

The Desolations of Jerusalem 01

From a Presentation by Duane Dewey 21, 11, 2011

Kneel for Prayer: Loving Heavenly Father;

We are grateful this morning to have You with us. We want to invite You into our presence and into our lives. We want to pray that all will receive enlightenment from this message. Bless all as they study Thy Word, and bless us that we may see things about Your movements among us as a people and that You are the Leader of this movement. Please be with us, in Jesus Name Amen.

I have been asked to give some thoughts on the History of Adventism in relation to things we have recently been studying on 'Biblical Hermeneutics' and how it relates to the history of the two charts you see behind me. (1843 and 1850 prophecy charts)

There is an attempt by some today in the church—and I should say that this is not a witch hunt; this is not an attempt to be unkind to those that had these ideas, but we want to try to convince them that they need to see things in a different light. That is really our effort this week. They are brethren and we are as desirous of their eternal welfare as of our own.

1st Angel's Message:

Revelation 14:6 "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the **everlasting gospel** to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,"

When this was first given in the 1840s – Miller began really in the 1830s to give this message, it was the Everlasting Gospel and it is still the Everlasting Gospel today. And there are some in the church beginning around 1890 and coming forward into our own time, they believe that what they see on these charts, is only arithmetic and mathematical calculations. They don't believe that what they see here is the Everlasting Gospel. But the text is clear that what was in this movement, the seer of Patmos declares is the Everlasting Gospel.

Now when we fast-forward into our own time, many of us today do not see it as the Everlasting Gospel, they see Millerite History and the things connected with these two charts as blasé, they see it as past history that we don't need; they want to write it off and throw it into the ash can of Adventist history. But I would say that they are making a great mistake, because in this history is the Lord, Jesus Christ, and He has brought a movement into existence. Without Him the Seventh-day Adventist Church would not exist.

It is our goal to show this week some things about where we are and our concepts and beliefs in regard to the Great Advent Movement of the time of the Millerites, leading on to the time of the Sabbatarian Adventists and you see on this chart—this is the time of the Millerites; this is the time of the Sabbatarian Adventists. The Sabbatarian Adventists came into history after the Great Disappointment of Oct. 22 1844, at the introduction of the Third Angel's Message. The empowerment of the First Angel's Message was on August 11, 1840, this is the Everlasting Gospel. But as in the times of old, there have been some disappointments in the history of God's People.

There are some who understand what Paul writes about in these two texts:

Galatians 3:28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

If you are Christ's then you are Abraham's seed: so the Everlasting Gospel is also in the story of the life of the patriarch Abraham, he is the representative of those who live by faith. The just shall live by faith according to Habakkuk and Romans 1:16, 17.

In the history of ancient Israel they also came to a point where they did not understand the Gospel, and I would submit to you that today in Adventism we don't understand the Everlasting Gospel. We are at a loss to place our history in the correct position of what the gospel was to the Millerites and what the Gospel was to the early Sabbatarian Adventists like Ellen White, James White, and Loughborough. For them what is on these two charts is the Rock of Ages, the Everlasting Gospel. It was to them an encounter with the Saviour.

This is the history of ancient Israel below here, (referring to his chart of dates) and we put them on the board like this because it is line upon line. You can compare the histories to see how the Gospel impacted the Millerites, the Sabbatarian Adventists, and impacted the lives of ancient Israel. The first date is 1921 BC, the call of the Patriarch Abraham. The text in Galatians says "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

The Gospel is about the 'Times of the Gentiles'. Abraham was a Gentile when he was called by God out of Babylon, and he began the peculiar history of God's Remnant Church that will take us through to the close of earth's history and the Second Coming of Christ. The Bible and the Gospel has always been about the Gospel to the Gentiles. The Jews were the special representatives to all the nations of the earth, who represent the Gentile church. Abraham is the representative of the Gentiles and he was called out of Ur of the Chaldees.

Over a millennium, almost two, later you come to the time of the completion of the work of Nehemiah in 408 BC. That is where we pick up our story:

Nehemiah 2:9 "Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. 10 When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel."

