earth!

So then, we have identified the mountain heights as being the holy kingdom, and the seas as being the people of the entire world which will be gathered by the three unclean spirits to the battle of the great day of God—Armageddon.

In this scenario, the devil strategically locates his throne, his kingship, his power, and his authority between the peoples of the entire world and the God of heaven and earth. Thus positioned, he intends that from that time forward, none of the people can have access to God, nor God have access to the people except through him. No place is provided for Christ, the Messenger of God's appointment.

Nowhere is there a better revelation given of what the devil is aiming to achieve. It is here shown that he does not wish to dismantle the kingdom, even though this would be the only possible outcome were he to succeed in establishing his policies. But he is

so blind that he cannot see the inevitable and unavoidable results of his propositions. So, in his deceived mind, he wants the kingdom to remain, and for him to be a working part of its structure. He still believes the proposition he advanced before he was expelled from Paradise, namely that the divine laws were too restrictive. He claimed that their enforcement denied the angels the perfect freedom which he declared was theirs by right, and which they would enjoy if only his policies were instituted. He claimed in the beginning, and ever since that:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 37:

If this prince of angels could but attain to his true, exalted position, great good would accrue to the entire host of heaven; for it was his object to secure freedom for all.

The “true, exalted position” to which he sought to be exalted, was within the kingdom, not apart from it. Once in that position, he was determined to restructure the divine government according to his ideas, fully believing that heaven would be a far happier place if they became the established order in Paradise.

It should now be clear that the devil does not plan to destroy the kingdom, but to restructure it especially in the area of gospel order. To this end he is working with fiendish zeal, desperate determination, and untiring perseverance to win the entire world to his side and, except for those few who will remain faithful to Jehovah regardless, he will succeed, for...

Revelation 13

⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Then, with himself at the head of his vast following, he will place himself between God and the people, all set to demand his elevation to his “true, exalted position,” and the institution of his kingdom-building structure.

So convincing will be Satan’s representation of himself as a dedicated kingdom-builder, though in fact the kingdom-destroyer,

that almost every dweller on earth will be totally convinced that his ideas will build them a better life. Only those who have developed the keenest ability not to be deceived by Satan's assertions will be secure.



But Jehovah will not be embarrassed by this seeming accomplishment, for, in that same moment when Satan appears to have achieved his long and ardently pursued objectives, his entire support will collapse just like a castle built on soft sand when struck by a flash flood. Suddenly, every single person under his command will desert him.

Daniel 11

⁴⁵ He shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

So then, Satan is not intentionally laboring to destroy the kingdom, but to obtain a legitimate place in the divine government. That is his claim even though the actual effect of his work would be to destroy God's kingdom were his ways to be admitted into Paradise.

Now the question arises:

“Why is it so important that we understand the nature of what Satan claims he will do versus what he is actually doing? Why is there this emphasis on the fact that Satan does not want the kingdom destroyed, but is fighting to be an eternal, active, and legitimate part of it?”

It is spelled out in detail here so that we shall understand the true nature of the issues involved, and thus avoid being deceived by our wily foe. We need to be made very much aware that like Satan, we can be working heart and soul with wonderful, self-sacrificing dedication to build the kingdom of God, when in fact, because we are not building the kingdom on earth as it is being built in heaven, we are destroying it.

It is a tragically common mistake to suppose that, because we have dedicated our lives to the building of God's kingdom, and are actively engaged in what we suppose to be this work, and are doing all we can to achieve this commission, we are thereby distinguished from the rest of the unbelieving world, whom we assume are not dedicated to the building of the kingdom, but to its destruction. But, and please do not fail to understand this point, if this is the checklist by which we satisfy ourselves that our work is of God and for Him, it is inadequate, for it calls for nothing with which to distinguish us from the apostate religious world.

Some of them are very active in promoting the kingdom. It is the main element in their message as they hurry from door to door with their glad tidings. Even more zealously than Christ's

true followers, they have dedicated their lives to the building of God's kingdom, and are actively engaged in what they suppose to be this work, and are doing all they can to achieve this objective.

It is not enough to be dedicated, professed kingdom-builders, for Satan himself is one of those. The test must be brought much closer than that, for, in addition, it is critical that it be built on earth exactly as it is in heaven. It is when we examine how it is being built, that we can know whether we are building with God or the devil; whether we are constructing or destroying; whether or not gospel order is being strictly observed.

In our application of the test whereby we ascertain whether a professed kingdom-builder, be he another person or even ourselves, is truly a builder and not a destroyer, we must not permit ourselves to be unduly influenced by friendly faces, zeal for the cause, or a manifest love for the work. A person can have all of these and still be a destroyer as Paul discovered to his sorrow.

In the Early Church

Consider how this was. The men who rose to leadership early in the history of the Christian church, came into the movement with a strong Jewish background wherein the kingdom of God was certainly not built on earth as it is in heaven. Gospel order was not known among the intensely religious priests and people. Even though they were directed to Jesus, the Messenger, both by prophecies and the mighty preaching of John the Baptist, the chosen people rejected their Messiah, and thus cast away gospel order. In doing so, they did exactly as Lucifer had done when he initiated the great rebellion. They broke up the structure of the divine government, and cut themselves off from light and life. They refused to recognize or accept Christ as the Channel, the Messenger, or the Connector, and thus, because God communicates His truth only through His Messenger, then they could receive no revelations from heaven.

Let it never be forgotten that the Almighty provides divine, saving light only through the channel of His appointment. It is a po-

sition to which we can appoint no one, for God alone has that right. He makes the choice, informs us whom He has sent to be His messenger to us, and then expects us to receive the light through this instrument. That is the structure by which the true church can always be identified, though it is not the only test provided by the Lord for that purpose. To establish the point, let us apply the test to the churches known as spiritual Babylon, otherwise known as antichrist. These churches do not have a qualified messenger, and therefore do not have the required structure.

On what basis can we make this confident assertion?

It is the absolute truth that no man on earth can be the messenger of the Most High, unless Christ is firstly the Messenger to him. This is so because no man can receive light except from the Father through Jesus Christ, the Messenger of the Covenant.

But for Christ to be the Messenger to His people, He must be truly and fully God, and, at the same time, truly and fully man. With His divine arm, He must reach all the way up to God, while with His human, He must encircle humanity.¹⁸ And Christ adequately possessed those qualifications whereby He was able to complete the structure of the divine kingdom as it is written:

The Desire of Ages, p. 311-312:

Jesus was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of man; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was God in the flesh. His character is to be ours. The Lord says of those who believe in Him,

2 Corinthians 6

¹⁶ I will dwell in them, and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

¹⁸ “Jesus became a man that He might mediate between man and God. He clothed His divinity with humanity, He associated with the human race, that with His long human arm He might encircle humanity, and with His divine arm grasp the throne of Divinity.” *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 926.

Christ is the ladder that Jacob saw, the base resting on the earth, and the topmost round reaching to the gate of heaven, to the very threshold of glory. If that ladder had failed by a single step of reaching the earth, we should have been lost. But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (*Romans* 8:3), He lived a sinless life. Now by His divinity He lays hold upon the throne of heaven, while by His humanity He reaches us. He bids us by faith in Him attain to the glory of the character of God. Therefore are we to be perfect, even as our “Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

For a more extensive study of the nature of Christ, His qualifications to be the Messenger, study *The Destiny of a Movement*. This book provides well documented evidence to show that the churches either deny that Christ was truly man, or that He was truly God. It does not matter which end of the ladder is removed—the top end which is His divinity, or the bottom end which is His humanity—the result is the same: Christ is deprived of His qualification to be the Messenger.

This means that Jehovah would be unable to raise up a Moses, a Joshua, or a John the Baptist, for none of these men would be able to receive light from the Source through a Messenger who did not either reach all the way up to God, or if He did, fell short of reaching all the way down to them. Therefore, any church which denies that Christ is come in sinful flesh, cannot possibly build according to the divine structure. Therefore, no matter what their profession, theirs is a ministry of death and destruction, and it is critical that we be able to see this fact. While they believe they are building the kingdom, they are in fact destroying it.

Such too was the situation with the unbelieving Jews to whom the divine Messenger was sent. Though they saw His humanity, they could not see His divinity, so could receive nothing through Him, and therefore could not structure their church after the divine order.

It was from that darkness that the leaders of the early Christian church came. These men had many qualities designed to lead their fellow believers to conclude that they were building the kingdom, when, in actuality, they were busy destroying it. Consider the impressive list of indications pointing to their being true kingdom-builders, and then be prepared to see they were not. This should serve to really impress upon our minds the sheer necessity for each one of us to understand how to successfully apply the test of gospel order.

Those men had been mightily moved by the ministry of the Holy Spirit in former rain power, and despite the threat of persecution and the loss of all things including life itself, separated from the Jewish church, and openly identified with the Christian church. It is written that they related to the work as...

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 400:

...the cause they loved,...[and were]...desirous of safeguarding the best interests of the Christian church.

Surely such men were kingdom-builders of the right order! Obviously they believed that the Christian church was the one through which the Lord would build His kingdom, yet, astonishing as it may be, these leading men did not shake off the kingdom-building procedures which they ought to have left behind forever in Jewry. One would have thought that the brilliant light of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and thereafter would have freed them from attempting to build the kingdom in another way than it is built in heaven, but it did not.

In His tender love for them, at the great council in Jerusalem, the history of which is recorded in *Acts* 15, the Sovereign of the universe opened their eyes to see how wrong they were, and how much they needed to change to proper gospel order. They genuinely repented of their wrong course, but only for a time, after which they once more reverted to their old ways again. They had denied gospel order and terrible were to be the consequences.

This unhappy development in the history of the Christian church is examined in detail in *Entering into God's Sabbath Rest*, Chapters Ten and Eleven.¹⁹ It is there revealed that the terrible outworking of this reversion was the premature loss of Paul by the church, the clearing of the way for the full development of the mystery of iniquity, the imposition of the awesome persecutions which, at times, all but wiped out the church of God, and the total disregard for gospel order.

Once these much revered leaders had reverted from the principles of true gospel order as revealed and accepted at the first council, they then set themselves in opposition to God's appointed messenger. They went so far as to determine...

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 401:

...that the work of preaching the gospel must henceforth be conducted in accordance with their own ideas. If Paul would conform his methods to certain policies which they advocated they would acknowledge and sustain his work; otherwise they could no longer look upon it with favor or grant it their support.

Such attitudes on their part placed them in active cooperation with the devil, and into direct opposition to the principles by which Paul worked, yet, surprisingly, when Paul arrived in Jerusalem for the last time, he testified that:

Acts 21

¹⁷ The brethren received us gladly.

How disarming this was, for it is much easier to resist an enemy who openly and manifestly reveals his true position in opposition to your own stand. Their being so glad to see Paul is hard to explain, but it does indicate that they firmly believed they were in the right movement, just as Lucifer did, but, like him, they were convinced that it needed restructuring to harmonize with their ideas. So exactly did these highly respected leaders relive the course followed by Satan in the original rebellion, that they

¹⁹ PP Editor's note: These chapter numbers refer to the original 1983 edition of *God's Sabbath Rest*. In the 2005 revision, the chapters would be 33 and 34.

were the very presence of the mystery of iniquity in the church. Their meeting with Paul who was especially commissioned of the Lord to proclaim the mystery of God, was a direct confrontation between light and darkness.

That was bad enough, but that which made the problem much more serious, was the fact that none of them, including Paul, was able to accurately assess the problem. Paul did not see them for what they were—destroyers. If he had, then he never would have respected them enough to carry out their suggestions. For their part, they failed to see him for what he was—the messenger of God. If they had, they would never have directed him to compromise his principles.

If the truly dedicated, Spirit-filled apostle, along with those high-level leaders, failed to clearly discern the true characters of the two parties facing each other, then how difficult it must have been for the average church member.

The same danger exists today, in the face of which we must have the capacity to positively identify those professed kingdom-builders who, in the true church and out of it, are in reality, destroyers, from those who are intelligently and sincerely dedicated to building God's kingdom, God's way.

This will require on our part, a deep and accurate knowledge of gospel order, and the determination to measure every kingdom-building effort by this standard. Never yet in all human history has there been a church which has measured up to this critical requirement, for which reason the kingdom has not yet been built, and we are still anchored to this present evil world.

But once again, the opportunity to become expert in this work of identifying and implementing true gospel order is given to the Lord's people, and we are they.

This time, we have to get it right.

15. The Rebellion of Miriam and Aaron

Messenger and News Review, November 1989

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 47

Gospel Order, Part 15

A Word from the Editor

The subject of this month's chapter on gospel order is the rebellion of Miriam and Aaron when they aimed to change the order God himself had established in Israel. It is an impressive revelation of how seriously the Lord regards any attempt to change the structure of the divine government, and of how uncompromisingly He will support and protect those who are loyal to the system. But for their repentance, the guilty pair would certainly have perished eternally.

After thoroughly studying this *Messenger*, it is strongly recommended that careful study be given to the chapter in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, entitled, "The Rebellion of Korah." You will marvel at how the rebels had learned nothing from the experience of Miriam, and will be sobered by the awareness that the same resistance to God's ways could be working in us to the point where we will have become so hardened that we will have closed the door of mercy against ourselves.

You will also be impressed with the strength of God's protection, guidance, and support for both Moses and Aaron, while totally separating himself from Korah and his company. This will give you the confidence to know that the only safe place to stand is where the Lord stands in unconditional support of gospel order.

THE revelation of God's light on gospel order lays upon His people the solemn responsibility of reforming their kingdom-building principles and procedures until they come into perfect harmony with the truth revealed. This calls for a thorough work to be done by making some very real changes. Old habit patterns must be broken up, so that the ways of the Lord can be instituted in their places.

It takes enlightened, determined dedication to bring one's life into line with the will of the Omnipotent, for we are so prone to continue in the groove of long-established habit patterns, against which it is not easy to press one's way. There is also the problem of colliding with those who are more inclined to be satisfied with a profession of devoted service to God, rather than to render real

service. Of this class Jehovah warned the prophet, Ezekiel in these words:

Ezekiel 33

³⁰ As for you, son of man, the children of your people are talking about you beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, everyone saying to his brother, 'Please come and hear what the word is that comes from the Lord.

³¹ So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as my people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain.

³² Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them.

³³ And when this comes to pass—surely it will come—then they will know that a prophet has been among them.

Education, p. 260:

It is one thing to treat the Bible as a book of good moral instruction, to be heeded so far as is consistent with the spirit of the times and our position in the world; it is another thing to regard it as it really is—the word of the living God, the word that is our life, the word that is to mold our actions, our words, and our thoughts. *To hold God's word as anything less than this is to reject it.* And this rejection by those who profess to believe it, is foremost among the causes of skepticism and infidelity in the youth.

A subtle argument supportive of the idea that no real change is necessary, is that, before the light came and changes were called for, we enjoyed Jehovah's leadership and blessing. From these facts it is reasoned that the continuation of the same pattern of behavior which God blessed in the past, will still attract His blessing today. This being so, the enemy's subtle argument continues, What need is there to rush urgently into drastic changes when there is no visible evidence that this will preserve the blessings already received, and, in addition, will open the floodgates of heaven to pour out even greater blessings?

These lines of thought emanate only from those who do not understand or, for selfish reasons, choose to ignore the principle that the Omnipotent One makes an allowance for our ignorance, but, once the light dispels the darkness, that protection is removed, and a correspondingly higher level of obedience is required. Unless obedience is rendered, not only shall we be left without the added blessing the new light brings, but we shall lose the blessings already enjoyed.

Paul enunciated this principle when he spoke to the Athenians in the Areopagus in these words:

Acts 17

³⁰ Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all men everywhere to repent.

It was a lesson the ancient Israelites were slow to learn. They thought that rebellion after the light of the law and the gospel had been delivered from Mt. Sinai, would be treated with the same leniency as before. What a costly mistake that proved to be!

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 379:

Murmuring and tumults had been frequent during the journey from the Red Sea to Sinai, but in pity for their ignorance and blindness God had not then visited the sin with judgments. But since that time He had revealed himself to them at Horeb. They had received great light, as they had been witnesses to the majesty, the power, and the mercy of God; and their unbelief and discontent incurred the greater guilt. Furthermore, they had covenanted to accept Jehovah as their king and to obey His authority. Their murmuring was now rebellion, and as such it must receive prompt and signal punishment, if Israel was to be preserved from anarchy and ruin.

Numbers 11

¹ So the fire of the Lord burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp.

The most guilty of the complainers were slain by lightning from the cloud.



ISRAELITES COMPLAINING AND CONSUMED BY FIRE.
NUMBERS 11:1

Thus, the more the light was revealed to them, the stricter the obedience required of them in following gospel order. When any crisis arose over this question, the Omnipotent One stood wholly and solely on the side of those who were faithful to the truth, and made no concessions to those who in any way sought to challenge gospel order. God's faithfulness in support of His order and of His appointed messenger in every crisis is very impressive. By this we can be assured that if we are careful and faithful in our adherence to gospel order, we can be absolutely confident that the

Lord will uncompromisingly stand by us, as He always did with Moses.

One of the outstanding incidents of this character involved the rebellion of Miriam supported by Aaron at Hazeroth shortly after they had left Sinai for the promised land. The problem which developed was but a repetition, a rerun, of the initial rejection of gospel order in heaven. In the study of what took place at Hazeroth, it is very important that we recognize and understand that the issue there was over gospel order, exactly as it was up in heaven when Lucifer rebelled. Just as Lucifer set out to change the order in heaven by his attempted elevation of himself to Christ's position, so Miriam sought to change the divine order in the camp by her agitating for the exaltation of herself to Moses' position.

That the issues were precisely the same is confirmed in the following statement:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 382:

But the some evil that first brought discord in heaven sprang up in the heart of this woman of Israel, and she did not fail to find a sympathizer in her dissatisfaction.

The origin of this evil and its subsequent development was as follows:

At Hazeroth, the next encampment after leaving Taberah, a still more bitter trial awaited Moses. Aaron and Miriam had occupied a position of high honor and leadership in Israel. Both were endowed with the prophetic gift, and both had been divinely associated with Moses in the deliverance of the Hebrews.

Micah 6

⁴ And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam,

—are the words of the Lord by the prophet Micah. Miriam's force of character had been early displayed when as a child she watched beside the Nile the little basket in which was hidden the infant Moses. Her self-control and tact God had made instrumental in preserving the deliverer of His people. Richly endowed with the gifts of poetry and music, Miriam had led the women of

Israel in song and dance on the shore of the Red Sea. In the affections of the people and the honor of Heaven she stood second only to Moses and Aaron. But the same evil that first brought discord in heaven sprang up in the heart of this woman of Israel, and she did not fail to find a sympathizer in her dissatisfaction.

Let us now study this story point by point. Firstly, let it be seen that the entire experience was a bitter trial for Moses, but we must not fail to correctly understand why it was. It certainly was not a bitter trial to him because he felt his position was in grave danger, for the preservation of his position was the last and least concern of his. In fact it was no concern to him at all. Gladly at any time he would have laid it down if the Lord had permitted it. He had never sought the position in the first case, and had done his best to avoid the responsibility when Jehovah called him to it.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 396:

The humble shepherd's life of Moses had been far more peaceful and happy than his present position as leader of that vast assembly of turbulent spirits. Yet Moses dared not choose. In place of a shepherd's crook a rod of power had been given him, which he could not lay down until God should release him.

There was no possible way by which any earthly power could remove God's messenger, Moses, from his position. God had positioned him as messenger to His people and only God could terminate his mission. The truth of this is confirmed by the repeated failures of a succession of rebels to demote him. Therefore, the man of God's appointment needed not to concern himself about his position, for the Almighty had undertaken to take full care of that problem.

But any threatened loss of position could never have been a problem to Moses, for it is written that...

Numbers 12

³ The man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.

Therefore he was a totally selfless person who placed the interests of God and His people before his own. This being so, you never find him expressing concern for his position.

They were Miriam and Aaron who were worried about position and they made an open, vigorous, and contentious issue about it. Likewise, it was Lucifer, not Christ, who in heaven was determined to reallocate the positions involved. So intense was the issue that war broke out in the very control center of the universe leading to the total loss by Lucifer and those who followed him of all they had ever possessed.

Those who, from the beginning of the great rebellion, have sought to replace gospel order with a new order, have shown such capability in clothing themselves with deceptive garments, that it is difficult to penetrate their disguise. Their power to avoid detection, of course, comes from the master deceiver, the devil himself.

We cannot treat this deceptive capability lightly, for, to be ensnared by it is to lose the capacity to distinguish between light and darkness. Those who are deceived will call truth, error, and error, truth, and will not know how to find their way to heaven.

Therefore, we need some guidelines by which to test the claims of those who come to us as angels of light as did Lucifer in heaven, and Miriam and Aaron later on. I will not list all the guidelines here, but will name one which immediately presents itself in the history under consideration.

Whenever a crisis arises in the movement and you are uncertain as to who is in the right, look and listen until you detect those contending for a position or who claim to have been robbed of their rightful station. False messengers always do this, but true messengers never do. An example of this is given in the story under study here. Moses, the messenger of God, did not say one word in defense of his place.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 384:

Their [Miriam's and Aaron's] accusations were borne by Moses in uncomplaining silence.

But it was not so with the rebels, Miriam and Aaron. Her position was the issue for which she and Aaron fought. By fighting for what she deemed to be her rightful place, she was, although she herself did not know it, literally announcing that she was activated by Satan's kingdom building principles, and was carrying out his procedures.

If the meekest of all men had no problem of self-interest in this crisis, then what made it a bitter trial to him?

It was the same as that which made the defection of Lucifer to be a grievous experience to Immanuel. Every messenger of God suffers in the same way when the principles of gospel order are laid aside, for they see to a larger or lesser extent as did both Immanuel and Moses, the awful consequences of setting aside God's kingdom-building principles.

It may well be that to many people, the significance given to gospel order is exaggerated out of all proportion to reality. Such souls might want to know what harm could possibly come from granting the talented, hard working, dedicated, and self-sacrificing Miriam the higher position she claimed for herself, where, as they see the situation, she would serve more people better than before! They see only good coming from such a promotion, and tend to give it their support, while regarding as unfair and unjust, any person who does not likewise join in upholding the cause.

Such precisely were the arguments and objections raised by Lucifer in heaven; and such were the principles of operation he established on earth after he had been cast out of heaven. One careful survey of the fearful results of his promotion of these very ideas will convince every honest soul that there are fatal flaws in these arguments, for the fruit condemns the tree.

While it is good to reject the position advocated by Lucifer because of what we see of the resulting ruin, it is better still to understand why Lucifer's alternative kingdom-building procedures are in themselves so evil and destructive. The very fact that our loving heavenly Father will not tolerate even the slightest trace of any rejection of gospel order in His kingdom, nor provide any place whatsoever for the devil's alternative form of kingdom-building, is sufficient to label Satan's propositions evil and unwanted.

God is so wise and loving that He will withhold from us nothing which is for our good, and will protect us from that which is evil. Therefore, as surely as our all-wise, loving, heavenly Father utterly refuses to provide any accommodation whatsoever for any system of government other than gospel order, then gospel order is the only formula which promises unblemished happiness, completely satisfying fulfillment, and eternal life to each of us. In other words: If God rejects it, then, under no circumstances are we to even consider giving it a place in our lives.

But why is Satan's system so productive in itself, not of greater and still greater happiness, but of separation, sorrow, loss, oppression, and death?

In gospel order, our loving heavenly Father holds the position of supreme Organizer of the galaxies which fill the universe, and of the inhabitants thereof. What a stupendous task that must be, a work for which He alone has the qualifications! Just think about what that work entails! It involves the appointment of every heavenly body, and of each individual living on those planets, to his exact position and work, and of the endowment of each one with just the right capabilities to perform his assigned duties. The successful, harmonious operation of all concerned depends upon the exactly correct appointment being made in every instance numbering multiplied trillions upon trillions of them without once making a single mistake. To exercise such incredible infallibility, God has to know all there is to know of every detail about

everything in the universe, and, at the same time have the capacity to assign every person in that infinite complex the precise position perfectly suited to that person.

Thus it was that the Omniscient One, knowing all there was to know about Miriam, positioned her when but a girl, where she could be God's instrument for the saving of the baby Moses from death, and later, placed her as a leader in Israel second only to Moses and Aaron.

Who else but the almighty Plan-maker could possibly have had the complete knowledge, the perfect wisdom, and the infinite power to make such decisions? There is none but God! This is the truth upon which every creature in the universe must be fully established, for it must be clearly apparent that:

The Ministry of Healing, p. 478-479:

We have not wisdom to plan our own lives. . . . Let God plan for you.

Lucifer did let God plan for him up to a certain point of time, up to which he occupied not only the best position of any creature in the universe, but the position which was the very best for him. During this period, his faithful adherence to the principles of gospel order brought him nothing but pure joy, unlimited opportunities for development, and enduring satisfaction.

But the time came when, like Miriam after him, he sought to establish himself in a position where God in His infinite wisdom had never planned that he should be. What we now need to see is that this step immediately set into motion a complex sequence of consequences which would develop into the worst possible results.

In the first case, his determination to capture the higher position for himself was his declaration that, in his opinion, he knew better than God what his capabilities were, and what position should in consequence be given him. This was to replace his previous faith in God with faith in himself. From now on, he would

decide what was best for himself, and would appoint himself to the coveted position.

From this point, the trouble really begins, for, the moment the system is introduced in which each person chooses for himself the position he shall occupy, it will be found that more than one will seek the same place. Fierce competition and rivalry will lead to strife, bloodshed, intrigue, conspiracies, cruelty, and so on, as it in fact has throughout the history of this sin-cursed earth.

Look at the evil spirit which manifested itself in Miriam! Her jealousy was excited, her peaceful, smiling countenance was replaced by angry looks, and from her mouth flowed bitter accusations and criticisms. Happiness had departed from her life and would return, she thought, only when she was promoted to where she believed she should be. The real facts were that, had she been instated according to her judgment of where she should be, that would only have rendered a bad situation even worse, and markedly increased her misery.

But that is not the full story of the loss to those who set gospel order aside. Let it never be forgotten that everything without the slightest exception comes to us from God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, to set aside gospel order is to disconnect one's self from the Source of life and thus perish.

Thus when Moses saw the nature of Miriam's rebellion, it was very much a bitter trial to him, for he plainly saw all the evil consequences which would come in to scatter, divide, destroy, and impose fearful suffering on his people. His concern was not for himself, but for them. It seems that the rejection of gospel order most often appears among those in the highest positions nearest the messenger, where there is the least justification for it.

In the very first uprising, Lucifer was the highest of all created beings; the one who stood nearest the Lord's Messenger himself and the one to whom had been given the most. It was this most favored of all receivers who lost his grip on gospel order, while the Messenger remained totally uninfected by the disease.

So it was that, at Hazeroth, she who stood nearest to Moses the primary-messenger, and to Aaron the high priest, and had the least excuse for murmuring, was the very one who stumbled so badly.

Let us remind ourselves again of all the gifts, talents, endowments, and honors which had been bestowed upon her.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 382:

Aaron and Miriam had occupied a position of high honor and leadership in Israel. Both were endowed with the prophetic gift, and both had been divinely associated with Moses in the deliverance of the Hebrews.

Micah 6

⁴ And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam,
—are the words of the Lord by the prophet Micah. Miriam’s force of character had been early displayed when as a child she watched beside the Nile the little basket in which was hidden the infant Moses. Her self-control and tact God had made instrumental in preserving the deliverer of His people. Richly endowed with the gifts of poetry and music, Miriam had led the women of Israel in song and dance on the shore of the Red Sea. In the affections of the people and the honor of Heaven she stood second only to Moses and Aaron.

How reminiscent this is of the description of Lucifer before the spirit of rebellion found lodgment in him.

That which, without justification, angered Lucifer and led him to choose apostasy, was the fact that...

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 37:

...the Son of God was exalted above him, as one in power and authority with the Father. He shared the Father’s counsels, while Lucifer did not thus enter into the purposes of God. “Why,” questioned this mighty angel, “should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He honored above Lucifer?”

Miriam was likewise unjustifiably troubled by the same problem. Of her it is written:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 382-383:

In the appointment of the seventy elders Miriam and Aaron had not been consulted, and their jealousy was excited against Moses. At the time of Jethro's visit, while the Israelites were on the way to Sinai, the ready acceptance by Moses of the counsel of his father-in-law had aroused in Aaron and Miriam a fear that his influence with the great leader exceeded theirs. In the organization of the council of elders they felt that their position and authority had been ignored. Miriam and Aaron had never known the weight of care and responsibility which had rested upon Moses; yet because they had been chosen to aid him they regarded themselves as sharing equally with him the burden of leadership, and they regarded the appointment of further assistants as uncalled for.

Moses felt the importance of the great work committed to him as no other man had ever felt it. He realized his own weakness, and he made God his counselor. Aaron esteemed himself more highly, and trusted less in God. He had failed when entrusted with responsibility, giving evidence of the weakness of his character by his base compliance in the matter of the idolatrous worship at Sinai. But Miriam and Aaron, blinded by jealousy and ambition, lost sight of this. Aaron had been highly honored by God in the appointment of his family to the sacred office of the priesthood; yet even this now added to the desire for self-exaltation.

Numbers 12

² And they said, Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?

Regarding themselves as equally favored by God, they felt that they were entitled to the same position and authority.

They looked upon themselves as being companion-messengers, which is much, much more than being companions to or of the messenger. To be a companion-messenger is to be a messenger of equal standing with the messenger; whereas, a companion to or of the messenger does not even have to be a messenger, but only a companion. It was the higher position to which both Miriam and Aaron aspired. To support their contention, they claimed that

the Lord had spoken by them even as He had spoken through Moses.

It is true that both of these rebels had been endowed with the prophetic gift, which, at first thought, would indicate that they were primary messengers receiving new messages for the people directly from God through Christ. One such experience where this might tend to be concluded, was Miriam's high point when she led the people in the triumphant anthem at the Red Sea. But, it was from Moses that she received the song. It was the song of Moses, not the song of Miriam.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 288-289:

The Spirit of God rested upon Moses, and he led the people in a triumphant anthem of thanksgiving, the earliest and one of the most sublime that are known to man...

Like the voice of the great deep, rose from the vast hosts of Israel that sublime ascription. It was taken up by the women of Israel, Miriam, the sister of Moses, leading the way, as they went forth with timbrel and dance. Far over desert and sea rang the joyous refrain, and the mountains re-echoed the words of their praise—

Exodus 15

¹ I will sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.

In the New Testament, it is called...

Revelation 15

³ ...the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb;

—but nowhere is it ever called “The Song of Miriam.” It is the song which none but the 144,000 can sing.

The Great Controversy, p. 648-649:

And they sing “a new song” before the throne, a song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb—a song of deliverance. None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song; for it is the song of their experience—an experience such as no other company have ever had.

This was no ordinary song, for it was much more than an anthem of gratitude for their deliverance. It was nothing less than a revelation of the character and power of God, of the gospel of Jesus Christ by which they had been delivered, and a prophetic portrayal of the future, as can be verified by reading the text of the song in *Exodus* 15:1-18. Only through a primary-messenger could such profound communications be made.

The fact that the Holy Spirit inspired Moses to compose that song identifies him as being the primary-messenger through whom alone, until his death, all the present truth for Israel was to shine.

At the same time, the fact that Miriam led the people in a song which she had received through Moses, identifies her as being a secondary-messenger or prophet.

The same is true of Aaron. This first high priest in Israel needed a vast amount of light to enable him to do his work in the sanctuary, but that message came to him through Moses. It was Moses, not Aaron, who was called to the mountain top to receive the wonderful light on the sanctuary. When he returned to the encampment, Moses taught it to Aaron and the elders. Over and over again are to be found Scriptures such as these.

Leviticus 6

⁸ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

⁹ Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering...

Leviticus 8

³⁶ So Aaron and his sons did all the things that the Lord had commanded by the hand of Moses.

This system of communication was consistent with Moses being the primary-messenger, and Aaron being a secondary-messenger, the flow of light arriving at Aaron through Moses. Therefore, Aaron, like his sister, was a prophet at the secondary and not the primary level.