There are a lot of things you can understand from this story; I believe Nehemiah is a representative man. He not only represents some of the characters from the Millerite time period, but he also represents you and I as we read this story, if we understand the relationship that God has with His people, which is close, like a father to a son. And the enemies of God do not like to see a man that God uses to be a welfare to the children of Israel—the enemy does not appreciate this. Continuing:

11 "So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days."

Now I don't think it is an accident that this story is talking about three days. I think it is in close relationship to the history of the Millerites where we have the First, Second and Third Angel's messages. Nehemiah was there for three days. Continuing:

12 "And I arose **in the night**, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon."

Notice that it was in the night; it was in a time of darkness that Nehemiah began to view the city. He came to view the city because he had heard of the desolation of the city. The walls were torn down and the work that was supposed to be done in Jerusalem was not yet finished.

He had gone in before the king in his work, and he knew that to go into the king with a sad countenance could cost him his life, but after a time, the trauma from sad reports from the city he loved—Jerusalem—was so great that he could not keep back his feelings. The king noticed it and asked Nehemiah, “What troubles you? are you sick at heart?” Then Nehemiah had to confess his situation that he was concerned for the people he loved and the city of his fathers and the True and Living God. So under these circumstances he had come to view the city for himself. Continuing:

13 “And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire.”

What is transpiring here, if you understand the history of ancient Israel: the broken down gates and walls of Jerusalem are not an anomaly that happened by accident, but in this history they are the results of an experience that was gained through many years of apostasy in the history of the divided kingdom of the north and the south—Israel being in the north and Jerusalem in the south. Nehemiah is here at night looking at the final results and display of this apostasy in the walls of Jerusalem which are broken down and the gates consumed. He is viewing the breach in the walls and the protection for the city was no longer there for the people of God.

Nehemiah was sent under a royal decree—the Fourth decree—of the King of Persia, to finish the work that had begun under the first return of the exiles in 536 BC. under King Cyrus. Then there was another decree under Darius in 519, this is the famous decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus that begins the 2300 day prophecy that ends in October 22, 1844. This history is based on the fact that there had been a breach made in the kingdom of the people of God in the time of the Israelites. I want you to see something about the mercy and love of God in dealing with the breach in the walls of Jerusalem, and what it means to be modern Israel today. Turn to Amos 9:

Amos 9:9-11 “For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.”

This is a promise, and it is prophetic and is being fulfilled. The book of Amos was given in 787 BC, but the promise is being fulfilled, not only in the day of Nehemiah but this promise is also going to be fulfilled in our day. Continuing in Amos 9:

10 “All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.”

That literally took place in the city of Jerusalem when Nebuchadnezzar attacked the city three times, first in 606 and the last in 588 BC when the city was completely destroyed and the temple was burnt. There is a warning here about what it means to not receive the warnings of God if you are His people. Continuing in Amos 9:

11 “In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old:”

This is talking about the same work that Nehemiah now is doing, he is repairing the breaches in the wall. The breaches in Amos is what took place in ancient Israel when the kingdom was divided under Jeroboam and Rehoboam, there was a breach in the Davidic kingdom. That is what it means when it says the tabernacle of David is fallen. The house of David was divided in two halves and it is going to be restored as it was in the old days. There was a time in the history of David and Solomon that the kingdom was united. The promise is that God is going to unite Ephraim and Judah and the story of Nehemiah reflects on that.

Isaiah 11:13, 14. "The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. 14 But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them."

Returning to Nehemiah 2:

13 "And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. 14 Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass. 15 Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned. 16 And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work."

Did you know that most of the leaders in Adventism are not watching this video this morning? They do not know what we are up to; but we do, and Nehemiah had a plan.

16 "And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work. 17 Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach."