The True Character of **The Rebellion of Miriam and Aaron**

GOD'S ORDER	SATAN'S ORDER	GOD'S ORDER	SATAN'S AND MIRIAM'S ORDER
<p>GOD <i>through</i> ↓ CHRIST <i>through</i> ↓ LUCIFER</p>	<p>..... <i>through</i> ↓ CHRIST ↓ LUCIFER</p>	<p>GOD <i>through</i> ↓ MOSES <i>through</i> ↓ MIRIAM and AARON</p>	<p>..... <i>through</i> ↓ MOSES ↓ MIRIAM and AARON</p>
<p>In heaven, Lucifer schemed to replace God's order with his own, in which he would bypass Christ and give himself, as the primary messenger, direct access to God.</p>		<p>On earth, Miriam and Aaron schemed to replace God's order with their own, in which they would bypass Moses and give themselves, as primary messengers, direct access to heaven.</p>	

Thus we read that:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 385:

Their claim to the prophetic gift was not denied; God might have spoken to them in visions and dreams. But to Moses, whom the Lord himself declared, “faithful in all my house,” a nearer communion had been granted. With him God spake mouth to mouth.

So there was no contention over Miriam and Aaron being messengers, but over the level of their messengership. One was the primary-messenger; the others were secondary-messengers.

Likewise in heaven, there had been no contention over Lucifer’s being a messenger, but over the level of his messengership. Exactly as Lucifer claimed messengership for himself on the same level as Immanuel, so Miriam and Aaron sought to establish themselves as messengers on the same level as Moses. That is the way in which each violated gospel order, and clearly reveals how the same fearful transgression can be repeated today.

Some may feel that God’s giving some direct revelations to Miriam and Aaron through visions and dreams makes them to be primary-messengers, but this is definitely not so. This is because every child of God, who truly believes in gospel order, and accordingly receives the light through the Lord’s messenger as from God himself, will be blessed with personal insights into the message. The Lord might even speak to such a one through visions and dreams.

Please remember that, while the Lord always sends His light through His messenger, we are to go directly to Him when we need Him to be our Problem-solver, Plan-maker, and Burden-Bearer. He does not communicate His solutions to your special problems through another believer, but to you directly unless, as can sometimes be, the other believer, on a specific occasion, has been called of God to be your counselor.

As an example of Aaron's receiving further details or insights concerning a message he had already received from Moses, there is the case of tithing. *Leviticus* 27:30, 32, is the first recorded place in Moses' ministry where God gave him instruction that the tithe was sacred and belonged to God alone. The next reference about tithe is *Numbers* 18:20-21, where God, speaking to Aaron, gave more detailed instructions concerning the use of the tithe and said that it should go to the Levites for their personal support.

An apparent contradiction on which we should spend a little time, is brought to our attention where, in a few cases, it is recorded that the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron at the same time. One instance which is typical in principle of all the rest, reads thus:

Exodus 6

¹³ Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them a command for the children of Israel and for Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

In these cases we must remind ourselves of the fact that Aaron was placed next to Moses because of Moses' unbelief. God's original plan was for Moses to speak to Israel and Pharaoh without Moses having a spokesman.²⁰

However, once Aaron was placed next to Moses, does that mean he had the same position as Moses and could directly receive from God all that Moses received? Aaron did not think so, for he recognized God's honor of Moses as above himself and aspired to Moses' position. Aaron could see what God was doing and he did not like it. God too did not see them as equals and He clearly testified to each person's position and access to himself when, at the scene of Miriam's leprosy, He clearly stated that Moses had a higher position and closer communion with God

²⁰The details of this subject will not be discussed here but are available in Chapter 17 in the book, *Child Salvation*.

than Aaron had, which is to say that Aaron could not directly receive from God all that Moses could. This is also to say that Aaron was utterly and completely dependent upon Moses for the light that only Moses could receive. If it were not for Moses, Aaron would not have had the job of spokesman for Moses for he would have had nothing about which to speak.

In this confrontation between sin and righteousness, Aaron was awakened and instantly saw how sinful he had been in fighting against God and what God was doing in assigning him a lower position than Moses, and, fortunately for him, he just as instantly repented. May all the Aarons that are left, repent and pray for the Miriams who are associated with them. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

So it was that the almighty Organizer and Commander of the universe had specifically placed Moses in the position of primary-messenger, and Miriam and Aaron were allocated the highest places among all the secondary-messengers. Once this was done, none of them according to the principles and procedures of gospel order, was to even think about aspiring to a higher position, or, in any way, of abandoning his post of duty. Any call to come up higher, to step down lower, or to relocate elsewhere must come from God alone. This principle of operation is clearly revealed in these words:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1173:

Heavenly beings are appointed to answer the prayers of those who are working unselfishly for the interests of the cause of God. The very highest angels in the heavenly courts are appointed to work out the prayers which ascend to God for the advancement of the cause of God. Each angel has his particular post of duty, which he is not permitted to leave for any other place. If he should leave, the powers of darkness would gain an advantage.

Lucifer was the very first being to break this vital rule as it is written:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 37:

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels.

Miriam did likewise. It is well worth noticing that, whenever a person violates the rules of gospel order, he or she is sure “to diffuse the spirit of discontent” among the believers. With subtle skill, while professing total loyalty to the message and the movement, they attack both the messenger and the movement. The fruit of these activities is disorder, disunity, weakness, and division among God’s true people. Yet, this does not perturb those who are the cause of this terrible situation, for they are convinced as Lucifer was that, if only they could be given the position they have allocated to themselves, then all would be well. Hear their claims as being but the echo of Satan’s words when he argued that:

If this prince of angels could but attain to his true, exalted position, great good would accrue to the entire host of heaven; for it was his object to secure freedom for all.

It must be remembered that these deceived ones will profess the best spirit and deepest interest in the well being of those they come to professedly bless. But, however good their spirit, and however unwitting they might be in their sinfulness, it is still a fact that good intentions do not annul the law of reaping and sowing. The results of accepting their influence will be evil indeed.

None need be deceived as to the true character of these Lucifers and Miriams, yet I have been astounded by the influence they are able to wield over true believers, especially when they claim total belief in and loyalty to the message. Do not be taken in by these professions, for the devil made the same earnest claims while at the same time working to destroy the authority of the Messenger and the message.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 38:

While claiming for himself perfect loyalty to God, he urged that changes in the order and laws of heaven were necessary for the stability of the divine government.

God, of course, was fully aware of the true character of the position adopted by both Lucifer and Miriam, as we too must become. He knew it was a determination to set aside gospel order in favor of a different system.

Any idea that any fault in Satan's system could be more than compensated for by the sincerity and good will of the bright angel, and by his earthly counterparts, is utterly swept aside by studying the stand taken by God in the face of this crisis in Israel. The Almighty was unequivocal in His instant and utter rejection of Miriam's and Aaron's claims. He immediately labeled their stand as disloyalty both to Moses and himself. This was nothing less than to charge them with that spirit of rebellion which has shut Satan out of Paradise forever.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 384-385:

God had chosen Moses, and had put His Spirit upon him; and Miriam and Aaron, by their murmurings, were guilty of disloyalty, not only to their appointed leader, but to God himself.

Miriam and Aaron were now in the deepest trouble, and in the greatest danger of being banned from heaven eternally. Their only hope of survival lay in the deep and thorough repentance which would likewise have saved Lucifer, but which, to his eternal damnation, he refused. Toward Miriam and Aaron Jehovah made no concessions whatsoever, while, at the same time, He gave His full support to Moses. It must be remembered too that God supported Moses in his position as primary messenger despite the fact that the seventy elders were the result of Moses' unbelief. God's supporting Moses was not a justification of Moses' unbelief. Moses' position as primary messenger and the matter of the seventy elders are two different things.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 385:

The seditious whisperers were summoned to the tabernacle, and brought face to face with Moses.

Numbers 12

⁵ Then the Lord came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam.

Their claim to the prophetic gift was not denied; God might have spoken to them in visions and dreams. But to Moses, whom the Lord himself declared “faithful in all my house,” a nearer communion had been granted. With him God spoke mouth to mouth.

⁸ Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

⁹ So the anger of the Lord was aroused against them; and He departed.

The cloud disappeared from the tabernacle in token of God’s displeasure, and Miriam was smitten. She...

¹⁰ ...became leprous, as white as snow.

Aaron was spared, but he was severely rebuked in Miriam’s punishment. Now, their pride humbled in the dust, Aaron confessed their sin, and entreated that his sister might not be left to perish by that loathsome and deadly scourge. In answer to the prayers of Moses the leprosy was cleansed. Miriam was, however, shut out of the camp for seven days. Not until she was banished from the encampment did the symbol of God’s favor again rest upon the tabernacle. In respect for her high position, and in grief at the blow that had fallen upon her, the whole company abode in Hazeroth, awaiting her return.

Let us look firstly at the way in which the Lord evaluated the actions of the rebellious pair, so that it will be seen that it is no light matter to claim messengership for yourself when the Almighty has never called you to that position, and especially when the position of primary-messenger is already filled.

It is written that they “were guilty of disloyalty” to both Moses and the Mighty One who had appointed him to be the messenger to Israel. To some at least, it might come as a surprise to see that the Lord required loyalty to His messenger, Moses, who, it was

clearly seen, was a fallible man capable of making serious mistakes as even he did on several occasions. But, as is clearly revealed, it is just what the Lord does require. Let us look at the statement again:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 384-385:

God had chosen Moses, and had put His Spirit upon him; and Miriam and Aaron, by their murmurings, were guilty of disloyalty, not only to their appointed leader, but to God himself.



Of course, Miriam and Aaron had lightly dismissed any previous conviction they might have had about being loyal to Moses as

the messenger even though they had no excuse for this dangerous disregard of their true responsibility. They thought that all that mattered was loyalty to God, not realizing that it is impossible to be loyal to God, while, at the same time being disloyal to His messenger. Their attitude is a further illustration of the point made in the last chapter that Satan is not seeking the abolishment of God's kingdom, but the restructuring of it.

In the same way precisely, Miriam did not intentionally seek the destruction of God's church in the wilderness, nor did she call for the toppling of God from His position. All she wanted in God's kingdom on earth was a restructuring of its order so that she would be given the position to which she believed she should be elevated. She appeared so sincere and so dedicated in her love for the cause, that many would have been deceived as to the true nature of her claims.

But, while in her mind, there was neither the intent to destroy the kingdom, nor the fear of such an outcome, this is what the end result would have been if her course of action had proceeded unchecked to its finality.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 385:

If Miriam's envy and dissatisfaction had not been signally rebuked, it would have resulted in great evil.

Everyone should be very much aware of the Lord's requirement for each one of us to be loyal to His delegated messengers as well as to himself. See, for instance, how loyal God was to Moses in the Miriam and Aaron incident at Hazeroth! That is the example of how we are to relate to God and His messengers.

"But," it might be asked, "what if the messenger falls into sin as when Moses struck the rock in his fury? Do we then remain loyal to the messenger?"

We most certainly are to remain loyal to him though, of course, we are not to excuse the sin. This disapproval of the sin must not be permitted to take the form of a holier-than-thou attitude by

which we declare that, if we had been the messenger, then we would not have fallen as he did. While Moses had no excuse for his sin, it must not be overlooked that the people were guilty of putting him under fearful pressure, from which they needed to repent and turn to wholehearted support of the messenger.

But for the people to pressure the messenger and then forsake him because he yielded to that pressure, would be a very grave injustice, and certainly not a revelation of God's character. Believers in divine order are to be aware that God's messenger is not answerable to them. They did not call the messenger, nor commission him with his work, as is clearly seen in the appointment of Moses. Therefore, it is not for the people to decide whether or not a messenger has become disqualified from continuing his work. That is a decision only the Lord can make. When He makes it, He will most certainly inform the church as He did when He called the Messenger in the first case.

So then, the Scriptures clearly call the aspirations of Miriam and her outreach for them, by their right name—disloyalty to God and His messenger, envy and dissatisfaction, pride, evil, the spirit of discontent and insubordination, and a complete repetition of the development of the original sin which brought Lucifer and his angels down.

Miriam certainly did not describe her cause in these terrible terms. She had much kinder words by which, in her mind, she represented her struggle for position. No doubt, she called it the claim for true justice to be done; her right to be recognized for what she was; the restoration of a balanced administration; the seeking of a better deal for Israel; the true liberation movement; and, to cap it all, her response to what she claimed was God's call for her to come up higher, in her efforts to obey which, she was frustrated by Moses' having secured all the upper levels for himself. You will always find that a false messenger will most solemnly claim to be divinely commissioned to fill his role.

This story provides us with one of the clearest examples of the way in which gospel order is usually set aside. It also shows the terrible extent of God's displeasure against the wicked thing, the certainty of the guilty party's separation from the Lord and His people, and demonstrates the need for the acceptance of deep, very prompt repentance as the only means whereby salvation from eternal death can be obtained.

No one who has spiritual discernment can read the tragic story of Miriam's ambitious outreach for power and fail to see that God did not regard her activities as being inconsequential. Instead, the Almighty viewed them in the most serious light possible, so serious in fact that He equated them with Lucifer's rebellion in heaven.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 382:

But the same evil that first brought discord in heaven sprang up in the heart of this woman of Israel, and she did not fail to find a sympathizer in her dissatisfaction.

When Lucifer set about the objective in heaven of changing the divine order, the eternal Father banished him from heaven—forever. Up to a certain point of time, he could have fully repented, become totally cleansed, been reinstated in his appointed position, and thereafter have lived in the strictest obedience to heaven's kingdom-building principles and procedures. Such a repentance would have had to include Lucifer's acceptance of the fact that God could not make the slightest change in heaven's order. All the changes had to be made by Lucifer.

In like manner, Miriam suddenly found herself a leper. What a paralyzing shock! It must have overwhelmed and almost killed her. Think of the awful feeling of being eternally lost, of seeing in that hideous symbol of sin, the horrific revelation of her spiritual contamination. In this situation we can see something of the horror of great darkness into which she sank. It was truly fortunate for her that Moses was a totally loving and forgiving person

whose powerful spiritual experience made him an effective intercessor for his now repentant sister.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 385:

In answer to the prayers of Moses the leprosy was cleansed.

After this ambitious adventure which become so frightening, Miriam seems to have learned her lesson, for she was thereafter content to live in obscurity. No further mention is made of her until the brief report of her death made in *Numbers* 20:1.

Just think what would have happened if Miriam and Aaron had applied the principles of gospel order when Satan began to tempt them with ambitious thoughts. They would have been perfectly protected from making their fearful mistake, suffering such dreadful humiliation, and narrowly escaping eternal damnation. They would have rejected any thought of ever being primary-messengers, for they would have known that, in the divine order, there could have been only one at that time, and he was Moses. What a beautifully simple way of solving such a problem.

In the light of Jehovah's reactions toward Lucifer's and Miriam's courses of action, we are provided with an incredibly clear revelation of the uncompromising way in which the Lord relates to all those who aspire to be primary-messengers when the position is already filled. Though these well meaning people feel assured they are operating under the Lord's leadership and blessing, they are in fact incurring His displeasure, and their work will come to nothing.

A survey of the history of the present movement clearly demonstrates the truth of these words. Person after person has stood claiming in one way or another to have new messages which did not come to them through the appointed messenger. There is not one of these whose work has prospered. Soon, they found themselves outside the movement, and, except in the rare cases where there was genuine repentance, never returned.

May we never be guilty of the rebellion of Miriam and Aaron.

16. The Rebellion of Korah

Messenger and News Review, December 1989

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 48

Gospel Order, Part 16

A Word from the Editor

Another decade is soon to become history, and still the Lord has not come for us, but our hopes do not fade, for we know that the promises of His return are utterly reliable, and that we are the cause of the delay.

The appearing of our coming King will be a further step in the kingdom building program, which step will only be possible if the developments leading up to it, are a true preparation for that long-looked-for event.

The structure of the church on earth when He comes for it, will be strictly that of gospel order, and His appearing will be delayed until His order is perfectly established. It is as simple as that.

God has infinite patience and power, so that, if we do not come into line on gospel order, He will wait till we do. The angels holding back the winds of strife will be instructed to continue holding them.

Therefore, it is extremely heartening to see the believers gladly accepting gospel order, and putting it into effect in their lives. This is the surest sign that the last movements are upon us. From now on, if we remain faithful to heaven's kingdom-building procedures, we can expect things to really start happening, and they will. In fact they already are, and we shall be surprised at how much more will occur on every hand. It is time to be alert, watchful, and prepared.

SO POINTED, explicit, clear, and powerful were the messages taught by God in the Miriam and Aaron incident, that one would be led to believe that they would never be forgotten by the Israelites. In view of the awful punishment Miriam's crime attracted, we would expect that no one would ever again dare to even think of mounting a call for a change in the divine order.

And for a limited period they seemed to have learned their lesson as they journeyed from Hazeroth to Kadesh-barnea, where, as we observed earlier in our study, they shut themselves out of the Promised Land because they set aside gospel order by seeking to build the kingdom other than by God's ways. Tens of thousands paid for their folly with their lives. It was a subdued, but impenitent multitude which turned back into the desert to spend the

next forty years ever going somewhere, but never arriving anywhere.

But as they trudged on with their backs toward Canaan, and their faces toward the desert, the seeds of their next attack on gospel order were germinating to life.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 395:

The judgments visited upon the Israelites served for a time to restrain their murmuring and insubordination, but the spirit of rebellion was still in the heart and eventually brought forth the bitterest fruits. The former rebellions had been mere popular tumults, arising from the sudden impulse of the excited multitude; but now a deep-laid conspiracy was formed, the result of a determined purpose to overthrow the authority of the leaders appointed by God himself.

This revolt was that of Korah, supported by Dathan, Abiram, two hundred and fifty princes, and a large number of the people. It was very carefully and skillfully planned and executed, at its height posed a terrible threat to the movement, and, despite Jehovah's personal, visible intervention in direct and total opposition to the conspirators, was not repented of by any of the guilty who perished in consequence.

This conflict was an exact repetition of what took place in heaven when Lucifer formed the determined purpose to overthrow the authority of the leader appointed by God himself—namely, Jehovah Immanuel. Likewise it was a repetition of the course pursued by Miriam and Aaron, who attempted the overthrow of the authority of the leader appointed by God himself—namely, Moses.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 403:

In the rebellion of Korah is seen the working out, upon a narrower stage, of the same spirit that led to the rebellion of Satan in heaven. It was pride and ambition that prompted Lucifer to complain of the government of God, and to seek the overthrow of the order which had been established in heaven. Since his fall it has been his object to infuse the same spirit of envy and dis-

content, the same ambition for position and honor, into the minds of men. He thus worked upon the minds of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, to arouse the desire for self-exaltation and excite envy, distrust, and rebellion. Satan caused them to reject God as their leader, by rejecting the men of God's appointment. Yet while in their murmuring against Moses and Aaron they blasphemed God, they were so deluded as to think themselves righteous, and to regard those who had faithfully reproved their sins as actuated by Satan.

This paragraph reveals in very clear and decided terms, the real nature of this revolt, and how God evaluated it and related to it. The sin manifested in the conspirators could not have been worse; nor more certain to attract eternal damnation.

This being so, why was it that, so soon after the pointed message conveyed through the experience of Miriam of which they were all witnesses, and the debacle at Kadesh-barnea of which they were all a part, this worst and most defiant of all their rebellions should have been organized? Surely the very nature of the previous and recent uprisings and their deadly outworkings should have been remembered so vividly that any thought of calling for a new structure in the kingdom would have been instantly dismissed! They should have been thoroughly and permanently convinced that, to war against gospel order, was to engage in open warfare, not merely against men, but against God himself in a battle they could never hope to win. They should have been fully persuaded that, to set their course in this direction, was to abandon all hope of living out their normal life spans on this earth, and to lose all possibility of inheriting the home of the saints. They should have known that it was to lose everything in order to gain nothing.

But instead, the delusion that they could seize upon the highest and best in exchange for the lowlier, was cherished and cultivated until it became the all-absorbing passion which ruled over them. Worse still, they came to the terrible place where they believed

their cause was so just and righteous that they had God's full personal approval and support, so that...

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 397:

...at last they really believed themselves to be actuated by zeal for God.

They then were supremely confident, for, with God fighting for them as they supposed He was, they were sure that they could not fail but would succeed in overthrowing the authority of the men whom the Lord himself had appointed to lead the host. They had convinced themselves that, not only were they about to come into possession of the best that this life could offer, but were guaranteed a place in the eternal mansions as well, so righteous did they appear in their own eyes.

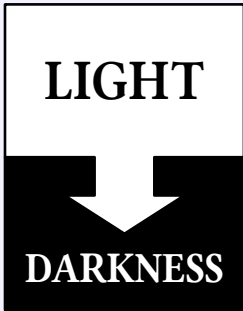
It is a terrible state of wickedness to be called of God to messengership, and refuse to respond, but it is a much worse situation when, having rejected great light, you are found at war with the men of God's appointment, yet believe you are totally loyal to God's truth and are enjoying His full approval and support. Such a person obviously cannot distinguish between truth and error. He can be relied upon to cherish error and reject truth. When the Holy Spirit approaches to restore truth in him, He is seen by this poor soul as being the devil instead, and accordingly rejects the divine messenger.

On the other hand, because the spirit of rebellion in him is akin to the same spirit in the devil, when Satan approaches him clothed in angel robes, he is welcomed as the Lord himself. The fatal result is that the more God tries to reach the erring one with His salvation, the more that one rejects Him as the voice of Satan; and the more the devil comes to him, the more happily the rebellious one welcomes him as the voice of God.

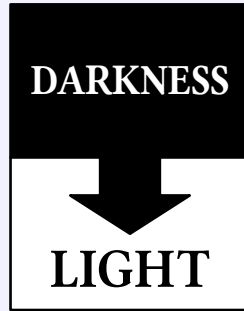
This is the unpardonable sin, made such, not because God has withdrawn His saving grace, but because the self-deceived person has placed himself in a position where it is no longer possible for the Lord to reach him. Korah and his immediate following came

to that point and are eternally lost, for the Scriptures make it plain that they died in their rebellion, unrepentant till the very last.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN or The Sin Against the Holy Spirit is to Call:



and:



It is to come to the place where:
the voice of the HOLY SPIRIT is believed to be the voice of SATAN;
and the voice of SATAN is accepted as the voice of the HOLY SPIRIT.
Thus it is not GOD who arbitrarily cuts the person off, but his own action,
—for the more the Lord tries to reach him with saving light,
the more He is rejected—thus making it impossible to reach that soul.

“Your turning things upside down is known of the Lord.”

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 97

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 405:

Notwithstanding they had had the most convincing evidence of God’s displeasure at their course, in the destruction of the men who had deceived them, they dared to attribute His judgments to Satan, declaring that through the power of the evil one, Moses and Aaron had caused the death of good and holy men. It was this act that sealed their doom. They had committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, a sin by which man’s heart is effectually hardened against the influence of divine grace.

Matthew 12

³² Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of man, [said Christ,] it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him.

These words were spoken by our Saviour when the gracious works which He had performed through the power of God were attributed by the Jews to Beelzebub. It is through the agency of the Holy Spirit that God communicates with man; and those who deliberately reject this agency as satanic, have cut off the channel of communication between the soul and Heaven.

God works by the manifestation of His Spirit to reprove and convict the sinner; and if the Spirit's work is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul. The last resource of divine mercy has been employed. The transgressor has cut himself off from God, and sin has no remedy to cure itself. There is no reserved power by which God can work to convict and convert the sinner. "Let him alone" (*Hosea 4:17*) is the divine command. Then...

Hebrews 10

²⁶ ...there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

²⁷ But a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 400-401:

In the name of the God of Israel, Moses now declared, in the hearing of the congregation:

Numbers 16

²⁸ Hereby you shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of my own mind.

²⁹ If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord has not sent me.

³⁰ But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit, then you shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord.

The eyes of all Israel were fixed upon Moses as they stood, in terror and expectation, awaiting the event. As he ceased speaking, the solid earth parted, and the rebels went down alive into the pit, with all that pertained to them, and "they perished from

among the congregation.” The people fled, self-condemned as partakers in the sin.



But the judgments were not ended. Fire flashing from the cloud consumed the two hundred and fifty princes who had offered incense. These men, not being the first in rebellion, were not destroyed with the chief conspirators. They were permitted to see their end, and to have an opportunity for repentance; but their sympathies were with the rebels, and they shared their fate.

When Moses was entreating Israel to flee from the coming destruction, the divine judgment might even then have been stayed, if Korah and his company had repented and sought forgiveness. But their stubborn persistence sealed their doom.

So, once more I ask the question:

“In the light of the powerful, all-convincing demonstration given by God himself through His appointed messengers, Christ and Moses, of His utter disapproval of any effort at changing the

divine order, and His revelations of the fearful punishment awaiting those who do attempt to introduce any kind of new order, why did they defiantly set about attempting to effect the change?"

Dealing with the Spirit of Rebellion

This is a question to which we must know the answer, for we are in as great a peril of doing what they did as they were. But if we know why they did it, and the steps they could have taken to ensure their perfect salvation from the deadly peril, we will know exactly what to do in order to enjoy God's perfect and complete protection against committing this sin.

So where lay the problem? Here is the answer:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 395:

...the spirit of rebellion was still in the heart and eventually brought forth the bitterest fruits.

From the very beginning of the rise of the present movement, it has been strongly emphasized that:

Education, p. 146-149:

No truth does the Bible more clearly teach than that what we do is the result of what we are. To a great degree the experiences of life are the fruition of our own thoughts and deeds.

Proverbs 26

² So a curse without cause shall not alight.

Isaiah 3

¹⁰ Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them...

¹¹ Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

Jeremiah 6

¹⁹ Hear, O earth! Behold I will certainly bring calamity on this people, even the fruit of their thoughts.

Terrible is this truth, and deeply should it be impressed. Every deed reacts upon the doer. Never a human being but may recognize, in the evils that curse his life, fruitage of his own sowing. Yet even thus we are not without hope.

To gain the birthright that was his already by God's promise, Jacob resorted to fraud, and he reaped the harvest in his brother's hatred. Through twenty years of exile he was himself wronged and defrauded, and was at last forced to find safety in flight; and he reaped a second harvest, as the evils of his own character were seen to crop out in his sons—all but too true a picture of the retributions of human life.

But God says:

Isaiah 57

¹⁶ I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry; for the spirit would fail before me, and the souls which I have made.

¹⁷ For the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry, and struck him; I hid and was angry, and he went on backsliding in the way of his heart.

¹⁸ I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will also lead him, and restore comforts to him and to his mourners.

¹⁹ ...Peace, peace to him who is far off, and to him who is near, says the Lord, and I will heal him.

Jacob in his distress was not overwhelmed. He had repented, he had endeavored to atone for the wrong to his brother. And when threatened with death through the wrath of Esau, he sought help from God.

Hosea 12

⁴ Yes, he struggled with the Angel, and prevailed; he wept, and sought favor from Him.

Genesis 32

²⁹ And He blessed him there.

In the power of His might the forgiven one stood up, no longer the supplanter, but a prince with God. He had gained not merely deliverance from his outraged brother, but deliverance from himself. The power of evil in his own nature was broken; his character was transformed.

At eventide there was light. Jacob, reviewing his life-history, recognized the sustaining power of God—

Genesis 48

¹⁵ ...the God who has fed me all my life long to this day,

¹⁶ The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil.

The same experience is repeated in the history of Jacob's sons—sin working retribution, and repentance bearing fruit of righteousness unto life.

God does not annul His laws. He does not work contrary to them. The work of sin He does not undo. But He transforms. Through His grace the curse works out blessing.

When Korah and those who were to later follow him in rebellion witnessed the awful outcome of Miriam's attempt to change the divine order, they must have been suitably impressed, and soberly resolved never to become involved in making the same blunder.

But, no matter how resolutely one may determine not to walk in evil pathways, if "the spirit of rebellion" is still in the heart, it will override the strongest of good intentions, and eventually will bring forth the bitterest of fruits. There is nothing more certain than that.

This is the urgent message Paul was burdened to present in *Romans* 7:1-25. There he portrayed the man who knows the law of God, loves it with all his heart, and has set his will to obey every one of the divine statutes, yet fails miserably. The very sins he does not want to do, he finds himself doing, while the righteousness he desires to perform, he falls short of achieving, despite the fact that he has set his will to do the right and shun the wrong.

The reason for this lies in the simple fact that the spirit of rebellion—otherwise known as the old man, the carnal mind, the sin-master, and so on—is far too strong to be successfully resisted by the human will. In every such confrontation, the spirit of rebellion will always emerge the victor.

Therefore, seeing that the spirit of rebellion remained in Korah and his followers, what they did was all that they could have done under the pressure of the temptations which attacked them, unless, realizing their peril, they had fled to the Mighty One for deliverance. The evil life-force within them was the problem. It was the master; they were its abject slaves. The only possible so-

lution to the problem was for each of them to have recognized his actual and deplorable condition which could only have been revealed through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and then have made an acceptable confession designed to eradicate the evil spirit and replace it with the spiritual nature of Christ.²¹

One must make an acceptable confession very early in the development of the problem springing from the presence in him of the spirit of rebellion. To do this requires the recognition that there is a problem, that we do have in fact the presence in us of the spirit of rebellion. This can be difficult, for the evil presence tends to clothe itself in sheep's clothing, designed to lead the sinner to believe that he is doing the Lord's will, when in fact, he is in active rebellion against the heavenly powers.

It must not be overlooked that the manifestation of a spirit of rebellion is not necessarily proof that a person is not born again, for he who has been delivered from the controlling power of the sin master will find that the spirit of rebellion can still rise in his human nature. It will especially tend to manifest itself when the law of self-preservation is involved, that is, when there is a threat to one's life, possessions, or position.

An excellent example of this was when David decided to place himself under the protection of Achish, king of the Philistines. He certainly took this action in violation of gospel order, for the Lord never appointed him to this position or provided that solution.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 672:

David's conclusion that Saul would certainly accomplish his murderous purpose was formed without the counsel of God. Even while Saul was plotting and seeking to accomplish his destruction, the Lord was working to secure David the kingdom. God works out His plans, though to human eyes they are veiled in mystery. Men cannot understand the ways of God; and, looking at appearances, they interpret the trials and tests and provings that God permits to come upon them as things that are

²¹For a more detailed explanation of this effective procedure, study *Acceptable Confession*.

against them, and that will only work their ruin. Thus David looked on appearances, and not at the promises of God. He doubted that he would ever come to the throne. Long trials had wearied his faith and exhausted his patience.

No Christian should regard himself as being immune to the deadly ministry of the spirit of rebellion, especially when it is remembered that this evil, controlling force developed in the perfect and sinless Lucifer, Adam, and Eve. If it could be found in them, as it was, how much more at risk are we, and how much more we need to walk very guardedly. All of us are warned that early detection of this propensity to wickedness is critical to victory over it, for, once it is firmly established, it destroys our capacity to recognize it for what it is.

I think I can safely say that its most dangerous form is when a person, out of love for the cause, and with a seeming spirit of self-sacrifice and conviction, believes that, if only he were installed in the position to which he aspires, the work would prosper wonderfully.

The process of deliverance from rebellion begins with a knowledge of the divine principles and procedures, combined with the conviction that the Lord's ways are indeed right and true. This knowledge and conviction are brought to the individual by Jehovah through His appointed messenger. Once this light is brought to him, he becomes responsible for it whether or not he accepts it.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 404-405:

Korah would not have taken the course he did had he known that all the directions and reproofs communicated to Israel were from God. But he might have known this. God had given overwhelming evidence that He was leading Israel. But Korah and his companions rejected light until they became so blinded that the most striking manifestations of His power were not sufficient to convince them; they attributed them all to human or satanic agency.

If they had but truly realized their peril, they would have set a close watch on their responses to daily events, and the moment they detected in themselves any rejection of the divine principles, they would have fled to the sanctuary for forgiveness, cleansing, and the infilling with the sweet spirit of Jesus. Had they done this, they would have been delivered from the spirit of rebellion, and would never have been involved in the awful conspiracy which cost them both the life which now is together with that which is to come.