This is the history of Adventism. Ellen White has a comment about this in Prophets and Kings: Some believe today that Ellen White is not a guide to understanding the Bible; they do not believe that she is necessary, but nevertheless:

"On the third night after his arrival Nehemiah rose at midnight and with a few trusted companions went out to view for himself the desolation of Jerusalem." {PK 636}

From what we will discuss this week we will see that Jerusalem, modern Israel today, which is the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is in a state of desolation. She is not as she should be: no longer do we believe that this message on the charts is the Everlasting Gospel; these two charts today are in the ash-can of Adventist History and they are not to be used according to many who are speaking from our pulpits. I would contend that these are the breaches in the wall about Jerusalem, and if we would go out like Nehemiah did at night—notice that Ellen White said it was the third night and it was at midnight. This story is full of parallels to the history of the Millerites. It was at the time of the Midnight Cry that the walls were surveyed at the time of the Millerites.

It was a time of darkness when the Advent Truth came into the world. The 1260 years of Papal Persecution ended in 1798. This history also includes the enemies of the people of God and it is really a close relationship in this story to modern Israel.

"On the third night after his arrival Nehemiah rose at midnight and with a few trusted companions went out to view for himself the desolation of Jerusalem. Mounted on his mule, he passed from one part of the city to another, surveying the broken-down walls and gates of the city of his fathers. Painful reflections filled the mind of the Jewish patriot as with sorrow-stricken heart he gazed upon the ruined defenses of his beloved Jerusalem." {PK 636}

These charts are the defenses of Nehemiah's beloved Jerusalem, if today you are Nehemiah. But if you are Sanballat, Tobiah the Ammonite, when they learned that this work was being done it grieved them exceedingly that there was a man to seek the welfare of the Children of Israel. Continuing:

“Memories of Israel's past greatness stood out in sharp contrast with the evidences of her humiliation.”
{PK 636}

I would suggest to you that to transport these histories to the ash-can of Seventh-day Adventist History, Ellen White describes it here, as the evidences of her humiliation.

“In secrecy and silence Nehemiah completed his circuit of the walls. "The rulers knew not whither I went," he declares, "or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work." The remainder of the night he spent in prayer; for he knew that the morning would call for earnest effort to arouse and unite his dispirited and divided countrymen.” {PK 636}

Now with that brief introduction; What we are going to look at this week, is the desolations of Jerusalem and we are going to see how we came to the place where we are today, where there are a thousand voices in Adventism that do not agree on any one given subject. I do believe it is because they have left the foundations. Ellen White writes in Early Writings, p. 74, that in this history of the Millerites all were united—but today we cannot say that. As a matter of fact you can go to any Adventist Church in any state in the union or, for that matter, anywhere on the globe today, and you can find hardly any agreement among us as a people on various doctrinal issues.

In this history, doctrine and the love for souls in Christ have been separated, but really, in reality, the doctrine of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, has always been in this history on the charts. There has never been a time when Christ was not in this history, but we, as a people, have separated Him from that history. Then we went about to remake that history, and in so doing we tried to put Christ back into a history that is not the true history of Seventh-day Adventism. So we don't understand the comment of Ellen White when she writes that the Third Angel's Message is the righteousness of Christ in verity.

In the history of the Millerites and the history of Sabbatarian Adventism what you see is the history of the Righteousness of Christ. In Great Controversy Ellen White writes:

“But so long as Jesus remains man's intercessor in the sanctuary above, the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit is felt by rulers and people. It still controls to some extent the laws of the land. Were it not for these laws, the condition of the world would be much worse than it now is. While many of our rulers are active agents of Satan, God also has His agents among the leading men of the nation. The enemy moves upon his servants to propose measures that would greatly impede the work of God; but statesmen who fear the Lord are influenced by holy angels to oppose such propositions with unanswerable arguments. Thus a few men will hold in check a powerful current of evil. The opposition of the enemies of truth will be restrained that the third angel's message may do its work. When the final warning shall be given, it will arrest the attention of these leading men through whom the Lord is now working, and some of them will accept it, and will stand with the people of God through the time of trouble.” {GC 610.}

This has to do with the story of Nehemiah, there were three enemies in the story of Nehemiah, Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the servant of the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian. The people of God that these men will stand with, are those that have received the message that are on these two prophetic charts. The people of God are those that follow the Everlasting Gospel as contained on these two charts.