By their persistent rejection of divine light they had come to the place where they were unable to identify what was rebellion and that which was loyalty. But then, do we have this ability today? Are we able to recognize what is true gospel order, and faithfully live by it? Let us spend a few moments listing a situation or two which are categorized as acts of rebellion.

The Subtlety of Rebellion

The word, “rebellion,” is a strong word, carrying the connotation of open, violent resistance to authority, and this usually is the case. But, if we limit our understanding of this evil against God to this concept of rebellion, we will fail to recognize its more subtle manifestations, in which it is practiced by the nicest people who regard themselves as being totally loyal to God.

Here is a simple example based on the principle that there is only one procedure by which God’s kingdom can be built, and that anyone who introduces any modification of the divinely ordained system is in rebellion.

The Lord calls a messenger in a time of apostasy and great spiritual darkness, and transmits present truth through him alone, for that, as we have learned, is the way God’s kingdom is structured. For a time the system operates without question or objection, each person receiving the light through the one, divinely commissioned channel. But, before too long, an individual will arise who has much to commend him or her. He or she seems to be dedicated to the building of the movement, and is energetic, hard-

working, friendly, compassionate, self-sacrificing, helpful, and firmly believes that the movement is of the Lord. However, this person does not confine him or herself to studying and teaching the present truth God is sending through His messenger, but proceeds to study out a message of his or her own.

The person is so sincere and dedicated that his or her course tends to be regarded with approval by the other members, at least until they become educated in the principles of gospel order, but the real fact is that God classifies this person's work as being rebellion.

And obviously enough it is, for such an individual has sought to add his own way of kingdom-building to that of the Lord's. There is no difference between this and the course adopted by Satan, Miriam, and Korah each in his turn, and the work of each of them is correctly called—rebellion. Both the one who puts together a message of his own, and the one who receives it, are in rebellion.

Let us now extend the definition of rebellion a little further. After the movement has become well established, as has so often happened down through human history, the messenger of God is overcome by temptation. A proportion of the members conclude that he has disqualified himself from being the messenger anymore, and separates from him.

They thus demonstrate an ignorance of God's kingdom-building structure by completely overlooking the fact that the Sovereign of the Universe who appointed the messenger to his work in the first case, is the only one who can lay him aside if the time should ever come. The one question which should be asked is not whether, in human judgment, he has disqualified himself, but whether God has terminated his commission. This may not be immediately apparent, but if the believer in Jesus waits patiently and prayerfully, he will soon know the truth of the matter.

Usually it will be seen that the Lord has something better than discarding him as it is written:

The Desire of Ages, p. 826:

Those whose course has been most offensive to Him He freely accepts; when they repent, He imparts to them of His divine Spirit, places them in the highest positions of trust, and sends them forth into the camp of the disloyal to proclaim His boundless mercy.

Those who separate from the messenger, then attempt to carry the movement on, believing they are the true continuation of the Lord's work. But they do not possess the gospel order structure. True, they appear at least to have a part of it. They believe they are loyal to God, and strive to obey all the commandments. Thus they are confident that there has been no change in that part of the structure, for they still look to God as the infinite Source. But then, so does the devil. Let us not forget his bold declaration of willingness to obey God, while rejecting the Messenger appointed by Jehovah.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 973:

He [Satan] declares he cannot submit to be under Christ's command, that God's commands alone will he obey.

It is not Satan's determination to dismantle God's entire kingdom building structure, but only to modify the position of the messenger. He believes he can do this without destroying the entire system, but this is a delusion.

His followers also have the bottom part of the structure when it is seen that they genuinely recognize themselves as truly helpless, dependent receivers. They reinforce this truth—and it is the truth—by iterating and reiterating their confession of their great need to be blessed of God, led by Him, and taught of Him. So ardently do they express their love for the Lord; so eagerly do they assemble for fellowship together on the Sabbath, the midweek prayer meeting, and the camp meetings; so devotedly and intensely do they study the Scriptures; so longingly do they pray for the richest outpourings of the Holy Spirit; and so earnestly do they testify to the blessings they believe the Lord has poured

upon them; that they give every appearance of being the present truth movement of the hour.

But, they can vigorously and sincerely exercise all these spiritual devotions, without the structure being complete. The vital link of the messenger of God's appointment is not in place. He cannot be, for they have separated themselves from him, when God has not done so. Clear and adequate proof of this is provided in the fact that the Almighty continues to channel the light of present truth through the messenger of His appointment, as if that messenger had never stumbled.

Let it not be overlooked that the true kingdom-building structure is never completed simply by having a messenger. If this is all that is needed to make the structure complete, then quite a large number of religious organizations would qualify as the movement approved in heaven, including the papacy. It would then be the case that every religious body teaching that God is the infinite Source, that the people are the helpless, dependent receivers, and that the Majesty of Heaven communicates His light through a messenger, would be the church of God.

But, it is not enough to have a messenger, for the only one through whom the Sovereign of the Universe will transmit the knowledge of His will, is the one whom *He has appointed*. This has been the point of issue from the beginning of the great controversy. Satan was determined to separate himself from, and to totally ignore the Messenger of Jehovah's appointment, and to put another messenger in his place. It became and still is a question of whether the messenger or a messenger should complete the kingdom-building structure. So then, if a messenger is installed in the place of the messenger, this is classified in heaven as rebellion. It was rebellion when Lucifer, Miriam, and Korah did it, and, to this day, it is still regarded in heaven as being what it is—rebellion.

Of course, the movement separating itself from the divinely appointed messenger, may seek to avoid this classification, by decid-

ing to recognize no one as the messenger, but to simply meet together to study the Scriptures as a group project. But that is still to separate from the messenger, and that is still rebellion. The kingdom-building structure is obviously incomplete, thus rendering it totally ineffective.

This is a serious matter, for the Almighty does not provide alternative kingdom-building structures for those who wish to reject the messenger of His appointment. For this reason, it is written:

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 97:

If you reject Christ's delegated messengers, you reject Christ.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 54:

God speaks through His appointed agencies, and let no man, or confederacy of men, insult the Spirit of God by refusing to hear the message of God's word from the lips of His chosen messengers. By refusing to hear the message of God, men close themselves in a chamber of darkness. They shut their own souls away from vast blessings and rob Christ of the glory that should come to Him, by showing disrespect to His appointed agencies.

When Christ sent forth the seventy disciples on their missionary journey, He told them how to relate to those cities which rejected them. They were to wipe the very dust from their feet to demonstrate God's rejection of them.

The Desire of Ages, p. 489:

They were not to do this from motives of resentment or through wounded dignity, but to show how grievous a thing it is to refuse the Lord's message or His messengers. To reject the Lord's servants is to reject Christ himself.

Luke 10

¹² But I say to you, [Jesus added,] that it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.

Then His mind reverted to the Galilean towns where so much of His ministry had been spent. In deeply sorrowful accents He exclaimed,

¹³ Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented a great while ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

¹⁴ But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be thrust down to Hades.

To those busy towns about the Sea of Galilee, heaven's richest blessings had been freely offered. Day after day the Prince of life had gone in and out among them. The glory of God, which prophets and kings had longed to see, had shone upon the multitudes that thronged the Saviour's steps. Yet they had refused the heavenly Gift.

It is easy for us to accept the seriousness of rejecting the messages when Christ himself was the Messenger, but we need to see, understand, and fully accept the fact that no matter who the messenger is, provided he is called of God, rejection of his message brings the same consequences. In other words, if Noah, Abraham, Ezekiel, Paul, Luther, Miller, Waggoner, or Jones had been the one sent of God to the people, there would have been no difference from Christ himself being sent. The consequences of the rejection of Christ's delegated messenger would have been exactly the same as if Christ himself had been scorned.

There is nothing more serious. To refuse to accept the messenger sent from God is to repudiate the Saviour himself. Once that is done, unless the one who has done this terrible thing sees the nature of his sin and truly repents of his error, there is no hope for him. It is obviously impossible to be saved by a Saviour from whom he has turned away. In the light of gospel order, the fearful implications of the rejection of God's messenger, which is nothing less than the repudiation of Christ himself, are shown in their true light, and it is made plain that no one who seeks light other than through the divinely provided channel has any hope of salvation. Once these truths are seen in their true power, the children of God will be much more careful to relate to Jehovah's messenger as He intends they should, and not rebel as did Korah and

his followers. Those who fail to come to the place where they see, accept, and live by the principles of gospel order, will eventually walk in such darkness, that they will believe they are being directed of God, when in fact they are in total opposition to Him.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 635:

1 Samuel 15

²³ Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

Rebellion originated with Satan, and all rebellion against God is directly due to satanic influence. Those who set themselves against the government of God have entered into an alliance with the arch-apostate, and he will exercise his power and cunning to captivate the senses and mislead the understanding. He will cause everything to appear in a false light. Like our first parents, those who are under his bewitching spell see only the great benefits to be received by transgression.

No stronger evidence can be given of Satan's delusive power than that many who are thus led by him deceive themselves with the belief that they are in the service of God. When Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rebelled against the authority of Moses, they thought they were opposing only a human leader, a man like themselves; and they came to believe that they were verily doing God service. But in rejecting God's chosen instrument they rejected Christ; they insulted the Spirit of God. So, in the days of Christ, the Jewish scribes and elders, who professed great zeal for the honor of God, crucified His Son. The same spirit still exists in the hearts of those who set themselves to follow their own will in opposition to the will of God.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 402:

It is hardly possible for men to offer greater insult to God than to despise and reject the instrumentalities He would use for their salvation.

Summary

Once again it is time to make the point that, if Korah had been solidly established on the principles of gospel order, he would never have risen up against Moses, Aaron, and the Lord who had

commissioned them to their posts of duty. He would have been safeguarded by his conviction that any attempt at setting aside the messenger appointed by God, would be listed against him in the records in heaven as inexcusable rebellion against the Most High. He would have been very much aware that he would be attracting fearful punishments on himself, and that his foolishness would cost him his place in Israel, and his present and eternal life.

On the positive side, he would have been in full harmony with the structure the Eternal One had designed, and by which He built His kingdom. He would have been truly supportive of the system by which the everlasting Father communicated through one messenger. From him would have emanated no envy, pride, unholy ambition, or rebellion. He would have lived a long, useful, blessed, and happy life.

Such is the protective power of gospel order. In earlier chapters we saw how it would have saved Lucifer, and then Adam and Eve, and then the children of Israel at Kadesh-barnea, from the disasters which overtook them in turn.

The great lessons taught by each of these cases is that when we understand, believe in, and faithfully practice gospel order, then we will be blessed with complete protection from the terrible consequences suffered by those who walk in other than Jehovah's ways of kingdom-building.

The experiences of Aaron provide a compelling example of this, for, sometimes he was on the right side, and sometimes on the wrong. It is worthy of notice that Jehovah dealt with him according to what he was, and not according to who he was. When he was in rebellion as at Hazereth, with strict impartiality, God treated him as a rebel. On the other hand, when his position was challenged by Korah, Aaron was completely protected because he was then totally in harmony with gospel order.

We must not overlook the fact that who he was did have some bearing on how he was treated. His being the high priest to whom special privileges and enlightenment had been given, made

him to be much more responsible, and therefore, he attracted severer punishments than would a lowlier member of one of the tribes. This principle is clearly stated in the comments on how he stood after the golden calf incident:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 320, 323:

The fact that Aaron had been blessed and honored so far above the people was what made his sin so heinous. It was Aaron “the saint of the Lord” (*Psalms* 106:16), that had made the idol and announced the feast. It was he who had been appointed spokesman to Moses, and concerning whom God himself had testified, “I know that he can speak well” (*Exodus* 4:14), that had failed to check the idolaters in their heaven-daring purpose. He by whom God had wrought in bringing judgments both upon the Egyptians and upon their gods, had heard unmoved the proclamation before the molten image,

Exodus 32

⁴ This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!

It was he who had been with Moses on the mount, and had there beheld the glory of the Lord, who had seen that in the manifestation of that glory there was nothing of which an image could be made—it was he who had changed that glory into the similitude of an ox. He to whom God had committed the government of the people in the absence of Moses, was found sanctioning their rebellion.

Deuteronomy 9

²⁰ And the Lord was very angry with Aaron and would have destroyed him.

But in answer to the earnest intercession of Moses, his life was spared; and in penitence and humiliation for his great sin, he was restored to the favor of God.

In the rebellion of Korah, Aaron was a receiver of the very treatment which he himself at Hazeroth, had previously directed against Moses, for Korah and his followers were determined to replace Moses and Aaron with themselves. Like his sister, Aaron had truly learned his lesson at Hazeroth, for, never again do we find him aligned against God in a challenge against gospel order.

Instead, we find him standing with Moses, not against him. In that position, we find God supplying him with perfect protection from the conspirators, against whom, as usual, the Lord aligned himself without compromise.

Thus the Lord demonstrated that He is no respecter of persons, that He does not stand on neutral ground, and that He can be absolutely relied upon to identify himself with those who take their stand on gospel order. Wise is the person today who recognizes that his only safe location is within the structure of gospel order. It is the place where He will always find God standing, and that is to find one's self in good, secure company.



17. The Extension of Gospel Order Through Redemption

Messenger and News Review, January 1990

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 49

Gospel Order, Part 17

A Word from the Editor

We have now entered upon the last decade of the twentieth century. Three years short of this decade, in 1997, we shall arrive at a point 2,000 years after the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, and very close to 6,000 years since the fall into sin. We do not know how close, for no man has an exact chronology of time between the fall of man and the birth of Christ. If it were possible to know exactly when the 6,000 years would expire, we could set and proclaim just when Christ would return, but we must never succumb to the temptation to set a time for this event. There is no point in it, for it is impossible anyway.

But, as surely as there will be 1,000 years of total rest for the earth during the millennium, so there will have been 6,000 years of unrest between the fall of man and the second advent of Christ. So, while we cannot know the exact time in advance, we are to be aware that the event for which we have looked so long is now drawing very near.

It is therefore now a time, not to be adding to this world's wealth, but to the limiting of ourselves to such simple living as will leave us ample time for deep soul searching and thorough preparation for a coming crisis which will test to the uttermost. Let not the future be loaded with futile regrets when we might be marching victoriously forward.

IN OUR survey so far of God's kingdom-building principles and procedures, we have seen how that, both in heaven and on earth, the Lord confined himself to the communication of present truth to His creatures through a single messenger, so long as that messenger lived or until his work was done. This procedure did not include the solutions to personal problems, nor added insights into messages already given. These were not channeled through the primary-messenger, but came directly from Heaven to the needy receiver.

In heaven, Immanuel was that single Messenger, who, because He lives forever, and because His work never ends, is the eternal Messenger.

On this earth, from the creation of man until the outpouring of the former rain, there was a long succession of one-man messengerships, examples of which are: certain of the patriarchs each in his turn, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, the prophets, John the Baptist, Christ himself, and others.

But, with the coming of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal power, there were suddenly multiple primary-messengers, in particular, the twelve apostles.

Then came the falling away, otherwise known as the great apostasy, in the recovery from which, there has been a return to one-man messengerships. God spoke through these messengers—Wycliffe, Luther, Wesley, Miller, Ellen White, the present messenger, and others.

Soon now will come the outpouring of the latter rain, when, according to the sure word of prophecy, we shall see the emergence once more of multiple primary-messengers as it is written:

Joel 2

²⁸ And it shall come to pass afterwards that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions;

²⁹ And also on my menservants and on my maidservants I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

As is usual in our study of great themes in the Scriptures, we are faced with a seeming contradiction. After having established the operating principle of one-man messengerships, it appears that, since sin entered both in heaven and on earth, the Almighty himself violates this principle by calling a number of messengers at the same time and in the same place, whereupon He then transmits His light through them collectively.

Seeming contradictions must be honestly and openly faced. This we can do in the confidence that there are no real contradictions with the Almighty, for in all that He does, He is perfectly

consistent with His laws, and is impeccably faithful to gospel order.

This will be better understood when we see that what took place at Pentecost and what will again take place when the latter rain falls, was not a change away from gospel order, but an expansion of it. We will learn that the establishment of one man messengerships was but the beginning of a greater communication service provided by God for His children. We will then realize that only those who can accept gospel order when it is structured around a one-man messengership of God's personal appointment, will be able to grow with the system and thus participate in the expanded structure when, in the eternity yet to come, there will eventually be millions of primary-messengers.

We will also see that while the one-man messengerships point back to what was originally in heaven, the multiple primary-messengerships founded during the former and latter rain periods are a revelation of the enlarged gospel order growing up in heaven.

The Original Arrangement

There is a very definite pattern to this development from a one-man messengership to multiplied messengers whether it be in heaven or on this earth. It is a pattern in which heaven leads the way, and the church on earth is expected by God to follow in harmony with the prayer that His kingdom shall develop on earth as it does in heaven.

The first stage in this development was the establishment of a kingdom in which all communication passed from the eternal Father to His children through a single messenger, in this case the Only Begotten Son of the Most High. It is no particular mystery why it was thus formed, for there was but one Person in the entire universe who possessed the qualifications necessary to fill the position of Primary-Messenger.

Those qualifications required that the Primary-Messenger had to be God in the truest sense of that word on the one hand, and,

at the same time, a subject of the Almighty on the other. In other words, He had to have both the life of the Creator and creature in the one person.²²

It was impossible for God to have direct communication with His creatures because the flow of power constantly emanating from Him at the level necessary to sustain the entire universe, is so great that any approach of Creator and creature to one another would result in the latter being utterly consumed. Therefore the problem of communication by which the vital life forces could be channeled to all His vast creations thus ensuring their continued existence, had to be solved in some other way.

There was only one way in which it could be solved and that was by the structuring of a kingdom in which a messenger was positioned between the almighty Creator and His creation—a messenger with the power to stand right in the presence of Jehovah safely receiving all the fullness of the infinite might of the Deity on the one side, and, on the other, to be one with His children.

That is precisely the way in which the Eternal One handled the problem. It was a perfect solution, simple enough in principle, yet unspeakably grand in its execution. Nevertheless, as some have proved to their personal damnation, it is entirely possible to misread the divine act of infinite love embodied in gospel order. What fallen angels could have seen as a loving provision for them to have access to God when no other way was possible, they viewed as a restriction of their liberties, and revolted against it. In their pride and corrupted understanding, they fancied they could have approached unto God without passing through Christ, not realizing that to reject God's Messenger is to reject God.

When the Almighty Ruler of the universe established gospel order as the only arrangement whereby the light and life needed to

²²For detailed studies on the dual natures of Christ, the Primary-Messenger, see other publications such as *The Destiny of a Movement*, *God's Sabbath Rest*, and *The Living and the Dead*.

maintain the existence of His creation, could be channeled to all His children, it should not be assumed that He was closed to the idea of multiple primary-messengers. However, initially Immanuel's messengership was quite adequate to serve the entire universe, and, if no challenge to it had ever been mounted or complaint against it ever registered, Jehovah would have been eternally content to manage the universe through the one-man messengership of Jehovah Immanuel.

Another aspect to the matter is that, in order for Christ's position to be shared, the sharers must have the life of God in them, but before sin entered, there was no way this could have been done, and thus, no possibility of multiple primary-messengers.

From the One to the Many

However, while God did not initiate sin into the universe, its abounding entrance did provide Him with the opportunity to give much more abounding grace in the form of Christ's life implanted in the repentant sinner which then opened the way for multiple primary-messengers.

As should be evident, the introduction of multiple primary-messengers is not a change in God's way, for He never changes. Multiple primary-messengers is something God was always willing to have, but could not accomplish without the entrance of sin. The sinless condition of the universe would only allow Him to have one Primary-Messenger in the form of Jehovah Immanuel, and it should be stressed that that situation, had it never changed, would have been sufficient for the eternal happiness of all created beings. But sin opened the way for the implantation of Christ's seed which qualifies the recipient to become a primary-messenger with Christ.

QUALIFICATIONS

Now, once a sinful being receives Christ's life, he is still on probation. He must measure up to God's standard and prove to the unfallen beings that he can be trusted to faithfully adhere to existing light even when he is put under great pressure, before he is quali-

fied to receive further light. Specifically that means that, before a person is able to accept the light on multiple primary-messengers, he must first show faithful adherence to the system of one primary-messengership. This must go far beyond a mere legal adherence, but rather be a heartfelt loyalty to and appreciation of that system.

REJECTION = DISQUALIFICATION

There is no doubt about the certainty of the application of this principle, ample proof for which is provided in sacred history. There, it is impossible to find any person who rejected the one-man messengership in force in his day, who did not thereby exclude himself from being a part of the kingdom when multiple primary-messengers were in service or yet will be.

Here are a few convincing examples:

Quite naturally, Satan was the first to reject the one-man messengership, and the first to thereby exclude himself from the kingdom—forever.

It is self-evident what Miriam's and Aaron's fate would have been had they not repented of their rejection of the one-man messenger, Moses. Even though they did not live until the time of multiple primary-messengers, the point is that their sin would have excluded them from becoming primary-messengers in heaven.

Those in the opening of New Testament times who rejected each of the two one-man messengers in their turn, namely John the Baptist and then Jesus, had no part in the reception of the early rain when multiple primary-messengers were appointed by the Almighty, nor will they be a part of the coming kingdom.

Be assured in the light of these histories that, no matter how religious they may be or seemingly sweet tempered or Christlike in their behavior or adamant that they are true followers of Jesus, the professed Christians of today who reject the one-man messengership in force now, will not receive the outpouring of the

latter rain, nor be a part of the church triumphant, nor be given a place in heaven, unless their repentance matches Miriam's and is not delayed.

This is a most serious matter, so much so that it is an issue of eternal life or everlasting oblivion. No one therefore will be able to advance to the multiple messenger stage unless, after test and trial, he has proved he can handle the one-man messengership.

SATAN'S REBELLION CAUSED THE TEST

This is not to be understood as saying that the Lord personally thrust a test upon the angels in order to force each one to make an irrevocable commitment one way or the other. He did not institute a proving of the angels to see who could be trusted to operate with a one-man messengership. This He would never do, for it is not in His character to arrange the tempting and testing of His subjects.

James 1

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He himself tempt anyone.

¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1094:

What is temptation?—It is the means by which those who claim to be the children of God are tested and tried. We read that God tempted Abraham, that He tempted the children of Israel. This means that He permitted circumstances to occur to test their faith, and lead them to look to Him for help. God permits temptation to come to His people today, that they may realize that He is their helper.

So, the testing of Lucifer came only and totally from within himself, and he then thrust that test upon everyone. The test originated with him; *not with God*.

Lucifer's mighty and subtle challenge of the divine order activated such an issue that every created being in the universe was

obliged to become thoroughly conversant with the subject of gospel order, and to come to a personal decision in regard to it. This was a significant development, for, up until the controversy began, no one even gave the matter a second thought. They all loved their Messenger, and were completely happy with the perfect harmony and complete efficiency of all of heaven's enterprises, objectives, and activities which God, through the system, so beautifully provided. The thought of anything better never occurred to them, so they all simply accepted the structure without question. Under those conditions no one could really say that he would remain loyal to the system regardless.

One would expect that there never could be an issue over anything in the presence of God, for, as some might suppose, such was His authority that one word from Him would instantly settle any matter. After all,

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 36:

God himself had established the order of heaven; and in departing from it, Lucifer would dishonor his Maker and bring ruin upon himself.

Since the infinitely loving heavenly Father had established heaven's order, then it was above and beyond question or criticism. Surely, it was unimpeachable and totally trustworthy. The angels would have been quite secure from failing if they had maintained flawless faith in their Maker. After all, who can argue with God! They did not need to understand every detail and principle of operation, but needed only to say,

“If the Almighty decreed the system, it must be right and good, and I fully accept it.”

But, when the spirit of disobedience takes possession of even the best informed and most intelligent of the angels, God's word ceases to be the infallible authority. This is proved by Lucifer's reaction:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 36:

But the warning, given in infinite love and mercy, only aroused a spirit of resistance. Lucifer allowed his jealousy of Christ to prevail, and became the more determined.

God is not a dictator. Therefore, every angel was left free to choose for himself where he would stand. Either their faith in God would be established by their becoming thoroughly conversant with the principles and procedures of the divine order, or they would develop a distorted view of the matter, and, in their deluded state, would reject heaven's governmental structure.

But, while each was given absolute freedom to make whichever choice he desired, the Almighty did not leave them uninformed as to the fearful consequences of choosing in Lucifer's favor on the one hand, or of the blessings to be reaped by the loyal to God on the other, as it is written:

But He who would have the will of all His creatures free, left none unguarded to the bewildering sophistry by which rebellion would seek to justify itself. Before the great contest should open, all were to have a clear presentation of His will, whose wisdom and goodness were the spring of all their joy.

To accomplish this, Jehovah convened that great meeting in which He...

...set forth the true position of His Son and [showed] the relation He sustained to all created beings.

Much more than enough information was imparted to that vast assembly to enable each member of it to make an intelligent decision as to where he would thereafter place his loyalties. Even Lucifer knew he was in the wrong and was convinced he should repent of his sedition, abandon his ambitions, and return to complete harmony with gospel order.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 39:

But such efforts as infinite love and wisdom only could devise, were made to convince him of his error. His disaffection was

proved to be without cause, and he was made to see what would be the result of persisting in revolt. Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong. He saw that “the Lord is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works” (*Psalms* 145:17); that the divine statutes are just, and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all heaven.

Thus by the persistent activities of the arch rebel, every angel was compelled to either fully accept or reject gospel order. Neutrality in this time of religious crisis was out of the question. Neutrality is an attempt to keep reasonably separated from both sides. To allow any separation from God means a loss of His protective power. Any angels trying to maintain that stance would be insufficiently empowered by God to withstand the pressures of Satan and his followers. That pressure would either drive them closer to God and His ways for complete power and protection, or break down their connection with God altogether and leave them completely unprotected and powerless to resist the enemy. The same is true today, for...

The Great Controversy, p. 343:

...the principles of God’s dealing with men are ever the same.

God’s abhorrence of neutrality in a crisis is expressed in the following statement:

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 281:

If God abhors one sin above another, of which His people are guilty, it is doing nothing in case of an emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God.

GOD’S FORBEARANCE

As we look back on the struggle and fall of Lucifer and his followers, we do not naturally tend to think of the possibility that they might have repented and been forgiven before it was too late. But let us consider what God tried to do for them after they became sinful but before they passed the point of no return.

Lucifer did not cut himself off the moment he began his campaign against Immanuel nor did God ever cut him off, but, before he finally closed the door of mercy against himself, he was given a long time of opportunity to repent.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 39:

In great mercy, according to His divine character, God bore long with Lucifer.

How long that was, we are not told, but it could have stretched into years. Later, Christ was to manifest the same patient forbearance in His dealing with the treacherous Judas. But, however long it was, it was probationary time, at any point during which Lucifer and his followers could have repented and been reinstated. This fact is plainly attested to by Inspiration:

He had not at that time [that is, when he “was convinced that he was in the wrong”] fully cast off his allegiance to God. Though he had left his position as covering cherub, yet if he had been willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator’s wisdom, and satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God’s great plan, he would have been reinstated in his office. The time had come for a final decision; he must fully yield to the divine sovereignty or place himself in open rebellion. He nearly reached the decision to return, but pride forbade him. It was too great a sacrifice for one who had been so highly honored to confess that he had been in error, that his imaginings were false, and to yield to the authority which he had been working to prove unjust.

So, if Lucifer and his confederate angels had made the decision to return, he would have been the one to have raised the issue by which all the angels would have been tested, and it is likely that all the others would have followed him back without the loss of even one soul. More than that, he and his supporters would have become qualified to occupy the positions of primary-messengers they had sought in the first case.

THE POSSIBILITY FOR REINSTATEMENT

Let us study the situation in order to understand how Lucifer would have received the qualifications of a primary-messenger so that he could have entered right into God's very presence on the divine side and then brought the light and life of God right to the angels and unfallen beings where they were. To engage in this work, this mighty angel would have had to possess both the life of the Creator and the creature in the one person. In other words, he would have to have had the same two natures which Immanuel had.

Lucifer came into existence as a created being, with only one life—that of a creature. His great mistake was that, with that one life, he aspired to occupy a position which required the possession of two lives—those of the Creator and creature. His terrible blunder caused him to become separated from God, turned his wisdom into corruption, and saturated him with sin.

Yet the Lord of the universe was perfectly willing for him to re-occupy the position he had vacated, and lovingly invited him to do so. But, and mark this point with care, he could not return to his appointed station as the covering cherub all stained with the sin which was now diffused throughout his entire being. Before such a reinstatement could take place, he would have had to have taken all the steps by which alone every sinner receives salvation from sin, and is reconciled to God. He needed much more than a judicial forgiveness; he needed a personal transformation by which he would have been no longer in a state of sinfulness, but that being eradicated, he would have been filled with righteousness. To achieve this he would have needed deep conviction of his sinfulness, thorough repentance, true confession both of what he was and what he had done, total eradication of the evil which filled him, complete infilling with the righteousness of God, and a full pardon.

But, this salvation from sinfulness and from sinning could only be available to Him if the Son of God whom he had despised were to die for him. Sin is sin whether it be found in an angel or in

man. It is the breaking of the divine law, the attempt to operate other than by the principles and procedures of gospel order. The natural outworking is the penalty of eternal death.

Let it never be forgotten that:

The Great Controversy, p. 418:

The broken law of God demanded the life of the transgressor.

Lucifer had broken the law, and his life was forfeited, which meant as it later did for us that his only salvation lay in Jehovah Immanuel's dying in his stead. To pay this price was an incredible act of self-sacrificing love on the part of the Eternal Father and His beloved Son, and totally undeserved by those to whom it was offered. A. T. Jones has described the situation in these words:

And yet at that very moment, and from the moment when Lucifer took his first false step, God was offering to give His Only Begotten Son and himself in Him; and the Son himself was freely offering himself to die a sacrifice; to save him who had sinned—to save this very one who was here making the charge and insisting upon it that God would deny himself nothing, and would make no sacrifices for anybody.

The sacrifice of Christ was in the invitation to Lucifer to return to God as certainly as it was in the invitation to man to return to God. For Lucifer had sinned, and from that moment he was sinner as certainly as ever man was sinner. And we have found before that God's eternal purpose in Christ is the same toward all: that purpose to "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth."²³ Lucifer had sinned and was a sinner when God invited him to return to God. But God did not invite him to return and take his place as of old as a sinner. Sin can not abide in the presence of God. Therefore the invitation of God to sinful Lucifer to return was in itself the offer to him of salvation from sin, that he might return and take his place in righteousness. But "the wages of sin is death."²⁴ Therefore to save Lucifer from sin was to save him from death, and to save

²³ *Ephesians* 1:10.

²⁴ *Romans* 6:23.

him from death was to die for him. Consequently, the sacrifice of the Son of God to save Lucifer from sin, was in the invitation of God to him to return, as certainly as the sacrifice of Christ to save man from sin, was in the invitation to man to return from sin to God. For whether sin be in man or in cherub, it is sin; and without the offering of life there is “no remission,”²⁵ and that the offering of the life of the Son of God. *John* 3:16; *John* 10:15-18.²⁶

Unfortunately, Lucifer was too proud to accept the incredible offer, choosing instead to remain unsaved, but this does not mean that we cannot understand what would have happened to him if he had accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ and been saved by it. The same things would have been realized in his life as are experienced in every one of those who accept salvation. Therefore, what we know of what God does for and in His human children, reveals to us what He would have done for and in Lucifer by giving His life a ransom for fallen angels.

In the plan of salvation, Christ not only gives His life for the perishing; He also gives His life to them. Unless we are the recipients of both of these ministries, we cannot be saved. The first of these two is the better understood, for humans have no problem knowing that a debt must be paid, but the truth that neither our fallen, mortal, sinful flesh and blood life, nor the evil nature dwelling in that flesh, can go to heaven, is not so readily grasped. It must be seen that what the broken law of God demands, namely, the forfeited life of the sinner, it will have. Therefore, unless Christ gives us a life to replace the one we have lost, we will have no life at all. This truth is beautifully expressed in these words from E. J. Waggoner:

The death sentence has been pronounced, and death works in

²⁵ *Hebrews* 9:22.