“The angel who unites in the proclamation of the third angel's message is to lighten the whole earth with his glory. (Revelation 18)A work of world-wide extent and unwonted power is here foretold. **The advent movement of 1840-44 was a glorious manifestation of the power of God;** the first angel's message was carried to every missionary station in the world, and in some countries there was the

greatest religious interest which has been witnessed in any land since the Reformation of the sixteenth century; but these are to be exceeded by the mighty movement under the last warning of the third angel." {GC 611.}

It was also a manifestation of the power of God when He brought the exiles out of Babylon and modern Israel had the same experience. The history of Nehemiah can be overlaid on the history of the Millerites and also now in the history of Sabbatarian Adventists here at the end of the world. We are down here now in the year 2011, and we are waiting for the Sunday Law. You can discard these truths if you like, but if you take a close look at this history, we are in the year 2011, and the next thing to take place in the United States in fulfillment of Bible Prophecy will be the Sunday Law. Now you might think twice before you throw this history out, in the face of the fact that we are facing the Sunday Law.

Where we have gone astray in Adventism is in our understanding of how we interpret the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. That is why we have so many voices in the church—one man says this, and one says that, but in the story of Nehemiah it says one man. He understood what Jerusalem needed and what he did was go out and survey the ruins of the city—he saw the desolations of the city. This story can give us a lot of courage, because Nehemiah finished the work—the city was rebuilt and the walls thereof. The broken-down walls were repaired and the people of God had a defense.

So if we correctly understand these things, we need to understand how it is we became the remnant people of God through the Divine Word. Turn to 2 Timothy 3:16: now this is the time that Paul is in prison and he is about to be sacrificed—he is about to give his all for the Gospel and he is admonishing his son in the gospel, Timothy:

"16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, **thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**"

Notice what it says, here is the 'man' that was demonstrated in the book of Nehemiah. This is the man that Nehemiah was, and it is the man that God wants us to be—"thoroughly furnished" and it is through God's Word. There is a very enlightening chapter in the Great Controversy about this in the introduction. I find it very interesting that the Spirit of God gives us the Great Controversy—it is on page vii.

"In His word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience. "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, R.V. {GC vii.1}

"Yet the fact that God has revealed His will to men through His word, has not rendered needless the continued presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, the Spirit was promised by our Saviour, to open the word to His servants, to illuminate and apply its teachings. And since it was the Spirit of God that inspired the Bible, it is impossible that the teaching of the Spirit should ever be contrary to that of the word. {GC vii.2}

"The Spirit was not given--nor can it ever be bestowed--to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the word of God is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. Says the apostle John, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." 1 John 4:1. And Isaiah declares, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20." {GC vii.3}

“During the first twenty-five hundred years of human history, there was no written revelation. **Those who had been taught of God, communicated their knowledge to others, and it was handed down from father to son, through successive generations.** The preparation of the written word began in the time of Moses. Inspired revelations were then embodied in an inspired book. This work continued during the long period of sixteen hundred years--from Moses, the historian of creation and the law, to John, the recorder of the most sublime truths of the gospel.” {GC v.2}

Jeff (Pippenger) gave a talk in Leoni Meadows on the four generations of Adventism—if you have not yet seen it, you need to get it and take a look at it. This is not necessarily to limit us to the understanding of a rigid chronological set of time like 70 years to each generation. What it means is the truths of God’s Word were passed on from father to son and that is how it was communicated before there was the written document. Continuing:

“The preparation of the written word began in the time of Moses. Inspired revelations were then embodied in an inspired book. This work continued during the long period of sixteen hundred years--from Moses, the historian of creation and the law, to John, the recorder of the most sublime truths of the gospel.” {GC v.2}

Notice she says that John’s book is the most sublime truths of the Gospel.

“**The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands;** and in the varied style of its different books **it presents the characteristics of the several writers.** The truths revealed are all "given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed have themselves embodied the thought in human language.” {GC v.3}

As you read the material written by the Bible authors you get some insights into the characters of these men. This is marvelous; this is a wonderful thing, that God would condescend to give to us the Everlasting Gospel in the voice and language and thoughts and feelings of men.

“The Ten Commandments were spoken by God Himself, and were written by His own hand. They are of divine, and not of human composition. But the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a **union of the divine and the human.** Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:14. {GC v.4}

I must say that when Ellen White says in Early Writings that the Brethren were united in 1840-44, it was because of the Divine union of the Son of Man and His Divine nature, in the Everlasting Gospel in that history which brought union to their understanding of the Bible truths that are on these two charts. When you look at these two charts, you are looking at the Son of God, whether you recognize it or not and He is the Everlasting Gospel. Now some in the church today would remonstrate against my position but nevertheless, we will push forward:

“Written in different ages, by men who differed widely in rank and occupation, and in mental and spiritual endowments, the books of the Bible present a wide contrast in style, as well as a diversity in the nature of the subjects unfolded. Different forms of expression are employed by different writers; often the same truth is more strikingly presented by one than by another. And as several writers present a subject under varied aspects and relations, there may appear, to the superficial, careless, or prejudiced reader, to be discrepancy or contradiction, where the thoughtful, reverent student, with clearer insight, discerns the underlying harmony. {GC vi.1}

“As presented through different individuals, the truth is brought out in its varied aspects. One writer is more strongly impressed with one phase of the subject; he grasps those points that harmonize with his experience or with his power of perception and appreciation; another seizes upon a different phase; and each, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, presents what is most forcibly impressed upon his own mind--a different aspect of the truth in each, but a perfect harmony through all. And the truths thus revealed unite to form a perfect whole, adapted to meet the wants of men in all the circumstances and experiences of life.” {GC vi.2}

This is critical if you want to understand what it means to be a Seventh-day Adventist here at the end of the world. This is a divinely inspired look at the Word of God;

“God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do this work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. **The treasure was entrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, nonetheless, from Heaven.** The testimony is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language, **yet it is the testimony of God;** and the obedient, believing child of God beholds in it the glory of a divine power, full of grace and truth.” {GC vi.3}

This was demonstrated in the time of the Millerites and Sister White describes it as a “glorious manifestation of the power of God.” To get a good grasp of this you are going to have to read the Great Controversy through several times; you’re going to have to understand the history of the Millerites better than we do today; that will take personal effort on the part of those who want to understand what I am trying to express.

There is a subject that recently inspired this talk this week, I was planning to come here to do something else. I have been privileged to live in a place in California all of my life except for the first four years in Nebraska. I was not born into the church, I was born into a home that was Lutheran. I became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1971, baptized in 1973, and the point at which I began to collect Adventist material, in some respects it has become . . . well . . . I have a lot of books. If I think about moving, it is going to be a lot of work to move all those books. Nevertheless, because of my love for Adventist material--my dear wife Jackie and I have been married now going on 13 years--and she also has come in contact with the two places that I have also used more than any other place to get all the books I have at home on Adventist history.

There are two thrift stores in Loma Linda and they have really been a boon to my experience as an Adventist because all the people who lived and died there since the 1906 era and left their books -- their families didn’t want their books and threw them out, and at the Thrift store we have purchased vast quantities of those books. So Jackie was at the Thrift Store six or eight weeks ago [about September 2011] and she brought this book home. “The role of Biblical Hermeneutics in preserving Unity in the Church”.

This particular book was written by a gentleman who, in his own words, is a ‘progressive’. That word has throughout time, changed its meaning, depending on who is using it. What he means by that is, he is liberal in his thoughts. So some of the things I am going to present come from a liberal or progressive point of view inside of Adventism. What you are going to get to see this week is you are going to get on your mule with Nehemiah and you are going to go about and view the wall for yourself and you are going to get a look at the desolation of Jerusalem.

This little book is one of the means by which we are going to show just how bad it is in the church today, regarding the subject we just covered in reading the introduction of the Great Controversy, how God has given us His Word and how we have interpreted it.