²⁶ *The Spirit of the Papacy*, by A. T. Jones, page 13. It is highly recommended that the entire booklet be restudied in the light we now have on gospel order. [PP Editor’s note: This booklet is available on our website under the title, *Self-Exaltation or Self-Renunciation*. It was taken from a larger book, *Ecclesiastical Empire*.]

men. Why does death work in men? What is the peculiar power of death? It is sin! "The sting of death is sin."²⁷ Therefore sin working in men is simply death working in them. Men who are sinners are stung by death. Death is in them already, and it is carrying on its work in them, and it is only a matter of time till it shall hold them in its grasp forever. But while probation is continued, there is a possibility that men may escape that sting, and the execution of that penalty. Nevertheless God must be just, even while He is the Justifier of them that believe on Him. Sentence of death has been pronounced upon every man, and that sentence will be executed. Every man must die, because that all men have sinned.

But there is given to every man a choice as to when he will die. Christ died for all men. We can acknowledge His death, and die in Him, and thus get His life; or on the other hand we may, if we wish, refuse to acknowledge Him, and die in ourselves. But die we must. Death has passed upon all men, and all men must die. The life of every man is forfeited, of ourselves we have no life at all. . . .

But pay the penalty, suffer the forfeit, we must; for the law will exact the forfeit. But as I said before, we have the choice as to whether we will wait, and let the law take the forfeit from us, at a time when we will have nothing left after it is gone, or whether we will give over the forfeited life when we can take the life of Christ, and have it left after we have paid the forfeit.²⁸

Lucifer and his followers were in the same situation facing the same options. They could have chosen Christ's offer to give His life to them. If they had, what would this have done to and for them?

They would then have been in possession of a life as superior to that which they had before, as the life of Christ is to an angel's life. It could be no other way, for the only life which Christ had to give was His own, and that was the life of the Creator. Once they had come into possession of the actual life of Jehovah Immanuel,

²⁷ 1 Corinthians 15:56.

²⁸ *Bible Studies on the Book of Romans*, by E. J. Waggoner, pages 37-39.

Lucifer and his followers would then have had the two lives—that of Creator and creature—which they had to have in order to be primary-messengers in heaven, the very position to which Lucifer had so fiercely aspired and so ardently accused God of denying him and which God was so willingly offering him.

Why then did they not elect to accept this marvelous offer? Are we to suppose that God kept them in ignorance of these wonderful prospects? No! We cannot draw such a conclusion because, for Him to have done so would have been out of harmony with His character of infinite love. When man fell, God offered him a position higher than the one he had before he fell. Since the principles of God's dealing with His created beings are ever the same and since He is impartial, then we can conclude that He told Lucifer and the other fallen angels that a higher position than they had known before, was awaiting them, even a position next to God, if they would repent and first accept the system of one-man messengership.

REJECTION OF THE OFFER

The question is whether Lucifer and his rebels had any desire to listen. Seeing all things as they now saw them through their corrupted understanding, they would have looked upon anything God offered them with the gravest suspicion and marked distaste. No longer did a life of loving, dedicated service have any appeal for them no matter what level of position went with it. So they scorned the gracious offer, while deluding themselves that they could make a better life for themselves than they could trust God to give them.

But if they had accepted the gift of Christ's own life, they would have become qualified to sit with Christ on His throne as kings and priests unto God. They would have occupied the places which the redeemed will now fill. This means that God would have had His enlarged messengership without the creation of mankind, for the creation of man would have become unnecessary.

CREATION AND FALL OF MAN

After Lucifer and his followers had left heaven, the vacancies needed to be filled. This was to be accomplished by the creation of man.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1082:

God created man for His own glory, that after test and trial the human family might become one with the heavenly family. It was God's purpose to repopulate heaven with the human family, if they would show themselves obedient to His every word.

So then, if Lucifer and his followers had never fallen, there would have been no vacancies to fill, and therefore the human family would never have been brought into existence. Likewise, if Lucifer and his followers had fallen and then repented, there still would have been no vacancies to fill, and no creation of the human family. But they did fall, and they refused to repent. Thus they lost not only the marvelous opportunity opened to them had they repented, but were also deprived of what they once had. They had no choice but to leave heaven forever. What might have been for them they could now never have.

After the expulsion of Lucifer, the direct purpose of God was to repopulate heaven with the members of the human family if they would be faithful. To realize that objective did not require humans to have God's life in them, that is, to be His begotten sons, in order to fill the vacancies left behind by the defectors. They needed only to be created beings just like those they were replacing. God never intended their descent into sin, and subsequent salvation therefrom, so that He could have an expanded messengership, for, as previously noted, the ministry of Jehovah Immanuel was more than adequate to service the needs of the entire universe, and with that the supreme Sovereign would have been content.

THE POSSIBILITY OF MANY PRIMARY MESSENGERS

But man did sin, and the new era in which multiple primary-messengers could and would be added into the system, was inaugu-

rated, but not without fearful cost. First, one third of the angels chose to defect, and then the rebellion spread to this earth. What a terrible waste of useful lives that was. The grief in heaven must have been indescribably heart rending over this appalling loss of friends and compatible fellow workers, not to mention the infinite suffering to the Father and Son. And do we need to rehearse the six thousand years of suffering that has befallen mankind. Our own lives testify to the price of sin. And it all happened because of rebellion against God's order, the order of one-man messenger-ship.

PP Editor's note

The next nine studies in the series, from January to September 1990, are contained in the book, Melchizedek. The original presentations on the Melchizedek priesthood had been given as early as 1970, and throughout the 1980's, although they were never written up in a book. Fred finally wrote them up as part of this series on Gospel Order, but I have put them in a separate book, so that the topic is more easily accessible. If the reader wishes to read the Gospel Order series in the strict order in which they were written, they should stop here and read the book Melchizedek, and then continue on.



18. Testing Times

Messenger and News Review, March 1990

IT IS one thing to sit through a camp meeting drinking in and accepting a beautiful new message such as gospel order, but for some at least it is something else to return home and successfully apply it. Yet, be assured that, on the active battleground of the home front, each will be tested to see if he or she can truly stand for the truth learned. It will be found that if the guidelines the Lord has laid down are strictly followed, perfect security will be experienced, but, if they are not, then disaster is sure to strike. The matter is so serious that it can cost eternal life.

In heaven, the first test for the angels came through the activities of one person—Lucifer, and every proving experienced by God's people since then, has come in the same way. It is for this reason that we are positively urged to become thoroughly conversant with the natures of the two great powers striving for the mastery, and to understand the form taken by the rebels in their demands that the divine order be changed. This point is decidedly emphasized in the following statement:

Education, p. 190:

The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found.

In every test over gospel order, two sides will be developed, in both of which there will be more than one role played out. What

each person needs is the capacity to recognize both the role being acted by him or her, and whether he or she is working with God or against Him. Be well advised that it is very necessary to make this evaluation quickly in order to avoid becoming the victim of the deluding power of deception when it will be impossible to see things as they really are—when you will be convinced that darkness is light, and truth is error.

Let us now discuss some of the roles in turn so as to make it easier to identify them.

The first to be briefly examined is the position which none of us can occupy, the office of God. The important point in regard to Him is that He and He alone is the Lawmaker. It was He who wrote the rule-book of gospel order, and not the messenger He sent to inform you of those principles and procedures.

Examine yourselves to see if you really believe this. Ask yourself most earnestly if you believe that the Almighty himself has so ordained things, that, except during the former and latter rain, He reveals His messages of present truth through one messenger. You may confidently declare that you do fully accept this, but the proof that you do will be confirmed in you or denied by you by the way you relate to a false messenger arising in the movement.

This brings us to the role of one whom God has not called to be a primary-messenger, but who, either consciously, or more likely, unconsciously, claims the place of a primary-messenger. In case you are not clear on this point, a primary-messenger is one to whom the Lord gives the messages directly without their coming to him through any living human channel. A secondary-messenger is one who receives those messages from God through the primary-messenger. God has decreed that there is but one of the former, while every believer is to be one of the latter.

This being indisputably so, it is incredibly easy to identify a false or self-sent messenger. Just look firstly at the timing of his or her appearance on the stage of action.

Here is what happens. In a time of deep apostasy, the Lord calls a messenger to whom He delivers the truths by which the movement is built. That messenger is the one and only primary-messenger called of God from then until his work is done.

But, long before his work is done, and well after the movement is founded, another person arises with a message for the members of the movement, despite the fact that members are not to teach members, but are to go to those who have never heard the truth.

His or her bringing another message to the movement at the time when he or she does, is all the evidence necessary to identify that person as a person not called of God, for the Almighty does not call a second primary-messenger at such a time and place. Without even hearing their teaching, you, if you understand the principles of gospel order, will know for certain it will be a deadly mixture of truth and error to which you dare not expose yourself.

Over the years there has been a string of such people who aimed to be primary-messengers when it was impossible to be such. They all taught error and none of them lasted very long among us. The sad thing is that they always found a few supporters, most of whom they took with them when they departed into outer darkness.

The messages brought by these aspirants have certainly not come through the existing primary-messenger, nor is there even the faintest chance that it came from God, for God does not call a second messenger to the movement. He just does not do that. Therefore neither the person being discussed here nor his or her message is from God. That person is self-sent and God describes such a one as being a curse to the cause.²⁹

If then, you are truly established on gospel order, you will not give these self-sent messengers a moment of time nor the smallest particle of your support. Always remember that they are following the same course as Satan in his rebellion against God. We

²⁹ See *Early Writings*, p. 99.

should realize how serious this is and relate ourselves to them accordingly.

For further confirmation that they are not sent of God look for the following symptoms of their spiritual sicknesses: They, while stoutly declaring that the movement is of God, will claim to have the power, not possessed by the believers in general, to see faults in the message sent through the primary-messenger. Doleful predictions will be made that, unless the primary-messenger accepts the "light God has given them," he will certainly lose his eternal life. Likewise, it will be claimed that unless the members of the movement shoulder their responsibility of straightening out the primary-messenger, the movement will fail as have all before it. They literally and earnestly believe that the Lord has commissioned them to save the cause, just as Satan in heaven believed that he, not Christ, was the Saviour of the kingdom.

The task of saving these deceived individuals does not rest with the believers, but with the messenger. Accordingly, when they bring their case to you, simply refer them to the messenger. Always remember that every time a true believer gives them a hearing, their reiteration of their ideas strengthens them in their position. To avoid this responsibility, true believers will kindly refuse to give them a hearing, and will return mailed studies unread.

For years, a steady stream of such people have arisen proclaiming the demise of the movement, but to them I have paid no heed. I note the impressive fact that while they never escape from the little circle of their imbalanced and limited message, the light continues to grow brighter and clearer in the movement. The message on gospel order has given us the means of making quick, reliable identifications of false messengers. Let us make the most of this facility for the advancement of the work, ever remembering that, if we are deceived and thus lose our place in the movement and in the kingdom, we will have none to blame but ourselves.

19. The War

Messenger and News Review, April 1990

THERE are some who are experiencing difficulty in identifying the real point in the gospel order message. There are those, for instance, who see in the message the determination to claim that the messenger is infallible. That is not the point. In any case, the messenger is not infallible and fortunately so, for if he were, there would be the alarming tendency to accept anything he says as indisputable truth, just because he says it. There would then be little if any incentive to engage in that deep study by which you will prove all things and make the message your very own. The result would be a movement of spiritual weaklings which would be among the last things we would want when faced with the final, climactic battle of the ages.

The whole point in the message is a revelation of the principles and procedures by which God builds and rebuilds His kingdom, and a call to join as coworkers with Him in that work. To the true believer in Jesus, what could be more welcome than the knowledge of how the Lord builds His kingdom, and the opportunity to intelligently share in the project. This is a truly wonderful message which all can understand.

As no other message has done, the study of gospel order has revealed the issues in the war, otherwise known as *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan*, which must be clearly understood by those who will be conquerors in the final battle. In brief, concise terms, the issues are as follows:

1. God in heaven built a kingdom of love, justice, and righteousness. It had a certain structure. There was one God, the Infinite Source, who did absolutely nothing except through a messenger or connector.
2. There was only one Primary-Messenger—Jehovah Immanuel. No provision was made by the Almighty for a second primary-messenger, so no vacancy for one existed.

3. And there were the myriads of created beings, each of whom received everything from God through His personally appointed Messenger.

It is most important that we see and believe that it was God himself who designed the structure, and established the order of heaven. Therefore no created being has the slightest right to even consider making the least change in the structure or order established by God. Every true believer's faith will be founded on this truth.

The time came when Lucifer became discontented with the one-person messengership structure, and set to work to establish a two-person messengership in which he would be the other messenger. Let it be understood that the brightest of all angels never planned to set up a rival kingdom. His intention was to restructure the existing one by adding a second messenger. In appearance, the scheme had much to commend it, for which reason, one third of the angels fell for it.

But, what did God call this proposition and the attempt to establish it? The Almighty called it by that terrible name—REBELLION!! Thus we are given some indication of how terrible a view God took of Satan's loss of confidence in the divine order, and his attempt to restructure it. Let none miss the awful realization that the Almighty places the same terrible condemnation on anyone, who, unsatisfied with the divine order, attempts any restructuring of it today. God's attitude toward Miriam and Aaron, and Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, is conclusive evidence of this.

So, when Satan set to work to add another primary-messenger where no vacancy for one existed, war broke out in heaven. It was a fearful confrontation, strife, struggle, and contest in which there was no place for neutrality or compromise. The devil and his followers fought for the right to add a second messenger, but the Almighty would not make the slightest concession whatsoever.

Satan and his angels wanted desperately to remain in heaven so they could work at restructuring the kingdom at its heart, but, after a bitter battle, they left their lovely home forever.

A brief picture of this warlike struggle is found in:

Revelation 12

⁷ And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,

⁸ But they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.

Immediately after this, God created this earth, and on it structured His kingdom exactly as it was structured in heaven. While direct communication remained between man and heaven during the sinless state of Adam and Eve, Christ was the one-person messenger to them. But Satan succeeded in persuading Eve and then Adam to accept him as another messenger. Thus they were led to reject the divine order, and to replace it with the multiple primary-messenger system.

When in heaven, Satan tried to achieve this restructuring of the divine order, it was called REBELLION by God, because that is what it was—REBELLION!!

So, if in heaven it was called REBELLION, what must it as certainly be called in the Garden of Eden? The answer can only be—REBELLION!!

So then, if the development of this situation in heaven resulted in war up there, what must be the result of the establishing of the same conditions upon this earth? The answer is war, a bitter conflict between the forces of those who are loyal to the divine order on the one hand, and those who seek to restructure it on the other.

The continuance on earth of the war which started in heaven is briefly described in:

Revelation 12

⁹ So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

¹² ...Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.

Since all this began in heaven and was continued in Eden, nothing has changed except the persons who rise and fall with each generation. Let us examine the presence of this war in the present movement itself.

The time came when God would again build His kingdom as it is built in heaven. So, as always, He who does absolutely nothing except through a messenger, called one without reference to the approval or disapproval of anyone. Mark it well that He did not call two or more, or even a messenger and His wife. He called one man only.

From time to time, different ones arose who were not satisfied with the structure of the movement, and set about an attempted restructuring of it. At least until their claims were rejected, many of them acknowledged the messenger of God's appointment through whom the movement had been built, but echoed the words of Miriam and Aaron:

Numbers 12

² Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?

—and then set out to restructure the kingdom by trying to add another primary-messenger where God had appointed but one.

Those rebels who attempt this evil work do not realize that there is no provision made for the installation of another messenger. They could have known this, and, if they had, they would have understood that God was transmitting nothing through the additional messenger, for the Almighty sends present truth only through the one messenger. Therefore, what they brought to the

movement was darkness, not light; error, not truth. It is no wonder then that the believers within the movement have rejected all the messages coming from these sources, and it is no surprise that each of these false messengers has survived for only a short while before disappearing into oblivion. Despite this, a succession of people have arisen claiming either by their words or by their actions to be companion primary-messengers, a position which does not exist at the present time.

Some were very ambitious for position, while others were deeply concerned over the state of the movement, while still others permitted the people to urge them into the position of messengers. None understood the real nature of their transgression, but this does not change the name by which this thing is described, especially now that it is so clearly exposed. Today, after so long a time, it is still what it was in heaven—REBELLION, and it still breaks out into open war.

This spiritual but nonetheless deadly war does not break out because two or more of the people involved decide that it is the means to which they will resort in order to terminate the problem. Instead, whether we like it or not, it erupts into open conflict the moment in which certain conditions are established. Earthly potentates sometimes avoid war through negotiations, but this is not an option in the Christian warfare. To avoid war by compromising truth is sin.

What were those conditions which caused the first outbreak of war? It was when Lucifer set out to restructure the kingdom by trying to install himself as a second primary-messenger. Once that was done, nothing could prevent the war from breaking out. This means that now that the Lord's people have determined to build God's kingdom on earth as it is built in heaven, we are in a state of war, and we need to know that. The very act of declaring your decision to structure God's kingdom on earth as it is structured in heaven, is to guarantee the onslaught of the forces of the enemy in an all-out war.

When earthly powers go to war against each other, they exhibit their worst characters and dispositions. They murder, lie, torture, mutilate, destroy, and so forth. Satan, in his unscrupulous rage, is not limited by any honorable principle whatsoever and neither are his followers.

But it is not so with God, for...

Revelation 19

¹¹ ...in righteousness He judges and makes war.

In His deadly warfare against the forces of darkness, the Lord's...

The Desire of Ages, p. 759:

...authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.

Prevailing power is overcoming power. It is the means to be used to gain the victory over Satan's determination to restructure the kingdom.

...truth and love are to be the prevailing power.

Consequently, in our warfare against our enemies, there should be no trace of anger, hatred, harshness, lies, attacks on the characters of those who oppose us, discourtesy, physical violence, or such like. To the world, this is a pointless, losing way to win a war, but to God and His children, it is the only way to victory.

The battle lines are drawn, the war is on, the protagonists face each other, and nothing will stay the fight until the issues are settled. Let us praise the Lord that His kingdom will be structured during this final battle, and on the earth made new, as it is in heaven.

20. From Moses to Joshua

Messenger and News Review, October 1990

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 59

Gospel Order, Part 27

A Word from the Editor

There are those who do not understand our earnest desire to be separated from the ones who are entangled with teachings which have no place in the message for this time. The most dangerous in this category are those who declare that this movement is in fact the only one called of God at present.

Therefore, they insist on remaining in the movement where, with dedicated determination, they set about attempting the infiltration of their ideas into the message.

To the true believer, this mingling of the false and the true is most distressing, for it establishes rebellion among God's people, and thus confuses and weakens the movement.

But, let those who are keeping pace with the advancing light, be comforted with the knowledge that God cannot tolerate the presence of these false teachers in His church, and is working to keep the movement free from them. This is why false teachers do not usually remain long among us, but have departed, never to return.

"We all have reason to thank God that a way has been opened to save the church, for the wrath of God must have fallen upon us, if these corrupt individuals had remained with us." *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, p. 201.

Please bear in mind that we are here speaking of false teachers, not foolish virgins. The latter love the message.

THUS far in our studies into the way in which the Lord has His kingdom structured in heaven, and is determined that it shall be structured on earth, we have depended heavily on how God related to Israel through the one primary-messenger, Moses, to reveal the unique but perfect structure of the divine kingdom, both in heaven and on earth. The point has been stressed that, just as God communicated to all the sinless beings throughout the entire universe through only one messenger, namely Jehovah Immanuel, so God communicated His truth and His will to Israel through only one primary-messenger, Moses.

Despite the fact that it was God himself who had established this system of government in heaven and on earth, there were those who found it to be a severe test, to the point where they

rose in rebellion against the divinely appointed constitution. God demonstrated His utter inflexibility in His refusal to concede to their demands. No space was allowed by Him for negotiations, and those who would not submit their wills and ways into harmony with God, cut themselves off from the body of Christ, and thus destroyed themselves. Such was the experience and fate of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

It could be that some may feel that too much authority has been given to what God did and said back there; that those were special circumstances which have but limited bearing on our present day requirements. But, if this were so, it would mean that God would call for a progressive change in His way of governing His people. On the other hand, if the structure of God's kingdom on earth in Moses' day was in truth God's perfect way of doing things, then we must expect to see God appointing and working through Moses' successors exactly as He worked through Moses and the primary-messengers who preceded him.

Therefore, the time has come for us to investigate how God related himself to Moses' successors, the first of whom was Joshua.

In doing so, let it not be overlooked that there is a vital difference between Moses' time and ours, which is that, whereas in those days Israel was a civil and a religious organization, today the church of God is religious only. The members are not assembled within a sovereign state; they have no country they can call their own. Therefore, whereas Moses, Joshua, and Samuel were both messengers and administrators, today the messenger of God's appointment is the messenger only. He has no commission, appointment, or calling to governorship whatsoever, and therefore to him is given no authority over any member of the body of Christ.

This is the whole point of the Sabbath Rest message. It teaches the believers that, in matters concerning where and at what each one shall work, in the quest for solutions to personal problems, in the bearing of individual burdens, and the making of plans, each

person is to go directly to God through Christ for himself. When the principles of Sabbath Rest were revealed to us, they were the truth, and what was truth then is truth still, for truth is eternal. There is nothing in the gospel order message which contradicts the message on entering into God's Sabbath Rest.

It is important to notice that in the days of Moses, the positions of messenger and administrator of the nation were both held by the one person, who was divinely appointed by God to these responsibilities.

Joshua Appointed by God

Upon the death of Moses, Israel remained a religious and a civil power. The positions of messenger and administrator remained in the hands of various single individuals until the closing days of Samuel's life when the people demanded and got a king. But that call did not come from the people at Moses' death, for instead, at that time, the people demonstrated a submissive faith in the divine order. As should be expected then, the Almighty called for no changes in the structure of His kingdom on earth once Moses was gone and Joshua occupied his place. As He had communicated His messages through Moses alone, so He now channeled His light through Joshua. There was a change in the man who filled the position of primary-messenger, but no change in the structure even though the needs of the hour had changed. Whereas Moses had been the leader through the wastelands where the daily objective was to make plodding progress toward the Promised Land, what was now needed was a military leader who would be God's instrument in dispossessing the Canaanites of their land.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 481-482:

Joshua was now the acknowledged leader of Israel. He had been known chiefly as a warrior, and his gifts and virtues were especially valuable at this stage in the history of his people. Courageous, resolute, and persevering, prompt, incorruptible, unmindful of selfish interests in his care for those committed to his charge, and, above all, inspired by a living faith in God—such

was the character of the man divinely chosen to conduct the armies of Israel in their entrance upon the Promised Land. During the sojourn in the wilderness he had acted as prime minister to Moses, and by his quiet, unpretending fidelity, his steadfastness when others wavered, his firmness to maintain the truth in the midst of danger, he had given evidence of his fitness to succeed Moses, even before he was called to the position by the voice of God.

This is not to suggest that Moses had deficiencies as a leader in wartime which would have disqualified him from crossing the Jordan, and leading the armies of Israel to victory. That he was well able to perform this work is shown by his highly successful leadership of Israel in the battles against the Amorites, and Og, King of Bashan. But the general character of the work after they had crossed the Jordan called for a primary-messenger with a set of qualifications just such as were possessed by Joshua.

Nevertheless, he accepted his heavy responsibilities with serious misgivings, fearful lest he should fail the Lord. But he was reassured when his divine leader advised him that there would be no change in the structure of the kingdom, but that, in exactly the same way in which He had worked through Moses, so He would work through Joshua.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 482:

It was with great anxiety and self-distrust that Joshua had looked forward to the work before him; but his fears were removed by the assurance of God,

Joshua 1

⁵ As I was with Moses, so I will be with you: I will not fail you, nor forsake you.

The Plan to Take Jericho

So it was that with God directing the Israelites through a new primary-messenger, they safely crossed the boundary of Canaan and prepared for the attack on Jericho. In what now took place, we have a striking illustration of the operation of the divine order. The strategy by which the overthrow of the fortress was to be

successfully accomplished could only be devised in the mind of God. There was no Israelite from Joshua with all his genius for military planning, down to the least in the encampment, who had the capacity to make such plans.

In the mind of God, the need of that moment had been foreseen from eternity, and the solution fully worked out from everlasting in the past. But, for that solution to be successfully applied, it had to be communicated to the Israelites so they would clearly understand just what they had to do to play their part. How was this to be accomplished? God could have called an assembly of the people, and personally informed them collectively of the procedure by which the mission would be carried out.

But that would not have been according to the principles of gospel order and is not the way in which the Lord operates. Had the Lord adopted this approach, He would not have been true to His promise to be with Joshua, as He had been with Moses.

So, God did not call the people together in order to advise them of the plan, nor did He reveal to Joshua *and* the elders what was to be done. It was to Joshua alone that the message was given. Furthermore, it was communicated to Joshua, the primary-messenger, in a secluded place with none of the people either being present or aware that anything was happening.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 487:

To reduce Jericho was seen by Joshua to be the first step in the conquest of Canaan. But first of all he sought an assurance of divine guidance, and it was granted him. Withdrawing from the encampment to meditate and to pray that the God of Israel would go before His people, he beheld an armed warrior, of lofty stature and commanding presence, “with his sword drawn in his hand.”

Then followed a conversation in which this impressive Personage identified himself as being no less a messenger of God than Christ himself.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 488:

It was Christ, the Exalted One, who stood before the leader of Israel. Awe-stricken, Joshua fell upon his face and worshiped, and heard the assurance,

Joshua 6

² I have given into your hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor,

—and he received instruction for the capture of the city.

To the mind of the average military general, what a strange set of instructions they were. In utter silence they were to march around the city once a day for six days. We are not informed whether they were six consecutive days, or six consecutive *working* days. If six *consecutive* days, one of them, or the seventh day of marching which, followed the six, would have been a Sabbath day. Whichever they were, there would have been no command to transgress God's sacred and holy law. So then, if one of the days on which they marched was a Sabbath day, it would have been on the basis of the principle given in the following statement:

The Signs of the Times, November 30, 1876:

The work done in the temple upon the Sabbath was in harmony with the law; yet the same labor, if employed in ordinary business, would be a violation of it. The act of plucking and eating the grain [on the part of Christ's disciples] to sustain the bodily strength, to be used in the service of God, was right and lawful. Jesus then crowned His argument by declaring himself the "Lord of the Sabbath,"—One above all question and above all law. This Infinite Judge acquits the disciples from blame, appealing to the very statutes they are accused of violating.

Then, on the seventh day, they were to march around the city seven times in the same utter silence as had marked their previous circuits, until the seventh circuit was complete. That accomplished, they were to give a mighty shout while, at the same time, the trumpeters were to sound a blast on their horns.

What a test this was in the principles of gospel order! Against the witness of sight and circumstances—for the plan which Joshua communicated to them seemed ridiculous in the extreme—they had to believe that the Lord, through His personally chosen messenger, had in fact commanded these procedures to be followed without murmuring or complaint. This required them to believe in the system of gospel order. They were to know that so long as the light came through the messenger of God’s appointment, they were to believe and act upon it regardless of how reasonable or otherwise it might appear to be.

Faith in Gospel Order

It was...

Hebrews 11

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.

When we read those words, we tend to interpret them as follows: It was by faith *in God’s power* and *in His promises*, that the walls of Jericho came tumbling down. That is the way in which those words are generally understood, and it is not an incorrect interpretation to view them in that light. But it is an incomplete, inadequate understanding of what those words mean. It was not only by faith in God’s power, but also by faith in the system of gospel order that the walls were brought down. A careful reading of the following paragraph makes this point very clear.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 493:

Hebrews 11

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down.

The Captain of the Lord’s host communicated only with Joshua; He did not reveal himself to all the congregation, and it rested with them to believe or doubt the words of Joshua, to obey the commands given by him in the name of the Lord, or to deny his authority. *They* could not see the host of angels who attended them under the leadership of the Son of God. They might have reasoned: “What unmeaning movements are these, and how ridiculous the performance of marching daily around

the walls of the city, blowing trumpets of rams' horns. This can have no effect upon those towering fortifications." But the very plan of continuing this ceremony through so long a time prior to the final overthrow of the walls afforded opportunity for the development of faith among the Israelites. It was to be impressed upon their minds that their strength was not in the wisdom of man, nor in his might, but only in the God of their salvation. They were thus to become accustomed to relying wholly upon their divine Leader.

This story confirms the beautiful and powerful truth that when God's people have faith both in the awesome power of God, *and* in gospel order which is His way of building His kingdom, they will see the Lord accomplishing marvelous things for them. We can be justifiably impressed with the incredible victory gained back there where any kind of success seemed to be an impossibility.

Faith and Obedience

But, let it never be forgotten that it was possible only when faith in God's power was combined with faith in gospel order and implicit obedience thereto.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 493:

God will do great things for those who trust in Him. The reason why His professed people have no greater strength is that they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf. He will help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and faithfully obey Him.

It is not enough to bring to God the prayer of faith. That is only part of the formula for success. We must come to Him with the prayer of faith *and* obedience. Then we shall know the awesome power of God working in our behalf.

The Review and Herald, July 12, 1887:

God will help us. The strong barriers of prejudice that have been built up will just as surely come down as did the walls of Jericho before the armies of Israel. There must be continual faith

and trust in the Captain of our salvation. We must obey His orders. *The walls of Jericho came down as the result of obeying orders.*

The fact that in one place it speaks of the victory being gained by faith, and in another by strict obedience, will be seen by some as a contradiction until the relationship between faith and obedience is clearly understood. It is for this reason that the message is called:

“Righteousness—that is, right doing—by faith,”³⁰

—for the only way in which we can achieve the obedience which the Lord can accept is by faith.

A State of Righteousness

It must be stressed that righteousness is firstly and very importantly a righteous *state of being* which can only be obtained from Christ, the infinite, impeccable Source of all righteousness. It is given to us as a gift of inestimable value in exchange for the unrighteous state of being which everyone of us has received as a terrible inheritance.

Everyone who has in him the righteousness of Christ, will literally and actually have within himself the beautiful attributes of the character of the Lord our Righteousness.

Galatians 5

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

²³ Gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

It is when these attributes have been implanted within the believer so that they have literally become a living part of him, that the believer has the capacity to obey the commands of the Everlasting Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, obedience is the fruit of faith.

³⁰ PP Editor's note: A very similar phrase is used by E. J. Waggoner in 1897 *GC Bulletin*, “Studies in the Book of Hebrews,” Study 13, and *Present Truth*, June 1, 1898 “Jesus Crucified.”

In the conquest of Jericho, before the Israelites could obey the detailed and mystifying commands, they had to really believe that God had the power to bring down those seemingly impregnable walls by any means whatsoever that He might elect to use. It was not for them to question the procedures chosen by the Almighty God, no matter how foolish or impractical they might seem to be. All they had to do was to believe and then, in the power of the Lord, step forward as He directed, with neither doubt nor complaint.

In addition, it was essential that each and every one of them had implicit faith in gospel order. Each of them had to understand God's way of communicating His light to His people, and to put their entire trust in that system. Then, when firm faith is established in God's omnipotent power and combined with an intelligent belief in gospel order, the church of God becomes invincible, as was demonstrated at Jericho.

The Failure at Ai

So definite and clear is the divine origin of this system, and so comprehensive and certain the success when gospel order is combined with the presence of living faith, that one would expect that the church would never consider any other option, but would ever be most careful to guard against any betrayal of these sacred principles. In particular, we would expect that the messenger himself, who must be very much aware of the critical necessity never to deviate from the pathway of strictest rectitude, to be faithful to his calling.

Yet, strangely and sadly, we find that the greatest among those called to be primary-messengers, have stumbled quite badly at times. Earlier in this series of studies, we observed that, when the people came to Moses with their proposition to send twelve spies into Canaan to survey the land, he endorsed the idea, and expressed an approval of the scheme which came not from God through him, but only from him.