He sets out with this—now I am going to repeat his own words. Our object today is not to discuss any particular doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but in the whole to look at where we have come as a people to view our doctrines in various fashions or light, depending how we understand that we should interpret the Word. He wrote this coming back from the 1995 General Conference at Utrecht, in Europe. This man served the church in employment and in retirement for seventy years. He died at the age of 92.

His forefathers were seventh-day Baptists and the keeping of the Sabbath in his family goes back for 400 years. His ancestors became Millerites and they became Sabbatarian Adventists, but before they were that, they were Sabbath keepers. His name is Raymond Cottrell. This is not to say anything bad about brother Cottrell, but this is to give you his view on what he believes is the correct form of Biblical Hermeneutics.

Now, I do not agree with his understanding, but I thought you might be interested to know, because of the influence he has had in the church, of how he understood that we should interpret the Bible. When you understand these things that I am now understanding, you will see where we are in Adventism. Then you won't have to wonder why we are the way we are—you will know. Then you will see what it means to understand that the church is in desolation.

What he writes here is that he is disappointed because of the lack of unity that he saw there at Utrecht within the denomination as a whole. What happened is this; in that year the North American division wanted to elevate the standard in the church for women's ordination to be accepted. But it was voted down at the General Conference in 1995, and the reason he states that it was, was because the third world population of the church, which now controls the majority of the votes and power within the General Conference, did not agree with the North American decision to allow women's ordination.

He is not writing this per se to discuss women's ordination, but he is writing it to discuss how proper and improper hermeneutics will affect the unity of the church. So he goes on now to give us his understanding of what proper Biblical hermeneutics is, but in doing so he is going to compare the Biblical hermeneutics of William Miller. So you are going to see both sides now, and you can decide for yourself who is correct.

Now if we understand what Ellen White and the Bible has just said about the Bible and its inspiration, you can conclude from what she is stating and what the Bible is saying, you can conclude that this man is in error. Yet he went to his grave, he died in 2003, unfortunately, he went to his grave believing that the sanctuary doctrine is not valid, based on his own hermeneutical principles. These are the hermeneutical principles that were instilled in Desmond Ford. These were the hermeneutical principles that were guiding William W. Prescott; these are the hermeneutical principles that are guiding, not all, but a good portion of the church today. Fritz Guy (?) of La Sierra is guided by these principles. The man that is no longer the president of La Sierra University, Geary,(?) he is still in the denomination. I forget where he went but he has been replaced by someone else, and he is guided also by the same hermeneutical principles as was Raymond Cottrell.

You are going to get a fascinating history this week on how this came into the church, and what work it has been doing and it is still doing in the context of placing these histories in the fourth generation of Adventism and why the fourth generation of Adventism today sees no validity in the foundations of Adventism, and it is based upon the progressive understanding of the Biblical hermeneutics of this one man—Raymond Cottrell.

Let's take a look here at what he says about Biblical hermeneutics. How many know what the word hermeneutics is? The definition is this: he goes through a list of how you can read the Bible; you can read it for pleasure; you can read it for its masterpieces of literary sources; you can read it for

inspiration; consultation or you can just plain read the Bible—whatever your reason for reading it, and he says: “for these modes of Bible reading there is no special training needed.” So if you just want to pick up your Bible, you do not need to be trained. Now I can agree with him on that.

He says, “But for Bible study with the objective of recovering the exact meaning the inspired writers intended their words to convey, a reliable hermeneutics is essential. And what is a hermeneutic? The word hermeneutic is derived from the Greek word hermeneuo; it means to interpret, which in turn was based on the name Hermes. Now who is Mr. Hermes? He is the legendary messenger or interpreter of the gods.”

So he is pagan. So we have within the Christian church, a thing called hermeneutics, based on the name of a pagan god, which helps us to interpret the Word of God. Now, let’s try to match wits with that if we can.

“A Biblical hermeneutic is a method by which to interpret and understand God’s messages to us on record in the Bible.”

We understand the word is being used to define interpretation, but nevertheless, I find it amusing somewhat, that we are using this word to define how to interpret the Divine Word.

About the importance of Biblical hermeneutics, speaking of this historic vote in the General Conference that would not allow the North American Division to get women’s ordination, he say: “that historic vote also escalated awareness of the crucial importance of Biblical hermeneutics in the formation of doctrine and church policy, to the unity of the church to an unprecedented level.”

To him, what he saw there, in earlier parts of the book, he describes what he calls the unlearned condition of the third world Seventh-day Adventist population of the General Conference. They are unlearned and so they do not rightly understand Bible doctrine. To him they are just country bumpkins, unable to understand for themselves the Word of God, because they aren’t properly trained.

So now he goes on to say, “Unless we as Seventh-day Adventists resolve this divisive difference in Biblical hermeneutics, it has the potential of making two Adventist churches inevitable. One for open minded people, (that would be him) who base their conclusion on Bible principles, and one for close-minded people who feel more secure with their immature, literalistic, authoritarian, reading of the Bible.” 50-40

This man was the major contributor to the SDA Bible Commentary.

“For us as Seventh-day Adventists, this hermeneutical issue resolves itself into whether we, as a community of faith, can be mature enough, open enough, to base our reading of the Bible on the weight of Bible evidence, or whether we permit pre-conceived opinions about the Bible to close our minds to the weight of evidence. We urgently need dialogue.”

Now he is going to continue his dialogue and go on to tell us why the Bible is understood in so many different ways. I was personally affected by his statement here, because when I first started studying the Bible, I couldn’t read, and it was through the reading of God’s Word that I am able to do what I am able to do today. He says:

“The Bible is the most remarkable literary document of all times, its concept of life and the existence of all things has influenced the thinking and lives of more people for a longer period of time than any other book. It continues to attract the careful study of a broad spectrum of readers all the way from people who consider it a strictly human product, to others, who are profoundly committed to it as the inspired Word of God.”

You know there are people who are committed to it as the inspired Word of God, but yet their approach to it is from a human standpoint. Continuing:

“and from people scarcely able to read, (that’s me) to scholars that devote their lives to understanding it.”

So I was a guy that once couldn’t hardly read but now, I don’t call myself a scholar, but praise the Lord, that I can read, and it was through His Word that I was enabled to do so.

“No other literary document has attracted as much universal attention or been understood in such a variety of ways, as the innumerable subdivisions of Christendom around the world make evident. Why is so important and influential a piece of literature understood in so many different ways? Is the Bible a sort of Delphic oracle that can mean anything a person wants it to mean? To the contrary; the Bible writers addresses specific messages to particular people in the context of specific historical circumstances.”

Here now he begins to inculcate you into his philosophy of correct Biblical hermeneutics.

“The reason for the oft-contradictory ways in which the Bible is understood, consists of the pre-suppositions, principles and procedures people follow as they read it. Obviously, reliable hermeneutical principles and procedures are of major importance.

“There are two basic methods by which people read the Bible and try to understand it; these two methods look at the Bible from opposite directions and often come to opposite conclusions as to what it means. One reads it from the viewpoint of what its words in translation mean to us today from our modern perspective of life.”

He’s comparing how we read it from our perspective, and how it was written according to the perspective of the times of the men who wrote it. He wants to make a distinction between how we see it, and how they actually intended it to be seen and wrote. He’s saying that how we need to translate it, is from their view of the world and not our own. To rightly understand the Bible we can’t use our view of the world, we have to use their view of the world and he calls this the **Historical Method**.

“One reads it from the viewpoint of what its words in translation mean to us today from our modern perspective of life, society, culture and salvation history, and the world about us as if the writers had us in mind as they wrote.”

Now, I think they did have us in mind as they wrote! The Spirit of God was the One who inspired the book, right? And the men, whether they recognized it or not, that’s an irrelevant point. If they didn’t recognize that they were writing for us, the Spirit of God was writing it for every age. Is that right? Amen!

“The other method reads the Bible looking for the meaning they intended their words to convey from their perspective of life, society, culture, salvation history, and the world, and as their contemporaries would understand that they wrote.”

In other words you have to get into the scan of Daniel and become Daniel to really understand what Daniel is telling you. You can’t understand it from your world perspective. That’s his conclusion.