Therefore the sending in of the survey party under those circumstances eliminated gospel order from the operation. Faith in God was divorced from the divine order thus effectively and certainly assuring the failure of the undertaking. So complete was the disaster, that not a single member among those twenty years or over ever entered Canaan, except for Caleb and Joshua, and those members of the unnumbered tribe of Levi who lived till they reached Canaan.

Now, after the fall of Jericho, Joshua committed the same mistake, namely of presenting a message which came not from God through him, but only from him. Before the investment of Jericho, Joshua as the primary-messenger sought the word of God that was to come from the Lord through him, and it was given to him. Thus living faith in God's power was combined with gospel order and wonderful were the results.

But in the attack upon Ai, Joshua did not follow the same procedures of seeking the word that was to come from the Lord through him to the people. Instead, he was quite content to announce to them that which came from him.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 493:

Soon after the fall of Jericho, Joshua determined to attack Ai, a small town among the ravines a few miles to the west of the Jordan Valley. Spies sent to this place brought back the report that the inhabitants were but few, and that only a small force would be needed to overthrow it.

The great victory that God had gained for them had made the Israelites self-confident. Because He had promised them the land of Canaan they felt secure, and failed to realize that divine help alone could give them success. *Even Joshua laid his plans for the conquest of Ai without seeking counsel from God.*

Thus the plans for the elimination of Ai did not come from God through His messenger, but from the messenger alone. This was the laying aside of gospel order, which meant that they set off to the battle with faith in God's power to give them the victory, and in full confidence in the divine promises to give them the land,

but without walking in the ways and procedures of gospel order. This was the guarantee of absolute failure, just as it proved to be. In addition, thirty-six fine warriors lost their lives. They had gone out to build God's glorious kingdom their own way because they had never become immovably established in the living, powerful truth that God's kingdom can only be built God's way. No matter how sincere and earnest the builders may be, if they do not build according to the divine pattern, they do not build at all.

That they advanced to the battle charged with faith in both the promises and in the power of God is verified by this statement:

The Review and Herald, March 20, 1888:

Three thousand of the warriors of Israel had gone up to besiege the little city of Ai. Joshua, their leader, had not expected defeat or disaster. He had seen the waters of the Jordan roll back to make a path for the advancing tribes of Israel. He had seen the invisible Commander of this great people, the mighty Angel, "the Captain of the Lord's host," stand with drawn sword ready to give victory to their hands. He had beheld how the walls of Jericho trembled and fell to the ground, as they compassed the city the seventh time, and sounded the trumpets, and gave a mighty shout. He had witnessed the triumph of his people as they marched into the stronghold of the enemy, and laid the city in ruins; and he had no other thought than that victory would crown their efforts to subdue the city of Ai. But to his great dismay, the once conquering corps break rank in precipitous flight. He sees Israel discomfited, retreating before the men of Ai. The battle is abandoned, and thirty-six of his bravest warriors lie dead on the deserted field of conflict.

The great triumphs which had so recently come to them from the Lord were very fresh and faith-strengthening for Joshua and the people, and it was in the power of that faith, that they advanced against the enemy. But, in this powerful surge of faith, there lurked an element of deadly peril, of which they should have been aware, and against which they should have been on guard. It was the danger of becoming confident in themselves of

assured victory, with a consequent diminished sense of their need to depend wholly on God.

Each believer needs to understand that every power given us of God requires skillful handling if we are to avoid the shameful defeat as at Ai, following a glorious victory as at Jericho. God made us to be intelligent and responsible and to exercise those powers. He will not do for us what He has given us power to do for ourselves, so that, if we fail to do our God-given part, we are certain to suffer miserable defeat as did Joshua and his army at Ai. Though it was the last thing they expected, because of the course they were following, it was exactly what they should have known would overtake them. Under the circumstance, none of them should have been the least bit surprised at their being driven back by an enemy much weaker than themselves.

Being put to rout by an enemy much weaker than ourselves, is a very humiliating experience but, without discrimination, it awaits every believer who does not combine living faith in God with the operational principles of gospel order. Not only must each person advance to the battle with a living faith in the invincible power of God, but each one must in that onslaught, walk intelligently like a well-trained soldier, in God's way of kingdom-building. Otherwise, failure is certain to be the outcome.

Defeat Turned to Victory

The inescapable truth of this is confirmed in the following statement describing the way in which the victory was gained over the Amalekites shortly before the weary travelers came to Sinai:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 299:

As Aaron and Hur supported the hands of Moses, they showed the people their duty to sustain him in his arduous work while he should receive the word from God to speak to them. And the act of Moses also was significant, showing that God held their destiny in His hands; while they made Him their trust, He would fight for them and subdue their enemies; but when they should let go their hold upon Him, and trust in their own power, they

would be even weaker than those who had not the knowledge of God, and their foes would prevail against them.

Thus a very solemn responsibility rests upon the Lord's people to always so put their trust in both the power and the way of God that they will never be weaker than their enemies. It was a lesson learned by Joshua and his soldiers at least for a short time, for, when they made their second attack on the little town, they were not weaker than their foes. This time the battle was fierce, short, and totally decisive in favor of the Israelites who discomfited and destroyed the Canaanites in that city.

Specifically, what made the difference between their defeat and their victory? Some may argue that the cleansing of the camp by the detection and execution of Achan is what cleared the way to victory, and without question, under the circumstances, this was a vital factor in their eventual success. But it was not the secret presence of Achan's sin which led Joshua and the people to be so self-confident that they ignored the principles of gospel order and went out to build God's kingdom their own way.

The trust in themselves which led to their awful defeat prevented them from being shown the cleansing which was needed in the camp before they went to war. They could not hope to cleanse the land of the heathen until they had cleansed their own house first. This is an eternal principle that, before we can be saved from Satan's power without, we must be emancipated from his presence within us, as it is written:

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 174-175:

Christ desires nothing so much as to redeem His heritage from the dominion of Satan. But before we are delivered from Satan's power without, we must be delivered from his power within.

If Joshua, the primary-messenger, through whom the Lord, at that time, would communicate His messages to His people, had sought the Lord in true, continued humility according to the principles of gospel order, as he had done before the fall of Jericho, the messages coming through would certainly have included the

exposure of Achan's sin and the necessity of dealing with it before attacking Ai. So, it was not the sin involving the theft by Achan which was the basic cause of their defeat at Ai, but the failure to guard against self-confidence to the point that they turned their backs on gospel order, thereby replacing God's kingdom building procedures with their own.

The League with the Gibeonites

With the lessons so pointedly taught both at Jericho and Ai, one would think that Joshua and Israel would never have made the same mistake again, but very shortly after the fall of Ai, when the Gibeonites came with their false claims, they did. Instead of seeking a message from the Lord through the primary-messenger, they accepted the claims of their deceivers.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 505:

These representations prevailed. The Hebrews...

Joshua 9

¹⁴ ...asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.

¹⁵ And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation swore unto them.

Thus the treaty was entered into.

For centuries thereafter, the Gibeonites were virtually slaves to the Israelites, doing the heavy, menial tasks of hewing wood and carrying water. From this it could be concluded that Israel gained something by not seeking counsel of the Lord—by disregarding gospel order,—but no one who understands heaven's way of building the kingdom would think that for a moment. Such know that every violation of gospel order is loss to the violator. So it is that we are informed that the league with the Gibeonites inflicted punishment on the Israelites.

The Signs of the Times, July 27, 1882:

Here [at Gilgal], Achan met the direful penalty of his sin, and here was made that unwise treaty with the Gibeonites which punished Israel's neglect to ask counsel of God.



The Gibeonites fool Israel into a Treaty because the Lord was not consulted.

In just what way Israel was punished, we are not told, but we can be quite certain that the Gibeonites' presence among the Israelites was a frequent cause of distress and anguish giving them real cause for repentance over the failure to ask counsel of the Lord through His messenger.

Let us never forget that only when living faith in God's invincible power is accompanied by the faithful performance of the principles and procedures of gospel order, that success is assured. That illustrious company, the one hundred and forty-four thousand, will be the members through whom the Lord will at last finish the work, because they will never fall away from these principles. They will build God's kingdom on earth as it is built in heaven.



21. The Human Vessel

Messenger and News Review, November 1990

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 60

Gospel Order, Part 28

A Word from the Editor

It has been stated that hope deferred makes the heart sick. We humans naturally look for a speedy resolution of our problems. When we pray for healing from sickness, we are disappointed if there is no dramatic deliverance such as marked the healing ministry of Christ. Likewise, we expect prophesied events to happen in quick succession.

But the reality is that events can require much more time to happen than we think is indicated. For instance, angels taught the elders of Israel “that the time for their deliverance was near” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 245. No doubt this led them to expect to leave Egypt within a few months at best, or a year or two at the worst, but that “near” event was over forty years away.

Likewise the time span between the first and second parts of *Revelation* 13:3 is over two hundred years.

In the light of this, the evil servant defers his diligent, earnest work of preparation until it is too late. Too many turn aside from making sure of their place in the kingdom, to build up their earthly possessions. There is the tendency to add house to house, and land to land, whereas the true believer in Jesus will be content with a plain, simple home which then leaves him free to concentrate on building God’s kingdom according to the divine principles and procedures.

THE lives of both Moses and Joshua who were two of the greatest primary-messengers whom God ever called, demonstrate that men occupying the position of primary-messenger, do not always speak only the words they have received from the Lord, but substitute their own messages instead. This has not been done with deliberate intent, but because they have not been careful to faithfully maintain a watch on themselves. Thus it was that Moses killed the Egyptian, and later approved of the plan to send twelve spies into Canaan. And from Joshua, not from God, proceeded the strategy for the overthrow of Ai, and from him again came the unfortunate acceptance of the Gibeonites’ fabric of deception. These four instances are prime examples of high-level messengers speaking from themselves rather than from God.

It is significant that the Lord worked no miracle to neutralize the evil effects of these violations of gospel order, for the very good reason that, if the Israelites could not become sealed in obedience to gospel order by the positive experiences resulting from its being faithfully practiced, they hopefully would learn the hard way. By one means or another, the lesson had to be learned by them, and it must be learned by us as well. Were God to turn aside the natural outworking from cause to effect, it would betray and weaken His holy law, in which case men would naturally conclude they could break the commandments with impunity.

Such would be the very worst possible outcome. Were God to follow a line of behavior which would develop this attitude in man, He would betray the very foundations of His kingdom, and render the sacrifice of His Son of none effect. The principle is solidly and soundly established that there must be living faith that God has the awesome power to do all that He says He will do, *and* strict obedience to the principles and procedures of gospel order, which includes obeying the Word of the Lord as spoken by His messenger, just as Israel,

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 290:

In marching down to the very water,...showed that they believed the word of God *as spoken by Moses*.

Obviously then, for the system to work, the primary-messenger must speak, not his own words, but only the messages given him by the Lord. Otherwise, the believers will not know what the word of God is that they are called upon to obey.

Here is where those who reject gospel order are quick to point to these occasional betrayals, as being positive evidence that the system cannot work because of human fallibility and perversity. They argue that, instead of receiving the messages of present truth through one fallible primary-messenger, who, they claim could not be trusted to present to them only that which God had given him for the people, but would be likely at certain times to

substitute his or her own ideas, it would be a much safer and better plan for each person to go directly to God for himself.

This argument certainly sounds very logical and as such is very appealing to many minds, so much so that it is enough to satisfy them that gospel order has no application for the church today. A careful study of human behavior down through history reveals that sooner or later when the primary-messenger reveals his fallibility, the people in God's movement start calling for the abolition of the system, while God exhibits no disposition to do so whatsoever. Instead, He stands by His messenger, and continues to communicate through him just as He did before the messenger had blundered.

Thus it is a simple matter to identify what, on the one hand, is consistent, righteous, divine behavior in the event of the primary-messenger's stumbling, while, on the other, what is the typical human response in the same crisis situation. Once the believer in Jesus has seen the difference between the two, he is without excuse if he does not behave under this kind of test as God himself does.

This means that, if the human line of reasoning is valid, God must lead the way in its implementation, and command the adoption of these altered procedures. In other words, after "discovering" that His "idealistic plan to speak through one primary-messenger was not dependable," God would have had to admit that the "inadequacies of the scheme" rendered it "untrustworthy," "unreliable," "faulty," and "dangerous." He would have to concede that communication of present truth to His people would have to be achieved by some "alternative better course."

Only if and when it is plainly evident that the Lord himself has adopted these attitudes toward these problems, and has abandoned the order which He himself has established both in heaven and on earth, in favor of a procedure which men have concluded is safer, can we safely do likewise. Everyone must look carefully at the behavior of God when faced with the seeming failure of the

structures which He has erected, as the only safe guide for what we shall do under like circumstances. It will be found that while He permits men to discard the principles and procedures of gospel order, He himself is unswervingly faithful to those principles no matter how much men may fail to operate by them.

Let it never be forgotten that He who is the Truth testifies of himself:

Malachi 3

⁶ For I am the Lord, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.

Hebrews 13

⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

James 1

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

God is not an experimenter who tries something to see if it will work, and, when it does not, discards or modifies that approach in favor of another which He hopes will achieve the desired result where the other failed. When that, in turn, develops an unsatisfactory product, another proposition is advanced, and still another until a practical, working solution is designed.

That is the approach men take to the development of their wonderful inventions. They follow this course because they have no living connection with the infinite Source of all light and truth. They grope their way through the maze of corridors of darkness until they are able to align enough information to make something a working reality.

Were God to operate in this fashion in order to arrive at a satisfactory structure for the government of His kingdom, He would be about as fallible as sinful humanity, the leader of a kingdom as guaranteed to fail as any built by man.

Because He is infinite and perfect in wisdom, God knows from the beginning exactly what is the correct procedure to follow in building His kingdom either in the heavens above, or on the earth beneath. Therefore, He establishes His procedures at the very outset of His creative work and, no matter how much they may appear to fail through the fallibility and perversity of fallen creatures, He will not modify His ways by so much as a hair's breadth.

Let this fact be seen in the structuring of the kingdom in heaven.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 36:

God himself had established the order of heaven.

That order decreed, for reasons already discussed in these studies, that all the communications between God, the Infinite Source, and all created beings—the receivers—were to be channeled through the one primary-messenger, Jehovah Immanuel.

But there arose a critic of the system who declared that the nature of the divine order was such as to inevitably lead to discontent and open rebellion, and that this proved that a different order had to replace the one which had “failed.”

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 42:

All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration. He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah.

He demanded a new system of government which would provide for each individual's having direct access to God, after setting aside the divinely appointed arrangement by which all communication passed through a single primary-messenger.

It was a moment in eternity when each creature had to make a decision for the right, or perish eternally. It was a time when, to come out on the side of truth and righteousness, each created being had to look steadfastly unto the Eternal Father to see what

was His response to this challenge, and to follow where He led the way.

What did God do? Did He admit there were deficiencies and imperfections in His kingdom's structure which proved that the existing order had to be replaced by a new and "better" one?

No! The Infinite One made no concessions of this nature whatsoever, but continued to operate as if no challenge had been mounted at all. Not for an instant did He even consider making any changes to the position and role of His Messenger, Jehovah Immanuel, but upheld Him without reservation of any kind.

It may be argued of course that Satan's demand was unreasonable since the Messenger had provided only perfect service. There was no fault which could be found with Him. Therefore, there were no behavior defects which could be used to justify the institution of a changed government in heaven. But, the startling fact is that, even if the Son of God had returned a defective messengership, the Everlasting Father would still not have modified His system of government in the least.

That may seem hard to believe, but it is the truth nonetheless. That this is so is incontrovertibly demonstrated by God's response to situations where His messengers did fail Him very badly. To be convinced of this, one has but to study how the Divine Leader reacted to situations where the fallibility and perversity of the messengers He had appointed, and through whom He worked, had led them to speak from themselves and not from God. Such an investigation into the divine pattern of behavior will reveal that God responded to these problem situations on earth exactly as He had in heaven when the work of His Only Begotten Son was questioned. The Almighty gave not the slightest hint that He would either dismiss the messenger, or abandon the established structure of the kingdom in favor of another system in which every believer in Jesus has direct access to the Source of all the messages of present truth without having to receive them through a messenger.

Let there now be a brief examination of some specific cases where messengers directly chosen by God spoke and acted from themselves instead of being faithful spokesmen for the Lord.

Moses was such a one. To begin with, he had been directly chosen of the Almighty to be the messenger of God to Israel, and, under the divine command, to lead them to the promised land.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 245:

The elders of Israel were taught by angels that the time for their deliverance was near, and that Moses was the man whom God would employ to accomplish this work. Angels instructed Moses also that Jehovah had chosen him to break the bondage of His people.

Nothing in the way of instruction, strategy, or anything else was to come from Moses, who was to have been nothing other than a channel through whom the Lord would communicate the light of present truth. It was his responsibility to be unswervingly faithful to the commission which required him to ever operate within the limitations imposed upon him by virtue of the structure of the kingdom. This meant that, under no circumstances whatsoever was he ever to speak his own words. To violate this principle of operation was to invite terribly costly repercussions such as no person or movement can afford. The very success of the vast enterprise by which the nation was transferred from Egypt to Canaan, absolutely depended, among other things, on Moses' strict faithfulness to the divine order.

Yet, it is the sad truth that he was not unswervingly faithful to it as is evidenced by the role he played in slaying the Egyptian who was oppressing the Israelite. He did not act on a command from God, but on his own judgment. He thought that the exodus would be accomplished subsequent to the military subjugation of the Egyptians by the Hebrews. He, as a general of the best equipped, most highly trained, most sternly disciplined, and most consistently successful army in the world at that time in history, exhibited tremendous faith in God's almighty power. He knew

the military might of the Egyptian army, for he had developed that awesome fighting machine to the highest levels of efficiency, and had personally led those seemingly invincible troops on one victorious campaign after another.

At the same time, he possessed an equally accurate assessment of the undisciplined, untrained, unequipped, unprepared, and totally inexperienced Hebrew host. From the human point of view, the Israelites had no hope of overcoming their oppressors. Any uprising on their part would initiate a savage slaughter of immense proportions, yet Moses was confident that, under God and by His power, the opposite would result.

So it was that Moses possessed one of the vital factors needed to successfully build God's kingdom—*faith*, but he lacked that implicit obedience in which there is not one thread of human devising—the submission to the divine will that rejects all human judgments, and acts on the word of God alone. To come to that place, the believer must be committed to bringing to God, not only the mighty prayer of faith alone, but the prayer of faith *and* obedience.

We need to learn what it really means to bring both faith *and* obedience to God. When he killed the Egyptian, Moses certainly possessed great faith in God and His almighty power, and he *thought* he was being strictly obedient to his heavenly Father's will.

Had he not, a professional soldier, been personally appointed by God to break the power of the Egyptians? Had he not accordingly refused to become entangled with Egypt's religious and social life? Was he not doing this for the one purpose of building the Lord's kingdom? How could anyone question the genuineness and sincerity of his "dedicated obedience"?

But, like Joshua at Ai, he was obeying messages which originated in his own interpretations of what God's specific will was in that particular circumstance. He was acting on what came from him, not what came from God through him. That was not obedi-

ence within the structure of gospel order, and, whatsoever is not obedience is disobedience.

To confirm that it was not obedience, one has but to consider the evaluation of it as made in the Spirit of Prophecy where it is termed, “error,” “taking the work into human hands,” and “not being God’s will.” Here is the text in full from which these paraphrases are taken:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 247:

In slaying the Egyptian, Moses had fallen into the same *error* so often committed by his fathers, of *taking into their own hands the work* that God had promised to do. It was *not God’s will* to deliver His people by warfare, as Moses thought, but by His own mighty power, that the glory might be ascribed to Him alone.

It was not God’s will. Therefore it was not obedience, and so could only be disobedience.

The whole adventure, being an act of faith outside of God’s will, could as it did, only end in complete failure, and would have cost Moses his life but for special, divine protection. Pharaoh certainly passed the death sentence upon him, but a hasty flight to Midian placed him beyond the power of the mighty king.

Here then is a situation where the weakness and fallibility of the human messenger had caused him, though quite inexcusably, to obey what came from him rather than through him. That was a very serious betrayal of gospel order, which, in order for the work of God to be finished in the earth, must be utterly eliminated from His people. But the question is:

“How did God respond to this failure of His delegated messenger? Did He repent that He had ever called this man, then dismiss him, in favor of another choice?”

Not for an instant did the Eternal Father even contemplate such an idea. There was no need to, for, when He had chosen Moses even before he was born, every detail of the man’s character and life was known to Him, and, knowing all of that, He chose him.

Therefore, the Omniscient One was not caught by surprise when His chosen one took the Lord's work into his own hands. He knew exactly what to do to meet the crisis, but that response did not include the dismissal of Moses. Instead, He sent Him off to the land of Midian, for forty years of further schooling, after which He launched His chosen primary-messenger into the most important phase of his life's work. Thus the Lord, who changes not, continued building His kingdom on earth as He had begun to build it.

But, observe that Moses did not relate himself to his blunder as God did. When the angels had informed both the elders of Israel and himself that he was to be the messenger whom God would use to lead the slave nation from Egypt to Canaan, he believed this without hesitation as did also the elders of the people who looked and longed for just such a deliverer to be given them, and he continued to believe that right up until his rash action separated him from the people he was called to save. From that time until the Lord reconfirmed the divine commission when He spoke to him from the burning bush, Moses was quite sure he had utterly disqualified himself from being God's primary-messenger, that God had therefore laid him aside, and had chosen a replacement who would be manifested in due time. No doubt Moses suffered a deep repentance and felt the keenest remorse for having failed the Lord, as he felt, so terminally. All this strengthened his conviction that he had destroyed his messengership.

We understand of course, that it was not his supposed personal loss of position which troubled him. His deep concern was that he had failed the Lord and thus delayed the setting into motion of the deliverance of God's people from Egypt.

It is very clear that Moses had reached this conclusion, for, if he had understood the principle of gospel order that God does not dismiss His primary-messengers when they make serious departures from the pure principles of divine kingdom building, he would never have acted as he did at the burning bush. It was

there that, forty years after his hasty flight from Egypt, he reacted to God's call as a man who fully believed he had long since permanently lost his appointed place. He vigorously protested that he was unfit to hold the position and advised the Lord to find someone else.

Exodus 4

¹³ But he said, O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send.

Furthermore, Moses also believed that the elders to whom the angels had revealed his divinely appointed commission, shared with him the persuasion that he had long since lost his appointment to be the messenger of God. We know this because, during his interview at the burning bush, Moses himself confessed his belief that this was so. After the Lord had directed him to go before the elders of Israel and had assured him that they would accept him as the primary-messenger, Moses expressed unbelief in God's word:

¹ Then Moses answered and said, But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, The Lord has not appeared to you.

If Moses had believed, as he should have done, that the children of Israel would acknowledge him as the messenger, he would never have answered the Lord as he did. He would never have said, "Suppose they say, The Lord has not appeared to you." Instead, he would have looked forward in calm confidence to the support of the people in the whole drama.

As usual, the witness of sight and circumstances was against the counsels, principles, and procedures of the Most High. By the time Moses bowed shoeless before the burning bush, over forty years of silence from heaven had elapsed. During that time, Moses remained an exile from Egypt with no possible hope of regaining his lost position as the next Pharaoh, from which eminence of extraordinary power Israel could see him setting them

free. But, they could not see him achieving this result as a lonely shepherd in a faraway land.

The Signs of the Times, July 12, 1905:

In the wilds of Midian, Moses spent forty years as a keeper of sheep. Apparently cut off forever from his life's mission, he was receiving the discipline necessary for its fulfillment.



There was nothing out of character or procedure in the Lord's forty years of silence, for there was nothing needing to be said

during that period. Before the commencement of that time began, God, through His angel messengers, had declared that Moses was the chosen messenger whom He would use to deliver Israel. That was the truth, which God spoke only because it was the truth.

When Moses, by killing the Egyptian, inaugurated the terrible crisis which robbed him of the throne, threatened his life, and separated him from his people so that he was seemingly removed from the very place where God had said he was to serve, the announcement made by the angels to both Moses and the elders, was still the truth.

Nothing about that truth had changed, so there was nothing to report, and so God had nothing to say. During those forty years, what God expected of them was a faith in His unchanging truth as unchanging as the truth itself—a constant, unwavering faith which did not need a divine reiteration at frequent intervals.

Sadly, Moses' faith in that word was not fixed, faithful, and resolute.

The Signs of the Times, July 12, 1905:

Apparently cut off forever from his life's mission,...

—Moses, convinced by the witness of sight and circumstances, lacking a great deal in his understanding of God's character, and failing to grasp the way in which God builds His kingdom, lost his grip on the truth that he was the primary-messenger.

Thus, so simply and clearly, the behavior of God as distinct from that of men, is revealed. This in turn, is a revelation of what human behavior should be and, in fact, what God requires it to be.

When the messenger fails as most have done, the human way of dealing with the problem is not only to reject the messenger, but worse still, to call for the abolition of gospel order, in which the Lord speaks through a single primary-messenger. Into the place of the unchangeable, divinely appointed system, they wish

to institute a structure which provides for each person to go directly to God through Jesus Christ, each for himself.

On the other hand, God terminates neither the messenger, nor the system of gospel order. God the Father, in all His transmissions of present truth, speaks only through a messenger, and, when the messenger betrays his sacred calling and thereby brings a serious crisis to the cause of truth, it is seen that the Lord has so fully made provision for the problem that defeat is turned into victory.

Thus there is no justification for our rejecting either the messenger of God's appointment, or the structure, by which God operates through him. In a crisis situation, the Lord has revealed by His own behavior how he expects us to behave. Understandably, to respond in this kind of crisis as God does, is to really put human nature to the test, for it is unnatural in our fallen condition for us to follow the principles of gospel order. There is something attractive to us in the idea of going directly to God to receive present truth directly for ourselves.

Of course, as already stated, when it comes to the Sabbath rest principles, which is concerned with where and at what we shall work for God, each person is to go to God directly through Jesus Christ for himself, but, when God communicates present truth, He will do it only through a messenger. In fact, we are advised that God has no other way of communicating the light of present truth except through His chosen, messengers.

This Day With God, p. 167:

Every message sent to you by God's messenger is for your good, to teach you the way of salvation more perfectly. What means has God to communicate His will to men, unless it be through His delegated messengers?³¹

The answer to this question is that He has no other means. Either we receive, accept, and believe the light of present truth as

³¹ See also *Romans* 10:14-15.

spoken by God through His messenger, or we are not recipients of God's light at all. This is not an overstatement, but is the plain declaration of what God has ordained shall be. it is a very serious life-or-death matter.

As explained much earlier in this series, created beings cannot come into God's presence and survive because of the power of the energy flow of sufficient volume and intensity to constantly sustain the entire universe. Sister White, while in vision was warned of this. She reported the truth of the matter as follows:

Early Writings, p. 54:

I saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and the Son. I gazed on Jesus' countenance and admired His lovely person. The Father's person I could not behold, for a cloud of glorious light covered Him. I asked Jesus if His Father had a form like himself. He said He had, but I could not behold it, for said He, "If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist."³²

Therefore, before sin began in heaven, God had no other way to communicate light and truth to His subjects throughout the universe than through His Messenger, Jehovah Immanuel. The entrance of sin has made the office of primary-messenger even more necessary. Not only must there be a primary-messenger in heaven, but there must be one on this earth as well. Let it be forever understood that God will not build His kingdom on earth except as it is built in heaven.

Therefore, let us become permanently and immovably established on the principle that, when a messenger of God's appointment falls into sin, under no circumstances are we to even consider the development of the slightest loss of confidence in God, in His messenger, or in the system of gospel order whereby we are required to obey the word of God as spoken through His messenger. We are to respond in these crises in the same way in which God does.

³²See also *Exodus* 33:20; *1 Timothy* 6:16.

We have seen in this chapter how God related to His chosen primary-messenger, Moses, when, by his rash act, he plunged God's work into a deadly crisis. Later, when at Kadesh-barnea, the same messenger again transgressed very seriously by speaking from himself as if he were speaking from God. It was a terrible sin that he committed there, for it caused the Israelites to install themselves in God's place. The inevitable consequences were tragic. They lost all faith in God's bringing them into the promised land, suffered a terrible defeat at the hands of the Amalekites and the Canaanites, and spent the next forty years in a long death march.



Yet we do not find any thoughts on God's part of either dismissing Moses or of dismantling His kingdom's structure. Neither

did the Lord give any indication that He was considering any termination of Joshua's messengership after the disaster at Ai.

It is to be understood of course, that a messenger most certainly has to repent of his sin or he will forfeit his messengership, but it will not be the Most High who dismisses him. Rather, he will have so disqualified himself for messengership, that he will not be able to operate in that role any longer. When he sins, it is his setting aside of the divine order which is the nature of his transgression. To fail to repent of that, is to further dismantle gospel order from his life thus placing himself where he can no longer be used as the messenger. He will have cut himself off from the position.

But, God does not call just anyone to primary-messengership. Candidates for this work must possess certain qualifications, among them being a ready spirit of repentance. Thus, when such a messenger falls into sin, it is no insuperable problem. Seldom has a messenger not repented and been delivered from losing his position. When it has happened, the Lord was not caught by surprise but had another to take his place.

Here it needs to be stressed that it is not given to his fellow believers to judge whether or not his repentance is both adequate and genuine. They must look to God to learn that. Only when it is unmistakably evident that God has found it impossible to work through a messenger anymore, are we to give no further heed to his messages.

It is comforting to know that, throughout human history, it is rare to find a messenger who refused to repent and thus was obliged to forfeit his position.

22. God's Unchanging Kingdom-Building Principles

Messenger and News Review, December 1990

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 61

Gospel Order, Part 29

IN THIS series of studies, the truth has been emphasized that God's kingdom is to be built on earth as it is built in heaven. That this is truly so is verified in the following very beautiful statement:

The Desire of Ages, p. 680:

Christ designs that *heaven's order, heaven's plan of government, heaven's divine harmony, shall be represented in His church on earth.*

That has ever been God's design against which all the demonic forces of darkness are pitting their considerable might. It was God's design for His people during the time before the fall, throughout the patriarchal period, when the Lord through Moses led the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land and settled them there as both a church and a state, through all the centuries since, and so on to the end of time. In fact, it will not be until this heavenly order, plan of government, and divine harmony are established on this earth, that Christ can return.

The achievement of these objectives is the means for the glorification of Christ in His people, a development for which every loving, sincere Christian will long with all his heart. This truth is beautifully presented in the remainder of the statement quoted above:

Thus *in His people* He is glorified. Through them the Sun of Righteousness will shine in undimmed luster to the world. Christ has given to His church ample facilities, that He may receive a large revenue of glory from His redeemed, purchased possession. He has bestowed upon His people capabilities and blessings that they may represent His own sufficiency. The church, endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depository, in which the

riches of His mercy, His grace, and His love, are to appear in full and final display. Christ looks upon His people in their purity and perfection, as the reward of His humiliation, and the supplement of His glory,—Christ, the great Center, from whom radiates all glory.

Where will Christ be glorified? The glorious answer is...

The Desire of Ages, p. 680:

...in His people!

And how will He be glorified in them? It will be when...

...heaven's order, heaven's plan of government, heaven's divine harmony, shall be represented in His church on earth.

What will then take place through His people?

Through them the Sun of Righteousness will shine in undimmed luster to the world. Christ has given to His church ample facilities, that He may receive a large revenue of glory from His redeemed, purchased possession. . . . they may represent His own sufficiency. The church, endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depository, in which the riches of His mercy, His grace, and His love, are to appear in full and final display.

We have only the faintest concepts of the glory which yet awaits those in whom gospel order is established and thus has become their way of life. Heaven will open to them, great floods of light shall shine upon them, and they will provide a truly glorious revelation of God's beautiful character. Long has the church awaited this day without fully realizing all that they are to receive. God's unchanging purpose shall be realized in the recovery of all the light which has been lost since the fall of man. Then gospel order shall have come on earth as it is in heaven.

The Mosaic Order and the New Testament Order

We have spent a good deal of time, and given much space to the point that in His organizing of the Mosaic order, God was directing that the earthly government of His people on earth be a du-

plication of His government in heaven. That is the truth of what He was doing and would always do.

But, it seems as if there are differences between the organizational structure of God's people in Moses' day, and the way in which God would have His people to be governed in New Testament times. However there can be no real, but only seeming fundamental differences, for, if there were alterations introduced when New Testament times began, it would mean that we have one dispensation existing before the cross, and a different one since! This cannot be! Nothing in heaven's order changed at Calvary. So there was no change in God's kingdom building structure on earth where Christ's instruction to His people is to pray that His kingdom should come on earth as it is in heaven. The structure of the divine order above is the model to be copied when building the divine kingdom on earth.

The structure of the model has never changed. Therefore, neither has the earthly counterpart, provided the builders built according to the divinely provided pattern.

The differences which appear to exist between the Mosaic and Christian orders are mainly found in the varying conditions under which the divine order was established. This did not change the structure either in heaven or on earth, but served to demonstrate the adaptability of the system to meet changing circumstances.

In the first instance, Israel in Moses' time was both a church and a state, whereas today, the people of the Lord have no land, and therefore, no statehood whatsoever. They are a spiritual body only, not a community with its own territory and government.

It was not God who led them from nationhood to their being a scattered people with no country they could call their own. It was by their own behavior that they forfeited what they had. God had planned perpetual nationhood for them with dominion, not merely over Palestine, but over the entire earth.

Prophets and Kings, p. 19:

The children of Israel were to occupy all the territory which God appointed them. Those nations that rejected the worship and service of the true God were to be dispossessed. But it was God's purpose that by the revelation of His character through Israel men should be drawn unto Him. To all the world the gospel invitation was to be given. Through the teaching of the sacrificial service, Christ was to be uplifted before the nations, and all who would look unto Him should live. All who, like Rahab the Canaanite and Ruth the Moabitess, turned from idolatry to the worship of the true God were to unite themselves with His chosen people. As the numbers of Israel increased, they were to enlarge their borders until their kingdom should embrace the world.

God's purpose for them and promise to them was:

Deuteronomy 28

¹³ And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them.

The Desire of Ages, p. 28:

Had Israel been true to God, He could have accomplished His purpose through their honor and exaltation. If they had walked in the ways of obedience, He would have made them...

Deuteronomy 26

¹⁹ ...high above all nations which He has made, in praise, and in name, and in honor.

Deuteronomy 28

¹⁰ All people of the earth, [said Moses,] shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of you.

Deuteronomy 4

⁶ The nations which shall hear all these statutes shall say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

But because of their unfaithfulness, God's purpose could be wrought out only through continued adversity and humiliation.

How different the history of the nations would have been had Israel been faithful to the principles of gospel order. Instead of be-

ing scattered and down-trodden, hated and despised, and slaughtered in their millions, they would have fulfilled their appointed commission to fill the earth with righteousness. They would have ruled the world in righteousness without resorting to the weapons of force, for their every action would have been a revelation of Him who rules without forcing anyone to serve Him. They would have had neither rebellious subjects, nor criminals to contend with, for,

Prophets and Kings, p. 19:

Those nations that rejected the worship and service of the true God were to be dispossessed.

The barren places would have become so fertile that:

Isaiah 35

¹ The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;

² It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, The excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God.

We could write many pages rehearsing the glorious descriptions of Israel as they would have been if they had built the kingdom of God on earth even as it is structured in heaven. It would be a great inspiration to do so. At the same time there would be brought before our sobered minds the startling reality of what might have been, and, in fact, should have been. We would then better understand the awful cost of building in any way other than that stipulated by the Sovereign ruler of the universe. We would also see how real and certain are the blessings of unqualified success for those who live by the principles of gospel order. Hopefully we would then be persuaded to follow unerringly in the footsteps of the Master who...

The Ministry of Healing, p. 19:

...glorified His life by making everything in it subordinate to the will of His Father.

A Temptation at Hazeroth

Let us now go back to the history of Israel to see where their departures from faithful adherence to gospel order sowed the seeds which gradually but certainly matured into the harvest of fearful woes on the entire earth. We will return to a very serious violation of gospel order made by no less a mighty man than Moses. The incident occurred at Hazeroth shortly after the thirteen tribes had departed from Sinai on their way to Kadesh-barnea, the gateway to the Promised Land.

The human leader of Israel who operated under the direct and personal supervision of Christ, the heavenly Leader, must have commenced that journey with what had to have been a very rich, powerful, fresh, and satisfying spiritual experience.

He had spent a total of eighty days and wakeful nights in Christ's personal presence on the mountaintop, receiving intensive instruction in the gospel as revealed in the sanctuary and its services. Divinely sustained, he needed neither food nor drink during that entire period, during which he absorbed so much vital life-force that, when he came down from the mountain the second time, his face shone with light so strongly that the people could not endure it.

In addition, God granted his request to be given a view of His glory. Think of the living faith such an experience would inspire! Any person who was privileged to be granted such a glorious and powerful revelation of the divine character, would know for himself the living, present reality of the divine Presence. To him, God could not be someone distantly removed and uncaring. Rather, He would be known for what He is, an ever-loving Father who personally cares for His needy children.

Coming so recently from such powerful, faith-building experiences, one would expect that Moses would have been virtually immune to the temptation to violate gospel order. But this was not so. Not only did he give way to discouragement and unbelief, but he was the means whereby there was introduced into the or-

ganized structure elements which should never have been permitted to take root therein. While at first there were certain advantages gained in the government of Israel, in time these new fixtures were the source of serious evils which God never intended should plague His people.

It all came about as follows: Upon the termination of their sojourn at Mt. Sinai, God directed the children of Israel to commence the eleven-day journey to Kadesh-barnea.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 377:

As they advanced, the way became more difficult. Their route lay through stony ravine and barren waste. All around them was the great wilderness—

Jeremiah 2

⁶ ...a land of deserts and of pits,...a land of drought, and of the shadow of death,...a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt.

The rocky gorges, far and near, were thronged with men, women, and children, with beasts and wagons, and long lines of flocks and herds. Their progress was necessarily slow and toilsome; and the multitudes, after their long encampment, were not prepared to endure the perils and discomforts of the way.

After only three days a great swelling of complaint emanated from the suffering travelers. This grew in volume until the people were openly and loudly critical of the route by which Moses was leading them,

...though they well knew that he, as well as they, was following the guiding cloud.

The problem among the people escalated from bad to worse until a satanic spirit took hold of them, and there was grave danger that there would be an eruption of violence. This was forestalled by the outbreak of a fire among them which consumed...

Numbers 11

¹ ...some in the outskirts of the camp.

Severe as this punishment was, it did not silence the survivors once they had recovered from their initial shock. To their complaining about the hardness of the journey, was added the call for flesh foods.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 379:

But the evil was soon worse than before. Instead of leading the survivors to humiliation and repentance, this fearful judgment seemed only to increase their murmuring. In all directions the people were gathered at the door of their tents, weeping and lamenting.

Upon Moses the people imposed a fearful trial which was greatly intensified by the contrasting glory to which he had been so recently exposed on the mountaintop. This made the evil which now confronted him to appear in its true light before his sinking spirits. Evil is exposed for what it is when placed beside righteousness at its radiant best. This is one reason why Calvary provided God with the total victory achieved there, for, at that point in time and space, sin at its ugly worst, faced righteousness at its thrilling best, and was vanquished.

Let it be noted here that we are not studying the behavior of the people, but of Moses, for it was his response to the pressure which has adversely affected the church to the present time. Here is his incredible expression of complaint:

Numbers 11

¹⁰ Now Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the Lord was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased.

¹¹ So Moses said to the Lord, Why have you afflicted your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you have laid the burden of all these people on me?

¹² Did I conceive all these people? Did I beget them, that you should say to me, Carry them in your bosom, as a guardian carries a nursing child, to the land which you swore to their fathers?

¹³ Where am I to get meat to give to all these people? For they weep all over me, saying, Give us meat, that we may eat.

¹⁴ I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me.

¹⁵ If you treat me like this, please kill me here and now—if I have found favor in your sight—and do not let me see my wretchedness!

Those were very strong words which were escaping the lips of Moses who must have been highly agitated in order to dare to give expression to such complaints. Even so, it seems that he failed to understand the specific principle of Gospel Order he was violating, for, if he had, he would never have acted and spoken as he did. Unless through the Holy Spirit's ministry today, we are instructed by this story until we clearly see and shun Moses' mistake, the record of this incident has little if any value to us.

A Vital Principle of Divine Order

So then, what was the vital principle overlooked by Moses? In the building of God's kingdom on earth as it is structured in heaven, every angel in God's service above, and every person united to Christ on the earth below, is assigned a position by the divine Head where he is to do in that place that which God directs him to do. He is expected to be a faithful servant who carries out the duties appointed to him with a willing heart, and to the best of his knowledge and ability.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1173:

Each angel has his particular post of duty, which he is not permitted to leave for any other place. If he should leave, the powers of darkness would gain an advantage.

Let no one miss the full force of this statement which informs us that every angel has his particular post of duty to which he has been appointed by the Lord of all Lords. Furthermore, none of them are permitted by the same Lord to leave that post of duty.

The operating principles and conditions for Gospel Order on earth being the same as they are in heaven, means that every person who has ever lived on earth has had his particular post of duty assigned to him by God. Unfortunately, the vast majority

have been uncaring of their true responsibilities to the Almighty, with the result that very few ever occupy their appointed places. Even God's true people have not been as aware of this as they need to be, even though it is plainly written:

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 326-327:

To His servants Christ commits "His goods"—something to be put to use for Him. He gives "to every man his work." Each has his place in the eternal plan of heaven. Each is to work in co-operation with Christ for the salvation of souls. Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God.

In the divine order, no man can appoint himself to any position of his own choosing, nor dare he, if he values eternal life, refuse the position to which he is appointed. When, in their turn, during the early development of the great second advent movement, William Foy and Hazen Foss each refused the work to which God had called them, they both forfeited their eternal life.³³ The same fate will be suffered by all those who, having located themselves in a station in life which the Lord has not assigned them, make it impossible for the Ruler of the universe to position them in the place He has prepared for them.

It then becomes critically important that each believer in Jesus be absolutely certain he is occupying the place the Lord has chosen for him. There must be no doubt about this. Your place does not need to be highly important, such as a national or even world leader. You may fill one of what the world regards as lowly positions such as a farm laborer, carpenter, taxi driver, gardener, house painter, or such like, but the important point is whether or not the Lord assigned you the position which you occupy. If you became located where you are by thoroughly proven divine appointment, and can rest in the assurance that this is so, all is well. Just continue faithfully performing your duties day after day, per-

³³ See the *Appendix* for a reconsideration of Foss and Foy.

fectly content to remain at that post of duty forever if that is what God has planned for you.

On the other hand, if your careful, Spirit-inspired examination of your position does not verify that you are where the Lord has put you, you have a problem. Make no attempt to solve this yourself by making plans to relocate to where you think you should be. Instead, give God the problem and patiently wait until He is able to move you to your appointed work and place.

Do not expect that your call to service has to be as dramatic as was that of Moses when he bowed in awe before the amazing phenomenon of a burning bush which was not consumed, and from which God announced His literal presence, and gave Moses his commission. More likely, if you are now in the place to which God has called you, you will have grown into it step by step as God has led the way. It will come to you from God after you have spent years in preparation.

A word of warning is very much in order at this point. It is that each child of God be absolutely sure that he has been divinely appointed to the particular work which he is doing. The religious world is literally flooded with self-sent messengers who...

Early Writings, p. 99:

...are a curse to the cause.

False Christ's and false prophets abound, each claiming to be appointed of God to do the very work in which he is engaged. These agents are deceived deceivers who appear to be of God, but who in fact are not called by Jehovah or recognized by Him. There is not one of us who can afford to be in this category. If we are and fail to escape the web of deceit, we shall perish eternally.

Divine order then leaves neither place nor opportunity for any person to appoint himself to a position anywhere in any capacity. Only God has the right and the power to do it as it is written:

1 Corinthians 12

²⁸ And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

He is God who has done it, and God alone. It was not done by God *and* man, nor did man do it with God's blessing and help. It was all done entirely by God, without man being consulted at all. It is most important that this fact be clearly understood.

Divine order does not permit anyone to refuse the position and work to which the Lord calls him except at the cost of his eternal life. When the individual does accept the ministry to which he is appointed, under no circumstances can he lay it down until the Lord releases him which is usually at the point of death.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 396:

The humble shepherd's life of Moses had been far more peaceful and happy than his present position as leader of that vast assembly of turbulent spirits. Yet Moses dared not choose. In place of a shepherd's crook a rod of power had been given him, which he could not lay down until God should release him.

This divine order and conditions for membership in the body of Christ were as valid throughout the Mosaic period as they are in both the New Testament times, and eternally in heaven above. No angel can appoint himself to a position of his own choosing, but has no choice other than to accept the place God assigns him. Once he is instated in his appointed place, he cannot leave that position for another unless reassigned by the Lord to the new station.

Some may be alarmed at the thought of someone else choosing their lifework for them for time and eternity, even if that somebody is God. There is a strong human tendency to feel that the only truly safe person to whom we can trust such crucial decisions is ourselves. We mistrust all others, including God because, in our hearts, we are convinced that they choose for us what they consider best for them.

This tragic attitude first infected humanity when Satan convinced Eve that God's decision forbidding them from eating of that one special tree was made in His interest at their cost. Ever since that sad day, the evil inheritance of mistrust and unbelief has been handed on from generation to succeeding generation. As long as this spirit prevails, Gospel Order can never be established as the one successful way of kingdom building.

On the other hand,

Education, p. 253:

Faith is trusting God-believing that He loves us and knows best what is for our good.

When we truly believe that God loves us, we will know that He will choose for us only that which, in His infinite wisdom, He knows is best for us. When this conviction fastens on us, what will be the result?

Thus, instead of our own, it leads us to choose His way. In place of our ignorance, it accepts His wisdom; in place of our weakness, His strength; in place of our sinfulness, His righteousness. Our lives, ourselves, are already His; faith acknowledges His ownership and accepts its blessing. Truth, uprightness, purity, have been pointed out as secrets of life's success. It is faith that puts us in possession of these principles.

The fact is that...

The Ministry of Healing, p. 478:

We have not wisdom to plan our own lives. It is not for us to shape our future.

If we do not have the needed wisdom, God does, so...

The Ministry of Healing, p. 479:

Let God plan for you. As a little child, trust to the guidance of Him who will "keep the feet of His saints." *1 Samuel 2:9*. God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the

glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him.

Once these principles are understood, and we are cleansed from the evil heart of unbelief which came down from Eden, we will experience no problem with God choosing for us, though the strength and genuineness of our convictions will be tested from time to time, even as it was with Moses at Hazereth. There, in His great distress he cried,

Numbers 11

¹⁴ I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me.

Sister White describes this as a temptation to distrust God—“Almost a complaint.” Here are her words:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 380:

In his distress he was tempted even to distrust God. His prayer was almost a complaint.

Obviously there was a measure of distrust in Moses’ attitude toward God, though not enough to cause him to abandon his ministry and turn traitor. That there was a measure of distrust involved is indicated on the same page in these words:

Had he relied *fully* on God...

These words plainly declare that Moses’ faith in God was limited by a measure of distrust.

In the work of kingdom-building, while God will lay on you burdens which you *think* you cannot bear, He will never ask more of you than you can in fact by His grace bear.

The Review and Herald, November 9, 1897:

He never asks us to do anything without supplying the grace and power to do that very thing. All His biddings are enablings.

Moses lost sight of that fact as is evident from his claim that his work load was more than he could carry. It was not, and it was out of order for him to say it was. God gives large responsibilities

to His children, so that they will have the opportunity to learn to live by faith in the word:

The Review and Herald, November 9, 1897:

He never asks us to do anything without supplying the grace and power to do that very thing. All His biddings are enablings.

The Desire of Ages, p. 371:

If the work be of God, He himself will provide the means for its accomplishment.

So, if the believer views with dismay the magnitude of the work assigned to him, he is to reach out by faith, prayer, and obedience, to lay hold of the facilities available to him from his heavenly Employer, as Moses should have done. Ever bear in mind that, before Jesus commissioned His disciples to the daunting task of preaching the gospel worldwide, He informed them that all power was given unto Him in heaven and on earth—power which would be given them in order to accomplish their divinely appointed mission.

With that kind of omnipotent, almighty support system, there is no place for complaint about being overburdened with work on the part of God's workers, nor dare they think in terms of off-loading a portion of their responsibilities on to others. If they really need helpers, God will supply one or more, but until He does, the workers must cheerfully continue their work without complaining, or manifesting unbelief.

The Appointment of the Seventy

Moses did not need a helper, even though he thought he did.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 380:

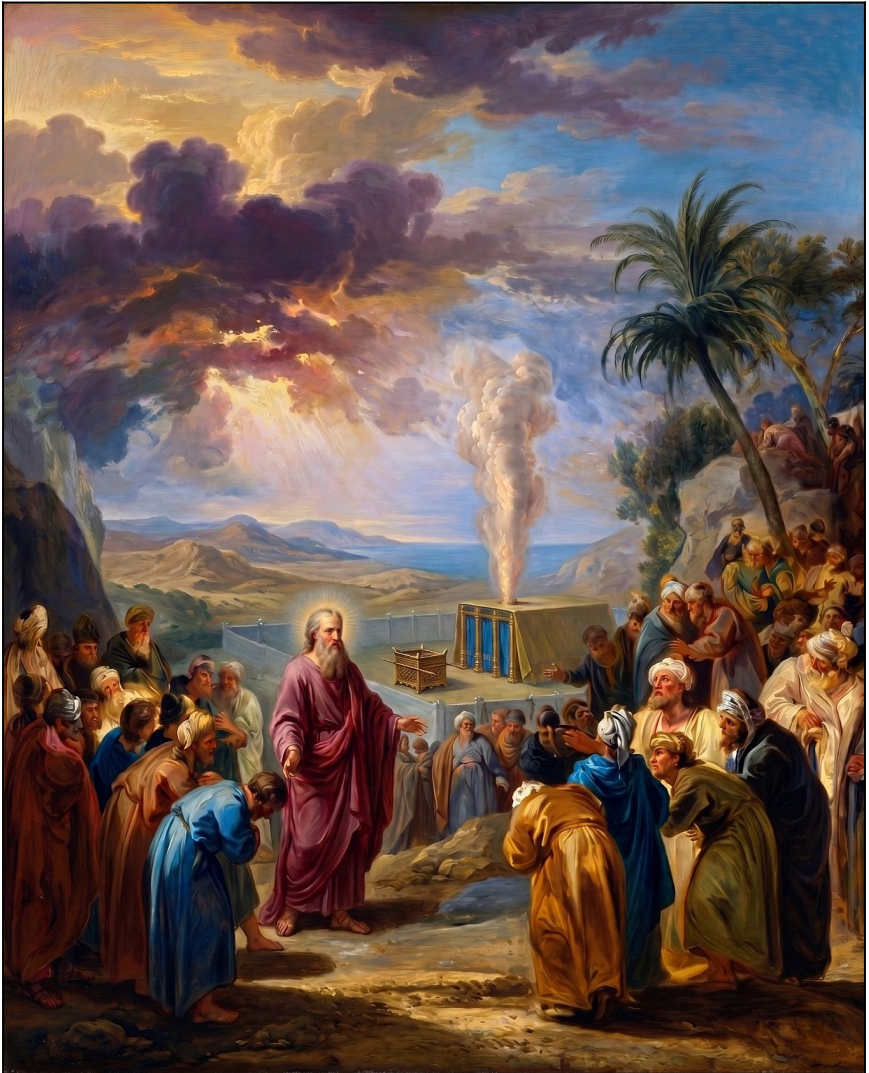
Had he relied fully upon God, the Lord would have guided him continually and would have given him strength for every emergency.

Yet, seventy helpers were provided for Moses, but not by God. This is a point which must not be overlooked. It was Moses who chose them with God's permission, in a context where only the

Almighty Head of the body has the right to make such appointments.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 380:

The Lord *permitted* Moses to choose for himself the most faithful and efficient men to share the responsibility with him.



We tend to think that, if the Lord *permitted* it, it had to be approved by God, and within the framework of gospel order, but this is not necessarily so, and certainly was not in this case. Gospel Order is the way of faith and righteousness, not of unbelief.

They would never have been chosen had Moses manifested faith corresponding to the evidences he had witnessed of God's power and goodness. But he had magnified his own burdens and services almost losing sight of the fact that he was only the instrument by which God had wrought.

As surely as God never provided Moses with those seventy helpers, but only *permitted* him to choose them for himself when living faith denied the existence of any necessity for the institution of these positions, then, just so surely, Moses was operating contrary to gospel order and was not building God's kingdom on earth as it is built in heaven.

Yet, as is usually the case, the immediate results were so good as to seemingly justify this departure from right, but the long-term outworking could not have been worse.

Their influence would assist in holding in check the violence of the people, and quelling insurrection; yet serious evils would eventually result from their promotion.

How serious were those evils? Their institution became a permanent establishment, but the occupants of those seventy positions did not maintain the integrity of the initial appointees, and sunk with the remainder of Israel into the deepest apostasy. It was this body which became known as the Sanhedrin which presented such resistance to Christ and His followers, and decreed the crucifixion of the Saviour. Furthermore, a large portion of the endowment of spiritual power which had rested on Moses alone, was now divided among the seventy elders, as God said:

Numbers 11

¹⁶ Gather to me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring

them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you.

¹⁷ Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone.

So Israel gained nothing by way of spiritual power, but Moses lost a great deal when the Spirit of God was taken from him and given to the seventy.

Thus were introduced into God's kingdom on earth, elements which were in direct violation of God's kingdom-building procedures, and which became so firmly established, that the church of God in the world did not escape from the evil of their presence until Christ and the Apostolic Church withdrew completely from the Jewish church organization, and formed a new body in which no place was provided for the Sanhedrin.

The appointment of the seventy should never have taken place, and therefore, is not a model of Gospel Order for the church today. Rather, we are to learn never to complain no matter how heavy the load we are called upon to bear. Never are we to appoint ourselves to any position, nor to vacate the one we presently occupy no matter how insignificant or unpleasant our present duties are.

Only those who understand these principles, and who operate within these guidelines, will build God's kingdom on earth as it is built in heaven. Only the kingdom built according to the divine order will endure.

For further reading on Moses' reaction to the people, see *The Signs of the Times*, August 12, 1880.³⁴

³⁴Included in the *Appendix*, "The Burning at Taberah."

23. Responsibilities of the Messenger and the People

Messenger and News Review, February 1991

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 62

Gospel Order, Part 30

IN THE last chapter, we considered the serious mistake of Moses and his departure from gospel order which led to the appointment of the seventy elders, which led to the formation of the Sanhedrin, the body of Jewish dignitaries who sent Christ to His crucifixion.

The study of these experiences of Moses and the Israelites was undertaken to show that God's messengers are not infallible, and that, regretfully, they do not always wait to hear and then to speak only the words which the Lord gives them. These occasional failures on the part of the Lord's messengers need never be, and would never have been if the men of God had faithfully and consciously always worked within the framework of gospel order.

The study was also undertaken to show that every violation of gospel order in the government of Israel rendered the organization less and less a revelation of God's way of building the kingdom.

Quite naturally we grieve over these very damaging preferences for the way of unbelief over strict obedience to God's perfect ways, and wish that history could have been rewritten, but it is now too late to remedy the past. Those who look forward to the future must do so knowing that they must learn from the past not to repeat its mistakes.

When the Messenger Stumbles

One astonishing lesson from the past is that, when the messenger stumbles, men proclaim their loss of confidence in him and the system, and abandon both, whereas God continues to work through both the messenger and gospel order as if nothing had

happened. Moses, for instance made three terrible mistakes after he had become the ordained primary-messenger—his manifestation of unbelief at Hazeroth, his faulty leadership at Kadesh-Barnea, and his striking of the rock at Meribah. This last ill-advised action was so serious that it cost him the crossing of the Jordan, and the leadership into Canaan.

Joshua too, transgressed the principles of Gospel Order and Sabbath Rest when he decided to devise his own plan for the conquest of Canaan, beginning with Ai. The immediate, horrifying result was the deaths of thirty-six men.

But in neither case did the Lord make the slightest concession to the temptation to abandon Gospel Order. He did not admit that the practical application had proved the system unreliable, and then turn to an alternative plan of action. We must become established on the truth that God is not an experimenter, who tries something out to see if it will work. From the very beginning, He knows precisely what are the very best, sure procedures to follow and, in His infinite love, offers us the knowledge of how to apply them, together with the power and wisdom to do so.

Revealing Truth vs. Counseling

At this point, we need to introduce a very important distinction, which is that, under those circumstances when messengers have been called upon to be the channels of living truth to the people, then they have spoken only what the Lord revealed to them. It is when a situation calls for a decision determining what course of action shall be followed, that messengers sometimes do not speak only what the Lord gives them to speak. Examples of this in Moses' life have already been noted such as at Hazeroth, Kadesh-barnea, and Meribah. While at all of these places he did not deliver to the people only what the Lord gave him to speak, the issues at none of them were revelations of present truth.

Revelations of Truth vs. Errors from the Past

A further distinction which needs to be made is that primary-messengers do not begin their work of revealing present truth only after they have been delivered from all the errors of the past. This is far from being the case. Actually, when they begin their heaven-ordained ministry, they know and teach relatively little of present truth, while still carrying forward a great deal of erroneous theories and ideas.

For instance, Martin Luther emerged from papal darkness to proclaim the living power of justification by faith, but, at the same time, he and other Reformers believed and taught the sanctity of Sunday as the Sabbath of God. This does not surprise us, for we understand that it took centuries to recover from the terrible darkness of the Middle Ages. It is a great comfort to know that the unravelings of present truth accelerate as we draw near to the end of time.

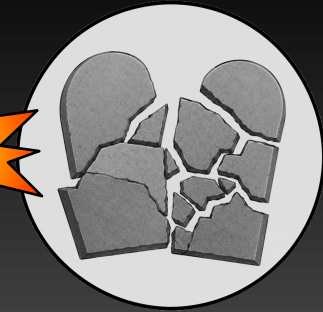
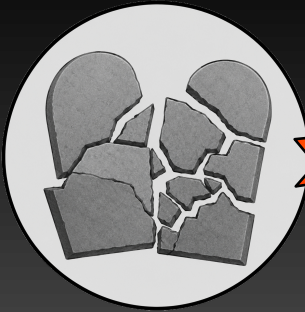
What to me and others proved to be the most surprising example of a messenger teaching error from the past, is that of Elder A. T. Jones who taught in his book *Great Nations of Today*, p. 98-104, the erroneous geographically-based political interpretation of the kings of the north and south. The former he taught was Turkey. To read his interpretation of *Daniel* 11:40-45, is no different from reading Uriah Smith.

That which makes the A. T. Jones case even more surprising, is that the true light on that question had already been revealed in the White family where the idea of Armageddon being a battle between powers disobedient to God and other powers of earth likewise disobedient to God, was replaced by the truth that it will be the battle between God and His obedient children on one side, and Satan and those disobedient to God on the other side.

Great Nations of Today was published by A. T. Jones in 1901. In May of the same year, Sister White wrote:

ARMAGEDDON

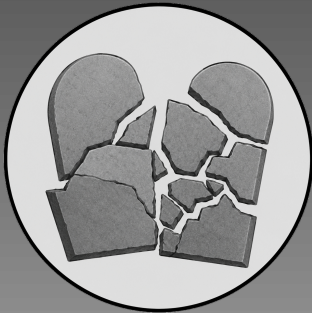
is not



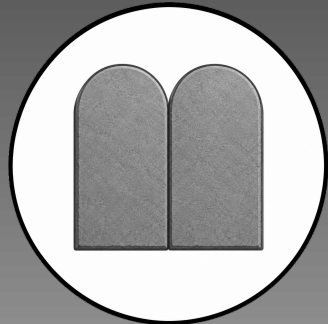
the

Disobedient against Disobedient

ARMAGEDDON



IS



the

Disobedient against *Obedient*

**“Two great opposing powers are revealed
in the last great battle.**

On one side stands the Creator of heaven and earth.

All on His side bear His signet.

They are obedient to His commands.

**On the other side stands the prince of darkness,
with those who have chosen apostasy and rebellion.”**

The Review and Herald, May 7, 1901

The Review and Herald, May 7, 1901:

Two great opposing powers are revealed in the last great battle. On one side stands the Creator of heaven and earth. All on His side bear His signet. They are obedient to His commands. On the other side stands the prince of darkness, with those who have chosen apostasy and rebellion.

Other statements to the same effect had been written at least as early as 1890, while as early as 1847, a mere three years after the great disappointment, James White wrote identifying the King of the North as being the papacy.³⁵

Therefore, it would seem that there was no justification for A. T. Jones not seeing and teaching the truth on *Daniel* 11, and *Revelation* 16-19. But, just as Martin Luther, in the divine plan of things, was not commissioned to preach Sabbath reform, but to teach justification by faith, so A. T. Jones was called of God to teach righteousness by faith, not dissertations on prophecy.

These facts in regard to the ministry of A. T. Jones do not in the slightest diminish my confidence in his work and the messages God gave him for us. I find no difficulty in distinguishing between what God gave him to deliver to the people, and what he received by inheritance from his and our apostate spiritual fathers.³⁶

This means that messengers, by virtue of these facts, are carriers of light delivered to them by the Lord, and, at the same time,

³⁵ See *A Word to the Little Flock*, p. 8-9.

³⁶ PP Editor's note: In fact, it seems very likely Jones inherited this understanding from Uriah Smith's interpretation. Among Seventh-day Adventist literature, the first reference I could find to the application of Turkey and the "Eastern Question" to *Daniel* 11:45 was in Uriah Smith's book, *Thoughts, Critical and Practical on the Book of Daniel* (1873). This interpretation was repeated in all publications of Smith's larger work, *Daniel and the Revelation*, from that time on. Since A. T. Jones became a baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist church in 1874, shortly after Smith's work was published, it is reasonable to suppose that he picked up that interpretation from Smith's book. James White also raised concerns with this interpretation on "the Eastern question" in a *Review and Herald* article of November 29, 1877 titled, "Unfulfilled Prophecy," but apparently his warning was ignored by most.

bearers of messages of darkness which they have inherited unchallenged from their spiritual forebears.

The question is: How shall we know the difference?

This may seem to be a vexing problem, but in actual practice, it has not proved to be so. In the first case, the messenger is sent by God with a special presentation of the gospel, the result of which is a new and living movement. Those who accept this mighty message know it is of heavenly origin because of its character, and its powerful capacity to change their lives, and initiate their entry into a new experience such as they have never known before.

During this phase of operations, the erroneous teachings from the past which bred and thrived in an apostate environment, and which came down to us as a spiritual inheritance, are largely ignored. The believers are far too preoccupied with the splendid light of present truth, the coming of which has been to them the dawn of a new day, than to be interested in rehearsing the dry, dead errors of the past. This is especially so as the new light is joined by progressive revelations of beautiful and inspiring truth.

Yet, as demonstrated by the lives of messengers who have served God in the past, old ideas and theories will be present and old habits of thought will strive for the mastery, leading the messenger to occasionally, though not necessarily, express past wrong teachings.

Of course, not all that comes from the past is error. The discovery and presentation of great truths have marked the rise of every movement God has called forth, and these are as truthful as when they were first revealed, but apostasy has robbed these priceless treasuries of their clarity and power. They must be cleared of the rubbish under which they have been buried and reset in their rightful places. These are not to be confused with the errors from the past.

However, as time passes, the bright light shining on God's people, will cause them to become suspicious of doctrines in which they had once trusted without question. The careful re-examination of these teachings which then follows exposes their real character, and they are discarded in favor of the growing light of present truth. Thus there is less and less danger of the messenger giving expression to anything other than what the Lord gives him. Faithfully he lives out the instruction given to Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 1

⁷ Do not say, I am a youth, for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.