“Then having found the meaning they intended to convey, this method looks for the Divine principles and instruction reflected in a Bible passage and how they apply to that particular situation in order to know how those principles and instructions apply to us today.

“The first of the two methods of reading and understanding the Bible, usually goes by the name of **Proof-Text Method**, which often takes Bible statements and passages out of their original and historical

and literary context, and applies them directly to our time, often under very different circumstances to which they do not apply. The second usually goes by the name, **Historical Method.**”

Remember this name. when I read this document this was the first time I had heard those words used together in that form. Historically, we are **Historicists**, using the **Proof-Text Method**. Miller was a Historicist; that means that history had to match what the prophecy was saying, the two had to agree. With the **Proof-Text Method** the Bible would agree with history and that was called the Historicist interpretation of the Bible.

[Note: it is also used to show the contrast between those who see that the 70th week prophecy was fulfilled in the past, as opposed to the ‘**Futurist**’ view that places it somewhere in the future.]

But here he is talking about a thing called the **Historical Method** which is not the Historicist method.

“Because it first reads the Bible in its own literary and historical context, with the ultimate objective to understand how to apply its principles and instructions to our time and circumstances.”

With this principle is the reason why Raymond Cottrell went to his grave denying the investigative judgment. That’s how he did it; that’s how Ford did it too.

“The big advantage of the **Proof-Text Method**, if there be any advantages, is that it requires no special training or experience.”

When I first read this it struck me very keenly. The King James Bible, by the way, we are celebrating the 400th year anniversary—I don’t know if you are, but I am. Most people don’t recognize that this is the 400th year of writing of the Authorized Version, the King James Bible, in the English tongue. It really is an achievement. A secular radio program that I listen to sometimes, which is funded by socialists, communists, they had a half hour program on the glories of the King James Bible and how it is a nation builder and a freedom builder and how it brings literacy, education and high attainments to the human race.

I found it frankly quite refreshing, even though it came from a communist, socialist source. But we as Adventists have not recognized what this source has recognized. As a matter of fact, we have taken the King James Bible and thrown it in the ash-can along with our foundational history. William Tyndale said: “I am going to make sure that every plow-boy knows more about the Sacred Word that you do!” and he was speaking to a Roman Catholic prelate. Guess who turned out to be the ‘plow-boy’? William Miller; William Miller is the plow-boy—he was a farmer from upper-state New York, and he was reading his King James Bible, when the Holy Spirit told him, “Go and tell it to the world”. He was fulfilling the prophecy of William Tyndale, with the King James Bible.

So this man says; “The big advantage of the **Proof-Text Method**, if there be any advantages, is that it requires no special training or experience.” AMEN!

“in fact, a person need not be aware of following any method. For most people the big disadvantage of the **Historical Method** is that it does require training and experience.”

How many understood the testimony in Isaiah: 29:11 “And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, **I cannot; for it is sealed:** 12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, **I am not learned.**”

So there is a dilemma there right? One can’t read it because it is sealed and the other can’t read it because he is not learned. They are in a rough place, right?

“For most people the big disadvantage of the **Historical Method** is that it does require training and experience. (you have to be learned) fortunately however, those who have not had the privilege of that training and experience can still follow the **Historical Method** by making use of information those who have that training have provided.”

Isn't that nice? More about that later. To be continued.

Let us kneel for prayer:

Loving Father in Heaven, Lord, it requires more that talent, it requires more that the human, to read the Bible and to study it, and to present these talks. It requires Your Divine Aid. Loving Father in Heaven, we would implore you for those watching and listening on internet and those who are present here today, and myself, that the aid of your Holy Spirit Lord, would encourage us, and strengthen us and give us wisdom above ourselves—even though Lord, we have no training, we speak with stammering lips with no education. We hope dear Lord that by your grace you will teach us Your Word. Be gracious unto us and pour out Your Spirit in Latter Rain power that those that hear these things will understand that they can view the Desolation of Jerusalem and it's not hopeless, but You have a great victory looking forward for those who will stand upon Your Word. We pray in Jesus' Name – Amen!