Jeremiah was faithful to his charter till death. I cannot recall a single instance when he spoke to the people any messages emanating from himself. Thus he *never* said:

“Hear the word of *Jeremiah* O house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel. *Thus says Jeremiah...*”

Instead he *faithfully* said:

Jeremiah 2

⁴ *Hear the word of the Lord* O house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel.

⁵ Thus says *the Lord...*

The Duty of the People

The problem of ensuring the correct and efficient operation of gospel order very seldom lies with the messenger, but with the people who have demonstrated again and again down through history their determination to reject the divine order in preference for their own. This is not to say that there were no bright spots here and there, for there were some times and places when God's people did have a disposition to serve Him according to the divine order. When they did, as at the fall of Jericho, the results were most impressive. When they did not, the far-reaching effects were both disastrous and retardant to the onward progress of the Lord's work.

A Decay in the Practice of Gospel Order

A significant example of this negative attitude and its terrible consequences is supplied in the story of Israel's rejecting the system God had maintained among them when Samuel was...

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 604:

...divinely invested with the threefold office of judge, prophet, and priest...

—and when the people came to God's faithful servant asking that a king be appointed them, so that they could be like the nations around them.

On Israel's part, this was obviously a serious rejection of Gospel Order which, up until that time in their government, and until their request was put into operation, was structured after the pattern in heaven. God through Christ was the Infinite Source, who channeled all His communications through His primary-messenger, Samuel, who, in turn, passed the light on to the priests and elders, so they could teach the people, whose responsibility it was to teach their children.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 603:

The government of Israel was administered in the name and by the authority of God. The work of Moses, of the seventy elders, of the rulers and judges, was simply to enforce the laws that God had given; they had no authority to legislate for the nation. This was, and continued to be, the condition of Israel's existence as a nation. From age to age men inspired by God were sent to instruct the people and to direct in the enforcement of the laws.

While this divine order was maintained, the nation prospered marvelously, as will always be the case

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 605:

The days of Israel's greatest prosperity had been those in which they acknowledged Jehovah as their King—when the laws and the government which He had established were regarded as superior to those of all other nations. Moses had declared to Israel concerning the commandments of the Lord:

Deuteronomy 4

⁶ This is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 603:

When the Israelites first settled in Canaan they acknowledged the principles of the theocracy, and the nation prospered under the rule of Joshua.

There is a fixed relationship between the faithful, careful, diligent operation of Gospel Order at all times and in all places, and spiritual, physical, mental, and material prosperity. Where one is, the other is sure to be. We have the absolute assurance of this in God's word wherein He has repeatedly stated this in unequivocal promises such as:

Deuteronomy 28

¹ Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.

² And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God:

³ Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country.

⁴ Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

⁵ Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.

⁶ Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

⁷ The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.

⁸ The Lord will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

⁹ The Lord will establish you as a holy people to himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways.

¹⁰ Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of you.

¹¹ And the Lord will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers to give you.

¹² The Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.

¹³ And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them.

¹⁴ So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

The remainder of *Deuteronomy* 28, is devoted to warning against the equally certain fruits of disobedience. I appeal to all my readers to keep this entire chapter ever before your eyes so that you will ever grow and prosper in the Lord. We are directed to obey *diligently*; to be *very careful* to order our lives according to these principles.

The divine assurances that strict obedience will produce unlimited prosperity, is not the only witness to the absolute truthfulness of these principles. Over and over, history has verified the truthfulness of this. What is most surprising and quite indefensible is the departure of God's people from this utterly reliable formula, to those ways which will certainly strip prosperity away. They have a habit of doing this when things are going really well and there is no justification for apostasy.

The Call for a King

The prosperity which marked the history of Israel during Joshua's lifetime and leadership was the direct result of their diligent obedience to God's order. It was a wonderful period during which the Lord's blessing was upon them in every way.

It should have remained that way, but the book of *Judges* records a tragic series of terrible oppressions, humiliating dispossessions of their lands, and the triumph of their enemies over them, the direct cause of all of which is found in their replacing the divine order with their own.

This transition did not happen on a single day, but stole upon them gradually as they failed to watch with the utmost diligence against the first seemingly inconsequential deviations from rectitude. They failed to realize that as surely as the first wrong step is taken, others will follow. Their gradual transition from what they had been in Joshua's day, to what they had become by Samuel's time, is clearly described in these words:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 603:

When the Israelites first settled in Canaan they acknowledged the principles of the theocracy, and the nation prospered under the rule of Joshua. But increase of population and intercourse with other nations brought a change. The people adopted many of the customs of their heathen neighbors and thus sacrificed to a great degree their own peculiar, holy character. Gradually they lost their reverence for God and ceased to prize the honor of being His chosen people. Attracted by the pomp and display of heathen monarchs, they tired of their own simplicity. Jealousy and envy sprang up between the tribes. Internal dissensions made them weak; they were continually exposed to the invasion of their heathen foes, and the people were coming to believe that in order to maintain their standing among the nations, the tribes must be united under a strong central government. As they departed from obedience to God's law, they desired to be free from the rule of their divine Sovereign; and thus the demand for a monarchy became widespread throughout Israel.

Samuel, the primary-messenger did not share in the apostasy which had stolen upon the people, nor was there any thought in his mind of calling for the tribes to unite under a king. No fault is to be found with his service to God and the people.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 603-604:

Since the days of Joshua the government had never been conducted with so great wisdom and success as under Samuel's administration. Divinely invested with the threefold office of judge, prophet, and priest, he had labored with untiring and disinterested zeal for the welfare of his people, and the nation prospered under his wise control. Order had been restored, and godliness promoted, and the spirit of discontent was checked for the time.

But, despite, his integrity, his faithfulness in adhering to the divine order, and his general success, there developed a problem which arose out of the misconduct of his sons in their offices as judges in Israel. They had been appointed as helpers of their aging father, but proved they did not possess his righteousness.

The problem could very easily have been solved by Samuel's dismissing them from their positions, a step he would have taken had he been informed of their behavior.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 604-605:

But this was not what the petitioners desired. Samuel saw that their real motive was discontent and pride, and that their demand was the result of a deliberate and determined purpose. No complaint had been made against Samuel. All acknowledged the integrity and wisdom of his administration; but the aged prophet looked upon the request as a censure upon himself, and a direct effort to set him aside. He did not, however, reveal his feelings; he uttered no reproach, but carried the matter to the Lord in prayer and sought counsel from Him alone.

In the course followed by the Israelites at this time, they shewed an alarming failure to carefully test the powerful desires of their hearts to see if they were or were not the divine will. It would have been a very simple matter to have subjected themselves to such a test which would have very quickly revealed to

them that they were calling for the restructuring of the order God himself had established. They knew the story of their exodus from Egypt, of Moses' position, and of the terrible fate which awaited those who set about trying to change the divine order, as in the cases of Korah and his supporters. They knew all the history in between, and had before them the living demonstration of the effectiveness and power of the system in and through the ministry of Samuel.

Yet in the face of all that, they persisted in demanding that the divinely established order be replaced by the structure of the kingdoms throughout the remainder of the world. That is something no child of God must ever permit himself to even think of doing. Any proposed course of action which in any way involves even the slightest changes in the structure of the kingdom, must be totally and eternally rejected. There is safety in no other course of action.

Nor was this the only test by which they could have been guided. They should have seen in their desire to have a king like all the nations, a heart-stopping warning that they were aligning themselves in direct opposition against God himself in the key area of the structure of God's government—Gospel Order. No more serious a step could they have taken than that which they took.

It is incredible that they could actually and with immovable determination, ask for a king like the kings throughout the entire world. Those kings in common, shared Satan's spirit of rebellion against the Most High God. They were the abomination of desolation of that time, Antichrists, and Anti-God. Their organizational order reflected Satan's rebellious determination to establish a restructured rebel kingdom in the universe. They were the agents of Satan, his servants, and the executioners of his will. To build according to their pattern, was a direct act of rebellion which would strip them of God's power without their acquiring any alternative power to compensate them for their loss. Thus they would be

weaker than their enemies who would reduce them to bond slaves as it is written:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 299:

...when they should let go their hold upon Him, and trust in their own power, they would be even weaker than those who had not the knowledge of God, and their foes would prevail against them.

When those Israelites in Samuel's time exhibited such an unshakable determination to ignore the lessons of the past and to set aside the principles by which God's kingdom operated, and build according to the ways of earthly kings, there was very little if any hope that even the strongest warnings would be heeded.

So it proved to be in their case. Through His primary-messenger, Samuel, the Lord voiced His utter disapproval of their plan, and spelled out some of the bitter consequences of their choice. But the people would not be moved regardless. When the prophet had finished delivering the solemn words of God to them, they promptly rejected the message from God.

1 Samuel 8

¹⁹ Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, No, but we will have a king over us,

²⁰ That we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.

If the Israelites had been mistrustful of self, they would have heeded the voice of God as it came to them through the Lord's primary-messenger. Note carefully that it was not the word of Samuel that they scorned but the voice of God, Samuel being but the channel of communication.

Let those of us who are numbered as Israel in these last days when we have no time left for mistakes, resolve that we will make no decisions to act on any propositions without exhaustively testing the plan to see if it is approved of God.

Ask whether it weakens or strengthens the divine order. Look and see if its implementation will call for the tearing apart of what the Lord has established. Listen to and respect the voice of God as spoken through His messenger. Heed the warning of the consequences which will spring from a wrong decision. Then act in the strictest obedience to your findings, making no compromise with your own feelings regardless of personal cost to yourself. There is safety in no other tours.

The question may now be asked: When Israel changed their governmental structure from a theocracy to a monarchy, so that they became like the other kings of the earth, why did not the Lord relate to them as He did to the other kingdoms. Why did He not withdraw himself and His blessings from them.

The answer is that He did to a point, for Israel, in their quest to be a kingdom like the kingdoms of the world, partially removed themselves from or rejected God. For instance, when they desired to install a monarchy, they did not ignore God's position and authority, but came and asked Him through the correct channel of the primary-messenger, for what they desired. Then they waited for the Lord to make the choice, and accepted it when it was made known to them.

Furthermore, when the Lord granted their request, He did so on the understanding that the structure of the kingdom should remain the same. The king was never to be a despotic, absolute ruler, but was to be instead the servant of the Lord.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 603:

The Lord foresaw that Israel would desire a king, but He did not consent to a change in the principles upon which the state was founded. The king was to be the vicerent of the Most High. God was to be recognized as the Head of the nation, and His law was to be enforced as the supreme law of the land.

None of these conditions existed in the kingdoms of the earth. Jehovah, was not the Head of those kingdoms, nor were those kings His vicegerents, which meant that no position was made

available in those kingdoms for the true God. Finding no place there for Him or His laws, He occupied no place there. This means that Israel was not given a king in all things like the kings of the world.

But despots such as King Ahab were in time to arise as men with respect neither for God nor His law, and were seated on thrones of absolute power. Gospel Order was virtually non-existent, while the evil fruit of their demanding a king became more and more corrupt until finally of the kingdom, it was declared:

Ezekiel 21

²⁵ Thus says the Lord God: Remove the turban, and take off the crown; Nothing shall remain the same. Exalt the lowly, and abase the exalted.

²⁶ Overthrown, overthrown, I will make it overthrown! It shall be no longer, Until He comes whose right it is, And I will give it to Him.³⁷

He whose right it is, is none other than Jesus Christ our Saviour, who did not come from heaven to set up a kingdom on this earth as the Jews expected. When questioned by Pilate in regard to His kingship, He replied:

John 18

³⁶ My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from here.

Differences Between Moses' Time and Ours

For many centuries now, the church of God has been without a kingdom. She has no territory and is not then a sovereign state. Accordingly, she neither makes nor administers civil laws, but is subject to the powers which are in force in the country where the believers live provided the State does not attempt to force God's children to violate His laws.

³⁷ See *Education*, p. 179; *Prophets and Kings*, p. 451.

Therefore, there must be some differences between the practical application of Gospel Order in Moses' situation and ours today. So there are.

One such difference is that the jurisdiction of the messenger is much more limited. Moses was the chief judge in Israel, as was also Samuel, a position definitely not held by the messenger today.

The civil government in Moses' time was definitely a theocracy, or a government in which God was the king, and His laws were the rule of life. At the same time there was a religious or spiritual theocracy in which God was the Head of the church to which He communicated His truth through His chosen messengers.

It is most important that we recognize and understand that there were these two different theocracies—one civil and one spiritual—or we shall never understand that one—the civil—has passed away, while the other—the spiritual—remains.

In the early centuries of the New Testament era, the bishops argued for the establishment of a civil theocracy, which A. T. Jones points out is quite impossible as the following statement shows. When reading this statement, remember that you must confine it to the civil theocracy in which God is Head, and not include the spiritual as well.

By these scriptures and all others on the subject, it is evident that the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of God, is not only not of this world, but is nevermore to be of this world. Therefore while this world stands, a theocracy can never exist in it again. From the death of Christ until now, every theory of an earthly theocracy has been a false theory. And from now until the end of the world, every such theory will be a false theory. Yet such was the theory of the bishops of the fourth century; and being such, it was utterly false and wicked.³⁸

³⁸ *Opposing Principles*, p. 12, or *The Great Empires of Prophecy*, p. 475, by A. T. Jones.

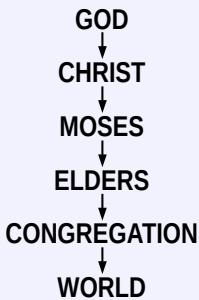
Every word of this statement is absolutely true provided it is applied to civil theocracy only, for the true church of God can only be a theocracy. If it is not a theocracy, then what is it? Is it a democracy—a government of the people, by the people, and for the people? Or is it an autocracy—a government ruled by one man with absolute power—a papacy—a dictatorship?

In the true church of God, the one structured on earth as it is in heaven, neither of these systems are according to God’s plan and desire. God through Christ is the Head of the church and that is a spiritual theocracy.

So it is altogether proper to study the structure of the church of Moses’ day as a model for the operation of Gospel Order today.

THE ONE WAY OF GOSPEL ORDER

OLD TESTAMENT



NEW TESTAMENT



The diagram is simplified. In some cases there were more levels, such as Gabriel between Christ and John.

The same principles apply at each level. The receiving agent must take the message from the one passing it to him, and faithfully transmit it to those in his sphere of influence. If he refuses to receive the message from the human messenger, but wishes to get it direct from God or Christ instead, or tries to form his own message, he cuts himself off from this living chain. To reject Christ’s messengers is to reject Christ himself.

24. The Full and Final Display

Messenger and News Review, March 1991

Pray for the Latter Rain, Part 63

Gospel Order, Part 31

A Word from the Editor

We are plainly told that: “God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. ‘Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ This command is a promise.” *The Desire of Ages*, p. 311. That is wonderful, challenging, and inspiring, for it opens to view something of the high and thrilling destiny available to every soul.

But what I find disturbing is the seemingly infinite contrast between the heights at which Christ demonstrated His Father’s love and power, and my own desperately low levels of achievement in soul winning. I am very conscious of the fact that I did not receive the gospel just to ensure my own salvation, though that was involved. But, I who was saved, was saved to save, a mission which cannot be accomplished without power greater than that of the enemy. We must study Christ’s ministry if we would form right concepts of the power needed to be a soul winner.

For a few minutes only He talked at the well to a woman whom He had never met before and who did not know who He was, and virtually an entire village was converted.

That was soul saving power which routed the enemy.

Let us learn to remain in the secret place of prayer until endowed with Christ’s soul saving power.

THROUGHOUT this series of studies on gospel order, I have constantly iterated and reiterated the truth that the messenger is nothing more than a dedicated channel. He is not an originator of truth, but merely the bearer of it according to the commands of Him who is the Truth himself. Therefore, though the messages entrusted to him come with the authority of the Almighty and are to be accordingly respected, the glory and honor belong to the Godhead alone.

The Vessel

Paul understood the relationship of his dedicated ministry of love to the God whom he served and to the people to whom he ministered. He described that relationship in these words:

2 Corinthians 4

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

There is no difficulty in identifying either the vessel or the treasure. The earthen vessel can be none other than the human agent in whom the Lord of the universe in His infinite wisdom has chosen to deposit the riches of His boundless mercy. Every child of God, fashioned as he is from the dust of the earth, is literally an earthen vessel—a storage container, a depository, a bank—designed by God to be filled with the incomparable treasures of truth, yet more often diverted by rebellious man to the containment of unholy things.

The use of an earthen vessel as a symbol for the children of men, is a very fitting one, the clear message of which is plainly revealed to us through Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 18

¹ The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying:

² Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear my words.

³ Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel.

⁴ And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.

⁵ Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying:

⁶ O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter? says the Lord. Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel!

⁷ The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it,

⁸ If that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.

⁹ And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it,

¹⁰ If it does evil in my sight so that it does not obey my voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.

Consider the lump of wet formless clay. It is of no use in that form, for no treasure can be stored therein, nor does it have the capacity to fashion itself into a useful vessel capable of containing priceless treasure. The skillful services of the potter are needed to transform the lump into a vessel of usefulness. Then, even the most insignificant vessel can house the most precious jewels.

Battle Creek Letters, p. 32:

The potter takes the clay in his hands, and molds and fashions it according to his own will. He kneads it and works it, and then tears it apart, and then presses it together. He wets it, and then dries it. He lets it lie for a while without touching it. When it is perfectly pliable, he continues the work of making from it a vessel. He forms it into shape, and on the wheel trims and polishes it. He dries it in the sun, and bakes it in the oven, thus it becomes a vessel unto honor, fit for his use. So the great Master desires to mold and fashion us, and as the clay is in the hands of the potter, so we are to be made in His hands. We are not to try to do the work of the potter. Our part is to yield ourselves to the molding of the Master-worker.³⁹

It is obvious that, for the clay to truly become a useful vessel, it must be absolutely submissive to the will and work of the potter, so too must we be in the hands of the master Potter—totally surrendered. Any effort on our part to become a vessel of our own choosing only frustrates the work of divine grace, and makes it impossible for the earthen vessel to achieve its true destiny—a life of efficient service to the true God.

Lift Him Up, p. 65:

While the human agent is devising and planning for himself something that God has withheld him from doing, he has a hard time. He complains and frets, and has still increased difficulties. But when he submits to be as clay in the hands of the potter,

³⁹ See also *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 471.

then God works the man into a vessel of honor. The clay submits to be worked. If God had His way, hundreds would be worked and made into vessels as He sees best.⁴⁰

There are several specifications which a vessel must meet before it can truly fulfill its destiny. Firstly, it must be so constructed that it will stand with the opening through which the treasure finds entrance, pointing upwards, for it can only be filled from above, and never from beneath. This is so obvious that it might seem pointless to mention it, but there is good reason for it to be mentioned. The Christian needs to make certain that his vessel is pointing upwards so as to constantly be receiving the precious heavenly treasure in order that he might pass it on to others as and where it is needed.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 116:

Although for ages sin has been strengthening its hold on the human race, although through falsehood and artifice Satan has cast the black shadow of his interpretation upon the word of God, and has caused men to doubt His goodness; yet the Father's mercy and love have not ceased to flow earthward in rich currents. If human beings would open the windows of the soul heavenward, in appreciation of the divine gifts, a flood of healing virtue would pour in.

The Treasure

The treasure takes a variety of forms, one of which is "healing virtue." Another is the glorious revelation of present truth. What wonderful life and light is here pictured as treasure flooding into human beings—the earthen vessels.

Men use depositories of different kinds to hoard their treasures hoping they might be securely locked away from other men. They operate on the policy of receiving to keep, not of receiving to give. They are blind to the fact that:

⁴⁰ See also *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1154.

The Desire of Ages, p. 417:

Mark 8

³⁵ Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

Selfishness is death. No organ of the body could live, should it confine its service to itself. The heart, failing to send its life-blood to the hand and the head, would quickly lose its power. As our life-blood, so is the love of Christ diffused through every part of His mystical body. We are members one of another, and the soul that refuses to impart will perish. And,

Matthew 16

²⁶ What is a man profited, [said Jesus,] if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

In God's kingdom, we are all to receive heaven's treasure for the great soul-saving purpose of imparting these incalculable riches to those who are about to perish. This plan of operation is beautifully demonstrated in the feeding of the multitude with five barley loaves and two small fish. In the human nature of Jesus that day was an abundant supply of the treasure, firstly in the form of wonderful truths, which, throughout the long day, He deposited in the thousands of earthen vessels of those who sat receptively listening to His teaching and were inspired by it; and secondly in the creative power by which He multiplied a little boy's meal till it was more than sufficient to feed that large assembly of hungry people.

Faithfully, in the dark and lonely hours of the night, through intercessory prayer, He had made certain His earthen vessel was well filled with sufficient treasure to supply every need the day might demand of Him.

The Desire of Ages, p. 363:

As a man He supplicated the throne of God, till His humanity was charged with a heavenly current that should connect humanity with divinity. Through continual communion He received life from God, that He might impart life to the world. His experience is to be ours.

That is the way in which to make certain that our earthen vessels are so filled with precious treasure, that we can meet whatever needs are presented to us throughout the day. It is not easy to acquire such wealth as Jesus did. Quite often, it cost Him a night's sleep, for He would not permit himself to rest until He was satisfied that His entire being was charged with the current of life-giving energy and power. From those periods of supplication, He emerged with the capability of doing anything necessary for the advancement of the kingdom, thereby demonstrating the full potential of an earthen vessel totally filled with heaven's treasure.

At His spoken command the most astonishing things took place—the leper was cleansed; the lame were given the strength and elasticity of youth; the murderous designs of His enemies against Him were thwarted; the wildest storms becalmed; and the dead were raised to life, to name but a few.

So it was then that Jesus was well prepared to teach and feed the crowd on that momentous occasion. It was no problem to Him, for His earthen vessel was more than sufficiently filled with the treasures of heaven.

So should the earthen vessels of the disciples have been brimful of the treasure to the point where they would have been as untroubled as Jesus was at the prospect of feeding the five thousand. They too should have spent the very private hours of the night supplicating the throne of God until their earthen vessels were so filled with treasure that they too would have been in command of any need in any emergency including the emergency feeding of the five thousand.

Prior to this, they had been so impressed with the power produced by the prayer-life of Jesus that they had said to Him,

Luke 11

¹ Lord, teach us to pray.

But, when they attempted to put His instruction into effect, a heavy stupor would descend upon them, and they would fall into deep slumber. Such was the experience of three of them on the mount of transfiguration. Jesus took Peter, James, and John high up the mountain that they might pray with Him, and that they might be strengthened to successfully cope with the fearful trials soon to burst upon them in the coming arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus.

The Desire of Ages, p. 420:

At first the disciples unite their prayers with His in sincere devotion; but after a time they are overcome with weariness, and, even while trying to retain their interest in the scene, they fall asleep.

Later, in Gethsemane, they were overcome by the same problem,

The Desire of Ages, p. 694:

Again the disciples in their weariness yield to the strange stupor that overpowers them. Again Jesus finds them sleeping.

The three disciples whom Christ took up on the mount of transfiguration paid a fearful price by their failure to gain the victory over the overwhelming desire to sleep. If they had been supplicating the throne of grace until night after night they had become charged with a life-giving current connecting humanity,—the earthen vessel,—with divinity,—the treasure, they would have been able to do all that Christ himself could and did do.

The Desire of Ages, p. 425:

Through being overcome with sleep, the disciples heard little of what passed between Christ and the heavenly messengers. Failing to watch and pray, they had not received that which God desired to give them,—a knowledge of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. They lost the blessing that might have been theirs through sharing His self-sacrifice. Slow of heart to believe were these disciples, little appreciative of the treasure with which Heaven sought to enrich them.

On the late afternoon when the problem arose as to how to feed the five thousand, Jesus knew how the disciples should have handled it, and how they would have approached the difficulty had their earthen vessels been filled as they should have been with heaven's treasure acquired through nightly supplicating the throne of God until charged with power from above. In accordance with what Christ could therefore have reasonably expected of them, He directed them to feed the multitude, in obedient response to which they should have fed them, for...

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 333:

Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings.

Christ never demands that we do that which is impossible, even though it will more often than not appear to us to be an impossibility. It certainly seemed so to the disciples when Christ commanded them to feed the five thousand. But they had the command; therefore they had the enabling which they would have realized had they previously supplicated the throne of God till their humanity was charged with power. If they thus could have obeyed the command, they would have fed the multitude that day and it would have been a wonderful experience for them. They would have rejoiced and have praised the name of the Lord as the seventy evangelists were to do later when they returned from their tour of missionary duty:

The Ministry of Healing, p. 139:

To the Seventy sent forth later He said:

Luke 10

⁸ Into whatsoever city you enter,...

⁹ Heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

The presence and power of Christ was with them,

¹⁷ And the Seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through your name.

Even though those disciples who were directed to feed the five thousand, had seen and heard the word of God in Christ speak

many miracles of healing into existence, they had not come to understand that in that spoken word is the creative power which called the worlds into existence. Had they realized that the value and power of the treasure was in the spoken word of Christ, they, without hesitation, would have successfully obeyed the command,

Matthew 14

¹⁶ You give them something to eat.

But they could not receive the power in Christ's spoken word unless they had been prepared for it beforehand by sufficient prayer. Likewise, when we have spent sufficient time in prayer, we too will understand and recognize that:

The Signs of the Times, April 11, 1906:

The creative energy that called the world into existence is in the Word of God. This Word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature and recreates the soul in the image of God.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 122:

The same power that Christ exercised when He walked visibly among men is in His word. It was by His word that Jesus healed disease and cast out demons; by His word He stilled the sea and raised the dead, and the people bore witness that His word was with power. He spoke the word of God, as He had spoken to all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament. The whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ.

The Scriptures are to be received as God's word to us, not written merely, but spoken. When the afflicted ones came to Christ, He beheld not only those who asked for help, but all who throughout the ages should come to Him in like need and with like faith. When He said to the paralytic,

Matthew 9

² Son, be of good cheer; your sins be forgiven you;
—when He said to the woman of Capernaum,

Luke 8

⁴⁸ Daughter, be of good comfort: your faith has made you whole; go in peace,

–He spoke to other afflicted, sin-burdened ones who should seek His help.

So with all the promises of God's word. In them He is speaking to us individually, speaking as directly as if we could listen to His voice. It is in these promises that Christ communicates to us His grace and power. They are leaves from that tree which is "for the healing of the nations." *Revelation 22:2*. Received, assimilated, they are to be the strength of the character, the inspiration and sustenance of the life. Nothing else can have such healing power. Nothing besides can impart the courage and faith which give vital energy to the whole being.

What a treasury there is then in the living word of God! What tremendous possibilities are opened to those who understand and appreciate these mighty truths. No wonder Paul exclaimed,

Philippians 4

¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

The Review and Herald, November 9, 1897:

The physical, mental, and moral powers are the endowments of God, and are to be appreciated and cultivated. We are here on probation, in training for the higher life. All heaven is waiting to co-operate with those who will be subordinate to the ways and will of God. God gives grace, and he expects all to use it. He supplies the power if the human mind feels any need or any disposition to receive. He never asks us to do anything without supplying the grace and power to do that very thing. All his biddings are enablings.

As will always be the case with unbelief, it affected the relationship of the disciples to their Master. Instead of asking what were His commands, they came telling Him what He should do. They did not do this in an authoritarian way, but as their troubled solution to a serious problem.

The Desire of Ages, p. 365:

The disciples finally come to Him, urging that for their own sake the people should be sent away. Many had come from far, and had eaten nothing since morning. In the surrounding towns and villages they might be able to buy food. But Jesus said,

Matthew 14

¹⁶ Give you them to eat,
–and then, turning to Philip, questioned,

John 6

⁵ Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

This He said to test the faith of the disciple. Philip looked over the sea of heads, and thought how impossible it would be to provide food to satisfy the wants of such a crowd. He answered that two hundred pennyworth of bread would not be nearly enough to divide among them, so that each might have a little.

Those men who lived and worked with Jesus every day were so poor in heaven's treasure in their earthen vessels, that they could only think in terms of an earthly solution involving the possession and expenditure of a considerable amount of money. But Jesus took the tiny supply of food which was available.

The Desire of Ages, p. 365:

Then He bode the disciples seat the people on the grass in parties of fifty or a hundred, to preserve order, and that all might witness what He was about to do. When this was accomplished, Jesus took the food,

Matthew 14

¹⁹ ...and looking up to heaven, He blessed, and broke, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

²⁰ And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

While Christ's disciples were weak enough in living faith that they were not able to apply the solution at the same level at which Christ did, they did have sufficient treasure in their vessels to qualify them to occupy the position of the link between Christ and the people in the distribution of the food. In this ministry, the

principles of gospel order were faithfully followed as they always were in the procedures followed by Christ.

He was the primary-messenger who received all “the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”⁴¹ from His Father.

The Desire of Ages, p. 368:

The providence of God had placed Jesus where He was; and He depended on His heavenly Father for the means to relieve the necessity.

Thus He lived out the principle of total dependence on God, the infinite Source from whom He received that He might give. It was only as He received that He could give.

As secondary messengers or suppliers, the disciples received from the Primary-messenger, so they could impart to the people.

The Desire of Ages, p. 369-370:

The disciples were the channel of communication between Christ and the people. This should be a great encouragement to His disciples today. Christ is the great center, the source of all strength. His disciples are to receive their supplies from Him. The most intelligent, the most spiritually minded, can bestow only as they receive. Of themselves they can supply nothing for the needs of the soul. We can impart only that which we receive from Christ; and we can receive only as we impart to others. As we continue imparting, we continue to receive; and the more we impart, the more we shall receive. Thus we may be constantly believing, trusting, receiving, and imparting.

The Desire of Ages, p. 369:

In Christ’s act of supplying the temporal necessities of a hungry multitude, is wrapped up a deep spiritual lesson for all His workers. Christ received from the Father; He imparted to the disciples; they imparted to the multitude; and the people to one another. So all who are united to Christ will receive from Him the bread of life, the heavenly food, and impart it to others.

⁴¹ *Colossians 2:3.*

It is when the human vessel is filled with heaven's inestimable treasure, that this power within the believer becomes the author of living faith in him who, coveting spiritual powers above all other, seeks the immortal crown. It was by such men and women that the mightiest victories for the cause of God in the earth have been achieved. The greater the treasure in the earthen vessel, the more significant the victory gained and the more far-reaching its effect for good.

Christ's Experience to Be Ours

But of them all there has been none to equal the peerless demonstration by Christ Jesus of the sheer invincibility of a purified earthen vessel filled to capacity with heaven's treasure. This is not to say that His performance is unattainable, for that would be but to deny the testimony of His word. Christ came among other things, for the specific purpose of showing both by declaration and demonstration the levels of purity and power to which we are to be elevated even while living in a world of sin.

Education, p. 73-74:

In Him was found the perfect ideal.

To reveal this ideal as the only true standard for attainment; to show what every human being might become; what, through the indwelling of humanity by divinity, all who received Him would become—for this, Christ came to the world. He came to show how men are to be trained as befits the sons of God; how on earth they are to practice the principles and to live the life of heaven.

What Christ came to accomplish, He will achieve. He has promised that:

Isaiah 55

¹¹ So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; It shall not return to me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

The Coming Day of Glory

So then we are assured that God's word will accomplish all that it has been commissioned to achieve. It will bring forth a spotless and invincible people, and when it does, and not before, the end will come. Here is one of the great prophecies of this coming day of glory:

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 18-19:

To His church, Christ has given ample facilities, that He may receive a large revenue of glory from His redeemed, purchased possession. The church, being endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depository, in which the wealth of His mercy, His love, His grace, is to appear in full and final display. The declaration in His intercessory prayer, that the Father's love is as great toward us as toward himself, the only-begotten Son, and that we shall be with Him where He is, forever one with Christ and the Father, is a marvel to the heavenly host, and it is their great joy. The gift of His Holy Spirit, rich, full, and abundant, is to be to His church as an encompassing wall of fire, which the powers of hell shall not prevail against. In their untainted purity and spotless perfection, Christ looks upon His people as the reward of all His suffering, His humiliation, and His love, and the supplement of His glory—Christ, the great center from which radiates all glory.

Revelation 19

⁹ Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

What a glorious, inspiring picture this is of the future destiny of the earthen vessel, here referred to as the church, which is defined as "His depository." To know this much that we are His personally selected depository, is wonderful enough, but to be informed that in these vessels of clay, the *wealth* of His mercy, love, and grace is to appear in "full and final display," is a marvel beyond description. It will be no wonder that the angels will view with amazement the transition from sinfulness and darkness to not merely forgiveness, precious as that gift is, but to the place where the treasure deposited in the earthen vessels will be so am-

ple as to provide the full and final display of the righteous attributes of God himself.

What a solemn, sacred trust it is to be earthen vessels appointed by God, to be filled with the treasures of the heavenly powers to the point where our supplies of grace will be so great that we shall be qualified Melchizedek kings and priests in the eternal courts forever. There is nothing to the remotest degree which this world can offer that is comparable to these highest of privileges which shall be granted to those in whose earthen vessels God shall have deposited the treasures of His mercy, love, and grace. When this shall be realized by God's people, they will form a different set of values altogether, and will realign their objectives and their interests. One theme will claim their constant attention—how to fill one's earthen vessel with the incomparable treasure.

Then there will be such a seeking after the kingdom of God and His righteousness as will bring complete satisfaction for the present, and the promise of further abundance in the future. Then the treasure-filled vessel will...

The Desire of Ages, p. 363:

...supplicate the throne of God till his humanity [is] charged with a heavenly current that should connect humanity with divinity. Through continual communion he [will receive] life from God, that he might impart life to the world.

Then he will know the blessed realization of the promise:

Jeremiah 29

¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

¹² Then you will call upon me and go and pray to me, and I will listen to you.

¹³ And you will seek me and find me, when you search for me with all your heart.

¹⁴ I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and

from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

Prophets and Kings, p. 732:

Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the city into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future of glory that is for the redeemed.

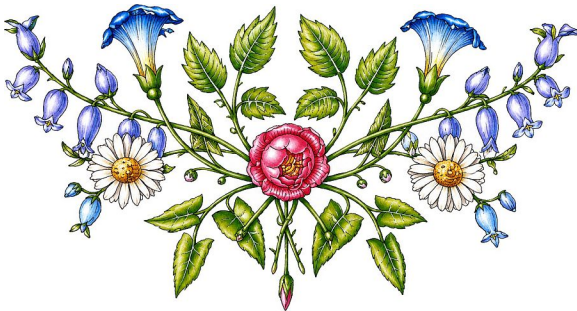
James 5

⁷ Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

⁸ Be you also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draws nigh.

PP Editor's note

Assuming that the *Melchizedek* book was read after chapter 17 of this book on *Gospel Order*, the final studies in this "Pray for the Latter Rain" series are found in the book, *Gabriel*, which should be read to complete the topic.



Appendix

1. The Burning at Taberah

Signs of the Times, August 12, 1880

By Mrs. E. G. White

AFTER traveling three days from Sinai into the wilderness, complaints began to be made by those in the uttermost parts of the camp who had not fully united their interest with the body, but who were continually watching to find something to condemn in those willing to bear the responsibilities and burdens of the people. These complainers were not pleased with the course of their march, and were constantly murmuring about the way in which Moses was leading them, notwithstanding they knew that he was following only where the pillar of cloud lead the way. Some also felt that they ought to have a leading position, while others complained of marching so long in the wilderness.

God continued to feed them with the bread rained from heaven; but they were not satisfied. Their depraved appetite craved flesh-meat, which God in his wisdom had withheld, in a great measure, from them.

Numbers 11

⁴ And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?

⁵ We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic.

⁶ But now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all, besides this manna, before our eyes.

They became weary of the food provided for them by angels. Yet they knew it was just the food God wished them to have, and that it was healthful for them and their children. Notwithstanding their hardships in the wilderness, there was not a feeble one in all their tribes.⁴²

⁴² *Psalm 105:37.*

Satan, the author of disease and misery, will approach God's people where he can have the greatest success. He has controlled the appetite in a great measure from the time of his successful experiment with Eve, in leading her to eat the forbidden fruit. He came with his temptations first to the mixed multitude, the believing Egyptians, and stirred them up to seditious murmurings.

These murmurings would soon have leavened the entire camp, had not the wrath of God in fire from Heaven flashed like lightning from the cloudy pillar and consumed those who were the instigators of the trouble. Yet this, instead of humbling them, seemed only to increase their murmurings. When Moses heard the people weeping in the door of their tents, and complaining throughout their families, he was greatly distressed.

Here Moses, himself, came very near distrusting the Lord. Even in his perfect physical strength and vigorous intellect he was staggering under the weight of responsibility, made so much heavier by the wicked complaints of the people. The burden seemed almost insupportable. Did not Moses at this time regret that he had not consented to have Israel destroyed, and himself made a great nation? Such temptations troubled him. It grieved him sorely to have them direct their complaints against him, as if every supposed deprivation was chargeable to him. And this was the very people for whom he had prayed that his name might be blotted out of the book of life rather than that they should be destroyed. He had imperiled all for them, and here was their response. His heart sunk within him; but he turned to the only One who could help him in his trouble. His was a prayer which was almost a complaint.

Numbers 11

¹¹ Wherefore have You afflicted your servant? and wherefore have I not found favor in your sight, that You lay the burden of all this people upon me?

¹³ Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh that we may eat.

¹⁴ I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me.

¹⁵ And if You deal thus with me, kill me, I pray You, out of hand, if I have found favor in your sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.

This prayer does not do honor to Moses, who had seen so much of the power of God. The burdens of care had overtaxed him. He could have borne them all had the people stood by him; but he knew that their perverseness would only be quelled by the display of God's wrath, and he preferred death rather than to see Israel disgraced and their enemies triumph. The Lord heard the prayer of his servant, and the answer came, strong and positive, directing him to gather before him seventy men, whom he knew to be elders in Israel,—men not only advanced in years, but possessing dignity, sound judgment, and experience, and who were qualified to be judges or officers.

Numbers 11

¹⁶ ...and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with you.

¹⁷ And I will come down and talk with you there; and I will take of the Spirit which is upon you, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you bear it not yourself alone.

The Lord allowed Moses to choose for himself the men whom he knew could be the best helpers. These men had shown faithfulness and order in their position as officers and elders, and now they were chosen to bear higher responsibilities. They were to be authority to check the violence of the people and quell any insurrection that might arise. But had Moses shown simple trust and confidence in God, corresponding to his great goodness and mercy, these men would not have been chosen. Serious trouble would eventually result from their enlarged authority. God would have guarded his servant continually, and strengthened him in every emergency, had he relied fully upon him. Moses was not excusable in so nearly imitating the people in murmuring against

God. He magnified his burdens and services, when the Lord was really the worker, and he only the instrument. Poor, weak human nature, how little is it to be trusted!

Moses was commanded to prepare the people for what God was about to do for them:

Numbers 11

¹⁸ Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow, and you shall eat flesh; for you have wept in the ears of the Lord saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt: therefore the Lord will give you flesh, and you shall eat.

¹⁹ You shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days;

²⁰ But even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you, because that you have despised the Lord which is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?

Once before, when they received the manna just before they reached Sinai, the Lord had answered their clamors for flesh-meat. They ate of it only one day, however, and then it was withheld because it was not the best article of food for them. Their murmurings now reflected upon the wisdom of God, as though he did not know just what they needed while traveling in the wilderness. The enemy perverted their imagination. The Egyptians who left Egypt with the Hebrews were accustomed to rich food and flesh-meats, and they were the first to complain. The food of the Israelites in Egypt was generally of the cheapest quality, but hard labor and a keen appetite made it palatable.

In response to the statement of the Lord that the people should have flesh to eat, Moses said,

²¹ The people among whom I am are six hundred thousand footmen; and You have said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month.

²² Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them?

These words expressed a manifest distrust, for which the Lord reproved him saying,

Numbers 11

²³ Is the Lord's hand waxed short? you shall see now whether my word shall come to pass unto you or not.

He who could divide the Red Sea, binding the waters like a wall on either side while Israel passed through on dry land, and could rain bread from Heaven, and bring water out of the flinty rock, could provide meat to supply the host of Israel.

²⁴ And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the Lord, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle.

²⁵ And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spoke unto him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders; and it came to pass, that, when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.

These persons were endowed with the Spirit of the Lord in a similar manner as were the disciples on the day of Pentecost. They foretold the work and mission of Christ, and by their wisdom and fluency of speech evidenced to all men that the power of God was upon them. The Lord saw fit to thus prepare them for their work, and honor them in the presence of the congregation, that confidence should be established in them as men chosen of God to unite their authority with that of Moses in his arduous work of restraining and governing the people during their sojourn in the wilderness.

There were two of the seventy chosen who went not out to the tabernacle. They were not rebellious, but they felt unworthy of serving in such a high and responsible position. But when the Spirit of the Lord rested upon the elders about the tabernacle, it fell also upon them, and they prophesied, speaking words of wis-

dom and eloquence. Then a young man ran to Moses and told him how two men were prophesying in the camp; and Joshua, being jealous for Moses, appealed to him to command them to be silent. But Moses, free from all jealousy, replied,

Numbers 11

²⁹ ...would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!

³¹ And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth.

³² And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails; he that gathered least gathered ten homers; and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp.

³³ And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague.

In this instance the Lord gave the people that which was not for their highest good, because they would have it. They would not submit to receive from the Lord only those things which would prove a benefit to them, but gave themselves up to seditious murmurings against Moses, and against the Lord. God gave them flesh-meats, as they desired, and they suffered the results of gratifying their lustful appetites. Burning fevers cut down very large numbers of the people. Those who had been the most guilty in their murmurings, were slain as soon as they tasted the meat for which they had lusted. Had they received with gratitude the food which God selected for them, of which they could eat freely without injury, they might have retained the divine favor, and they would have escaped the terrible results of their rebellious murmurings.

2. William Foy and Hazen Foss: A Reconsideration

By Frank Zimmerman

Note: This article is included as a reconsideration of Fred Wright's statement that Foy "lost his eternal life for refusing to take up the call of God" (see Chapter 22 of the main book). Fred was basing his conclusion on J. N. Loughborough's book, *The Great Second Advent Movement*, which had some inaccurate historical information.

"I'm curious what J. N. Loughborough relayed about William Foy, in his book *The Great Second Advent Movement*. In a nutshell can you give us an idea of what struck you as faulty in that regard?"

THIS is a very interesting question! But first, some brief background information:

Historical Timeline

William Ellis Foy was born in 1818 and died in 1893. Hazen Little Foss was born in 1819 and died in 1893. Both men were involved in the Millerite phase of the early Adventist movement in America.

Foy was given some visions, prior to the Great Disappointment in the fall of 1844, which he related, and finally published in 1845. Foss was also given some visions, just a few weeks before the Great Disappointment (October 22, 1844), and again shortly after 1844, which he was instructed to relate to the believers. He refused to relate them.

As a side note, Foss' older brother, Samuel, was married to Ellen White's older sister, Mary Plummer Harmon. So there was a bit of family connection between them.

Loughborough's view, which became the standard for most other Adventist church history books, is that Foy and then Foss, were supposed to be *the prophet*, as Ellen White later was. But that each, in turn, refused, and therefore the work was given to

Ellen White. Loughborough relates that Foss, because of his refusal to do the work of the prophet, lost his eternal life. To be fair, this is from a statement Foss made to Ellen White. But Loughborough seems to imply that Foy suffered the same fate, for Loughborough grimly states, “he died shortly after.”

And that was the standard view, until some recent years ago, when an African American Adventist scholar did some investigation into the life of Foy, and found out that he did not die, but lived a fairly long life, as a minister, which is what he had been training for, prior to 1844. This research is in the book, *The Unknown Prophet*, by Delbert W. Baker.

Now I’ll tell you why this story had such an interest for me. When Fred Wright received a calling to preach the message full time (it was not a vision, but more of an internal voice), he saw all the difficulties: the hard labor, the travel, long periods away from home, the betrayals, and so forth. When he saw all that, he thought to himself,

“No! not for me!”

Then he remembered how Foss and Foy had (supposedly) rejected their calls, and had (supposedly) lost their eternal life, and he thought,

“Well, I don’t want that either!”

So he made conditions for the acceptance of the Lord’s call: he would only go where God sent him (by invitation, not by advertising), and he would never ask for money, and if the money dried up, he would quit! That might seem a bit odd, but that’s the deal he made. I believe he strongly disliked the way modern ministers and ministries begged for money. Instead, he believed that “if the work was of God, He would support it.” He also used to say,

“If you work for an employer, is it not right that he pays you? Would you want to work for him, and then also have to raise your own wages?”

So anyway, you can see that the Foss & Foy story were embedded into the beginning of our church. Naturally, then, when I heard about the new history on Foy, I was eager to investigate. And indeed, when you look at Foy’s story, it’s impossible to say that he rejected his call, or turned away from it. And he certainly did NOT “die shortly after” as Loughborough claimed.

Now as to the book, *The Unknown Prophet*. It’s an interesting read, but I felt it was mostly full of “filler” material, to bulk it out into a book length. The actual important details could have been condensed to about 5 or 10 pages.

Nevertheless, involved in this story, especially as Loughborough laid it out, are some interesting questions about God’s character, and how He deals with those whom He directly calls. Does God indeed “cast off” anyone who rejects a call to either a prophetic, or ministerial office? Does such a person lose his eternal life, when he rejects the call?

First, let’s give the brief timeline of Foy’s life (and some dates relating to Foss):

1835	Baptized.
1842 January	First vision 2.5 hours.
1842 February (Friday night)	Second vision 12.5 hours.
3 days later	Starts to share the visions publicly. On Sunday Pastor J. B. Husted and several members of the Bromfield Street Second Methodist Episcopal Church, a White congregation, visited Foy and asked him to come to their house of worship and relate to them his visions.
1842: March to May	Preaches the Advent message.
1842: May to August	Labors manually to support his family.
1842 August until first printing of book (1845)	Continues in ministry.

1844 mid (?)	Third vision (only referred to by Loughborough).
1844 (?)	Fourth vision (referred to by E. G. White).
1844 October: a few weeks before <i>Midnight Cry</i> ended	Foss receives a vision.
1844 (after the Disappointment)	Foss is told to relate the vision. He refuses.
1844 winter	Foss is given the vision again and told to relate it, with warnings.
1844 winter	Foss is given a third vision, people urge him to present it; but he said he was deceived, and then the voice says he has grieved away the Spirit of the Lord, and that he was “released.”
1844 winter	Foss is alarmed, tries to hold a meeting, but can’t remember the visions.
1844 December	Ellen White (Harmon at that time) given her first vision in Portland, Maine. Foy has an “interview” with her. Ellen speaks the next evening and Foy is present. All of a sudden, right in the middle of Ellen’s presentation. Foy let out a shout of joy, rose to his feet, and excitedly “jumped right up and down.” As Ellen remembered, “Oh, he praised the Lord, praised the Lord.” He testifies publicly that her vision was legitimate, just what he had been shown.
1845 spring	Millerites meet and unite on certain points, one of which is the “opposition to all claiming special illumination.”
1845	Foy publishes his two visions “to comfort the saints.”
1845	Ellen White receives visions and relates them. Foss overhears and tells her it was what he had been shown.
1846 (?)	Foy moves to Augusta.

1850	Foy moves to New Bedford, Mass., to answer a call to pastor.
1855	Foy moves to Chelsea, Maine, to pastor a Freewill Baptist congregation there.
1860	Foy moves to Burnham, Maine, to pastor a Freewill Baptist congregation there.
1865	Foy moves to East Sullivan, Maine, still pastoring. Makes a permanent settlement there, until his death in 1893.

Inaccurate Histories

Now we read what Loughborough and other historians (who build on his platform) say:

Great Second Advent Movement (1905), Chapter 8:

As he [Foy] expected the Lord Jesus to come in a very short time, he failed to recognize the fact that a third message was to follow the first and second messages of *Revelation* 14. Consequently the vision was to him unexplainable, and he ceased public speaking. After the close of the prophetic period, in the year 1845, he heard another relate the same vision, with the explanation that “the first and second messages had been given, and that a third was to follow.” Soon after this Mr. Foy sickened and died.

Story of the Advent Message (1926), M. E. Andross, p. 58:

However, it is interesting also to know that even before the disappointment, God was calling men to act as His messengers to the advent believers. In 1842 He gave a man of Boston, William Foy by name, two visions. They related to the new earth and the travels of God’s people to the holy city. William Foy was an educated man, a minister, and an able speaker. Large audiences listened spellbound to his story of what he had seen of the heavenly land. Not long before the disappointment in 1844, God gave him a third vision, in which he saw three steps or platforms, the third extending clear to the kingdom of God. This vision he could

not understand, as he was looking for Jesus to come very soon, and so he did not make it public, as he should have done.

The Story of Our Church (1956), Department of Education, p. 188:

After traveling extensively with his message, Foy was given a third vision shortly before the disappointment. New material was presented to him, showing three platforms, which indicated a third phase in the message from God for that time. His firm belief in the immediate coming of Jesus prevented a clear understanding of the vision. He discontinued public work. A few months later, at a public meeting, while Ellen Harmon was relating her first vision, Foy stood up, shouted, and explained that her vision was the same as his had been. Soon afterward he died.

Light Bearers to the Remnant (1979), R. W. Schwarz, p. 64:

Opposition to private revelations had helped to keep two other advent believers from accepting the divine commission later offered Ellen Harmon. Early in 1842 William Foy, of Boston, a Baptist studying for the Episcopal ministry, received two visions dealing with Christ's soon return and the reward of the righteous. Foy was reluctant to relate the visions publicly, partly because, as a mulatto, he was aware of the prejudice displayed toward men of color. Overcoming his initial reluctance, he accepted the nearness of the advent and related the visions to large audiences throughout New England. Later, however, financial pressures and a third vision, which he could not understand, led Foy to stop recounting his experiences.

These histories reiterate three ideas:

1. That Foy and Foss were supposed to fill the prophetic office that Ellen White later received
2. That Foy ceased preaching because he could not explain or understand the vision.
3. That Foy died soon after 1844.

Point #1 is not easily proved. In the book, *The Unknown Prophet*, Delbert Baker suggests that Foy could have been just a "John the Baptist"-like figure, who played his limited role for a short time,

and therefore was never intended to fill the role of prophet as Ellen White did.

Point #2 does not seem to be backed up by any evidence. Foy did not cease public work, except for the 3 months mentioned in the timeline. The book *The Unknown Prophet* comments:

We can only approximate the time of Foy's third and fourth visions. The best reconstruction points to his receiving both visions during the summer of 1844. We do know that he received all of them before the Great Disappointment and that he traveled and shared them up to that time. We also know that we cannot agree with Loughborough's account that "he ceased public speaking" around 1845 and soon after "sickened and died." We know that Foy lived until 1893, almost 50 more years, and that he continued to pastor, preach, and hold revivals up to the time of his death.

Point #3 is just flat wrong, as Foy lived until 1893. On his tombstone was written the verse:

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7)

The other thing that I am not able to verify right now, from the books I've looked at, is the idea that Foy refused the prophetic call and therefore lost his eternal life. I'm not sure where Fred Wright got this idea, for Loughborough does not directly draw the conclusion; it's only there by implication. Perhaps there is another Adventist history book that made this statement more directly.

The Experience of Hazen Foss

Certainly there is some evidence to show that Foss may have experienced this loss, although it is based on his own confession, as Ellen White records it. She does *not* state, "The Lord showed me that Foss was lost," or any such thing. So there is a question there whether it was actually too late for Foss to repent, or whether his own disappointment and disbelief in the 1844 message caused him to doubt his salvation.

It seems strange that a “lost man” who has no more spiritual interest, should encourage Ellen White to “be faithful” and that “she can have the crown he could have had.” Why should he have such remorse if the Spirit left him? Why should he encourage another to be faithful, when he no longer believes in those things? It is quite possible that Foss was just so disappointed by the failure at 1844, that he himself gave up his faith, and looked at himself as a “lost man,” when this might not have been the case at all, if he had but looked upward. It could have been a sad case of self-pity and remorse, out of control due to a wrong view of God’s character. Ellen White later wrote:

Selected Messages, book 1, pp. 63-64:

I was shown in vision, and I still believe, that there was a shut door in 1844. All who saw the light of the first and second angels’ messages and rejected that light, were left in darkness. And those who accepted it and received the Holy Spirit which attended the proclamation of the message from heaven, and who afterward renounced their faith and pronounced their experience a delusion, thereby rejected the Spirit of God, and it no longer pleaded with them.

If Foss was correct in his assessment that the Spirit of God left him, and that therefore he lost his eternal life, it was not his refusal to relate the visions that cost him his eternal life, but because he “renounced his faith and pronounced his experience a delusion,” as Ellen White states above. God does not reject people, they reject Him, and then He accepts the fact.

Romans 11

²⁹ The gifts and calling of God are without repentance,

–and therefore, the rejection must come from the human side, not from the Lord.

There ARE some Biblical examples of lost people confessing the righteousness of others:

1. Saul confessing David's righteousness, when David reveals that Saul was under his power in the cave (*1 Samuel 24:16-22*)
2. Judas confessing the innocence of Jesus, before the priests, when he casts away the pieces of silver (*Matthew 27:3-5*).
3. The apostate Adventists bowing before the feet of those who are faithful (*Revelation 3:9*).

For evidence of Point #3, there is this:

A Word to the Little Flock, p. 12:

You think, that those who worship before the saints' feet (*Revelation 3:9*), will at last be saved. Here I must differ with you; for God showed me that this class were professed Adventists, who had fallen away, and "crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." And in the "hour of temptation," which is yet to come, to show out every one's true character, they will know that they are forever lost; and overwhelmed with anguish of spirit, they will bow at the saints' feet.

Did Foss have an experience like that? Possibly.

Differences Between Foy and Foss

Here are some of the differences between Foy and Foss:

1. Foy related the visions shown him; Foss didn't.
2. Foy anticipated redemption; Foss didn't.
3. Foy retained his Advent beliefs after the Disappointment; Foss didn't.
4. Foy maintained his religious interest and church connections; Foss didn't.
5. Foy's experience was validated by others; the experience of Foss wasn't.

Let's also consider what Foy did in 1844 and 1845. Apparently he continued ministering. After the Disappointment, he published his visions. Why would he do this, if he had no confidence in them? It certainly was not a favorable time for publishing Advent views, especially not visions, but he went ahead anyway; that re-

quires some faith. Secondly, sometime in 1845, he attends a meeting where Ellen White speaks. Why would he even go to the meeting, if he had rejected God? Ellen White's account of Foy is recorded in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 17, p. 95-97. Here's one paragraph (although it is worthwhile to read the whole thing):

I had an interview with him. He wanted to see me, and I talked with him a little. They had appointed for me to speak that night, and I did not know that he was there. I did not know at first that he was there. While I was talking I heard a shout, and he is a great, tall man, and the roof was rather low, and he jumped right up and down, and oh, he praised the Lord, praised the Lord. It was just what he had seen, just what he had seen. But they extolled him so I think it hurt him, and I do not know what became of him.

So, he REJOICES to hear the same message; he leaps up and down, praising God! That doesn't sound like a lost man. It doesn't sound like someone who rejected the message.

Refusing God's Call

Now let's look at the matter of God's calling of prophets and messengers. Have any others refused God's call? Yes!

1. Jonah. When he ran from the Lord's call, the Lord pursued him, until he relented.
2. Moses. He argued to be relieved from the call for quite a while. But the Lord kept after him, until he relented.
3. Elijah. He ran from his post of duty after the victory on Carmel. The Lord pursued him, and gave him another work.

One might also mention Balaam, as he was once a true prophet. But even in his greed, the Lord held him to the contract, when he was willing to speak the Lord's words.

Did you also know that there is an instance where Ellen White also refused to relate a vision? Here it is:

A Letter to Joseph Bates, July 13, 1847:

After I had the vision and God gave me light, He bade me deliver it to the band, but I shrank from it. I was young, and I thought they would not receive it from me. I disobeyed the Lord, and instead of remaining at home, where the meeting was to be that night, I got in a sleigh in the morning and rode three or four miles and there I found Joseph Turner. He merely inquired how I was and if I was in the way of my duty. I said nothing, for I knew I was not.

I passed up [to the] chamber and did not see him again for two hours, when he came up, asked if I was to be at meeting that night. I told him, no. He said he wanted to hear my vision and thought it duty for me to go home. I told him I should not. He said no more, but went away.

I thought, and told those around me, if I went I should have to come out against his views, thinking he believed with the rest. I had not told any of them what God had shown me, and I did not tell them in what I should cut across his track.

All that day I suffered much in body and mind. It seemed that God had forsaken me entirely. I prayed the Lord if He would give me strength to ride home that night, the first opportunity I would deliver the message He had given me. He did give me strength and I rode home that night. Meeting had been done some time, and not a word was said by any of the family about the meeting.

Very early next morning Joseph Turner called, said he was in haste going out of the city in a short time, and wanted I should tell him all that God had shown me in vision. It was with fear and trembling I told him all. After I had got through he said he had told out the same last evening. I rejoiced, for I expected he was coming out against me, for all the while I had not heard anyone say what he believed. He said the Lord had sent him to hear me talk the evening before, but as I would not, He meant His children should have the light in some way, *so He took him*.

There were but few out when he talked, so the next meeting I told my vision, and the band, believing my visions from God, received what God bade me to deliver to them.

“...so He took him.” Presumably, it means “He [God] took him [Joseph Turner].” So when Ellen White would not relate the vision, God used Joseph Turner. It’s not clear whether he also had a vision, or was just impressed with truth in his mind. But in any case, Ellen White did not “lose her salvation” for refusing to relate this vision. She *does* say though that “it seemed that God had forsaken me entirely.” So it was not a light matter, and she swiftly repented of her stubbornness.

Now, I don’t share this with you so that if the Lord lays upon you some vision, that you should feel at liberty to refuse to share it. But just bear in mind that the Lord has patience, and does not let go of His people. They may let Him go, but He remains faithful. Nevertheless, when God calls, the responses of Isaiah in the Old Testament, and Mary in the New Testament stand out as excellent examples for us:

Isaiah 6

⁸ Here am I; send me.

Luke 1

³⁸ Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to your word.

The Calling of Elisha

Now another interesting example that throws some light on this issue of God’s calling is Elisha:

Prophets and Kings, p. 220:

1 Kings 19

²⁰ And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray you, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you...Go back again, [was Elijah’s answer,] for what have I done to you?

This was not a repulse, but a test of faith. Elisha must count the cost—decide for himself to accept or reject the call. If his desires clung to his home and its advantages, he was at liberty to remain there. But Elisha understood the meaning of the call. He knew it was from God, and he did not hesitate to obey. Not for

any worldly advantage would he forgo the opportunity of becoming God's messenger or sacrifice the privilege of association with His servant.

1 Kings 19

²¹ He...took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

Without hesitation he left a home where he was beloved, to attend the prophet in his uncertain life.

It says, regarding Elisha's calling that "he was at liberty to remain there," if he should choose not to follow Elijah. Really? Was he really "at liberty"? Or would he have lost his eternal life if he decided to refuse the call? Certainly it would have been a more selfish choice if he had refused, and if this selfishness was not overcome, it would eventually have choked out the life of God. But I don't think that God would have seized away Elisha's eternal life and left him a doomed man. He would have continued to work with him, and lead him over the same ground to overcome his selfishness. But perhaps God would have found someone else to be the prophet instead, in the meantime.

God's Character

There's a wonderful series of studies on *Religious Liberty* written by A. T. Jones, and published in 1905. Let's read a few paragraphs from the first study:

Now, though that is the first of all possible relationships, and the first of all duties; though that relationship and duty are inherent in the very existence of intelligent creatures; yet even in that inherent obligation, God has created every intelligent creature *free*—free to recognize that obligation or not, free to discharge that duty or not, just as he chooses. Accordingly it is written:

Joshua 24

¹⁵ Choose you this day whom you will serve.

Revelation 22

¹⁷ Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Thus it is absolutely true that in religion—in the duty which we owe to our Creator and the manner of discharging it—God has created man entirely “exempt from the domination of others and from restricting circumstances;” has made him free “to make his choice, and decide his conduct for himself, spontaneously and voluntarily.”

Thus religious liberty is the gift of God, inherent in the gift of rational existence itself. Any service as to God that is not freely chosen by him who renders it is not service *to God*. There can be no virtue in it; there can be none of God in it. Any service rendered as to God that is not freely chosen on the part of him who renders it cannot be of God; because...

1 John 4

¹⁶ God is love:

—and love and compulsion, love and force, love and oppression, never can go together. Therefore any duty, any obligation, anything, offered or rendered as to God that is not of the individual’s own freely chosen choice, can neither be of God nor to God. Accordingly when the Lord created whatever creature—angel or man—in order that that creature should be happy in the service of God, and in order that there should be virtue in rendering service or worship to God, He created him free to *choose* to do so.

And freedom to choose to do so carries with it, and in it, freedom to choose *not* to do so. Therefore, when God says to all creatures:

Joshua 24

¹⁵ Choose you this day whom you will serve,

...it is left to each creature in the universe to decide for himself in his own freedom what he will do; whether he will serve God or not. And when in that freedom he makes a wrong use of his choice, and chooses not to serve God, *then*, even then, mark it—even then, God, being God, does not persecute him, does not set him at naught, and does not hunt him; He does *seek* him; yet not to pursue him, *but*, as it is stated in the parable of the one sheep that was lost away on the mountain alone, He goes to *find* him, and seeks him to bring *him back*.⁴³

⁴³ Luke 15:4-7.

Therefore note this truth: when God has made every creature perfectly free to choose to serve Him, and in that, free to choose *not* to serve Him—when that creature exercises his choice in the way *not* to serve God, even then God only loves him: for God is only love. The only disposition that God has toward him is to love him, and by every possible means to win him yet to the choice to love him and serve him. That is God, and that is religious liberty.

In these studies, A. T. Jones argues that God gave Adam and Eve perfect liberty to obey or not to obey. He did not build into disobedience some kind of “booby trap” to punish them if they didn’t obey. Instead, God knew that sin would punish man. There was no need to directly punish man, because God’s way is the only way of life, and every other way is the way of death. So you don’t need to kill a man that’s already on the path to death. In other words, God would *not* say,

“In the moment you disobey, I will take away your eternal life.”

That would lead to the obedience of fear, not love. Then why should it be any different in the calling of a prophet? Clear, there is the warning in *Ezekiel* 3:15-21 that if you do not deliver the warning, “their blood will be on your hands.” Ellen White had a similar experience where she saw the frown of Jesus when she would try to soften down the message. It is a serious matter to deliver God’s message faithfully, for the life of souls hangs in the balance. But even such a sin is not the “unforgivable sin.”

When we think about ancient Israel, God never took His sanctuary away from them, even when they were worshiping other idols. The Babylonians and the Romans took the temple away, but God never did. His gifts and calling are without repentance.⁴⁴ However, they did eventually lose the spiritual understanding of these things, and of His word, so that it became quite meaningless to them. This only further demonstrated that it was not God who punished them, but sin that brought darkness and punishment on

⁴⁴ *Romans* 11:29.

the sinner. In like manner, it was not God who removed the Bible from the people, but the papal church. And what was their argument?

“The people are not worthy of the Bible, they will misunderstand and misuse it!”

But in the end it was the papacy that misused the Bible. The very ones who thought themselves capable of protecting the Word, became the ones who distorted it. It is a warning to us. If God were to act like the papacy, then His kingdom would also be one of fear and compulsion.

Then it must be the same with God’s calling. He does not punish people for refusing the call; rather, they punish themselves by making the wrong choice. But He has great patience with them to help them make the right choice; and if they refuse the call, to bring it back to them again.

Those are about the extent of my thoughts. I realize that when I am discussing the finer points of God’s character, that it is holy ground. So I want to be sure that everything is correct. I see the danger that some would act presumptuously if they thought they could avoid God’s commands with impunity. But at the same time, serving God out of fear that He will take away your eternal life, is not the pure...

Romans 8

³⁹ ...love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.



