

END OF TIME SERIES

An Expanded Spirit of Prophecy Study

By Pastor Vance Ferrell

- VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS - BEERSBEBE SPRINGS, TN 37305

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END OF TIME SERIES - PART THIRTEEN

THE GREAT TIME OF TROUBLE

THE GREAT TIME OF TROUBLE AND THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

The little time of trouble began with the setting up of the image and enactment of the national Sunday law. Yet, prior to the close of probation, Satan was restrained from causing all the misery that he desired. Souls needed to be warned and Satan's power was limited. But, when probation for all mankind ends, this restraint is removed.

Immediately, two different powerful agencies begin work. (1) Satan has more freedom to wreak havoc upon the wicked, and (2) the time for the outpouring of God's wrath, as promised in the third angel's message, begins. Satan works through destructions, calamities, and warfare; God sends His angels to pour out the seven vials of the plagues.

The "winds" of disaster, strife, and bloodshed, which good angels have held back till the close of probation, are caused and worked by Satan. He originated them by tempting mankind to sin. Wickedness always brings evil results, but the full impact of those results is held back until probation ends.

The plagues, in contrast, are different. After having extended pleading and mercy to them throughout most of their lives, the plagues are part of God's judgments upon sinners.

As Jesus throws down the censer, He leaves the sanctuary, instructs the angels with the vials of wrath to begin pouring them upon the wicked, and instructs the four angels who hold the four winds to release them –permitting Satan to bring intense devastations and strife to the wicked. Thus, both devastations from Satan and the seven plagues from God –two separate sets of events –simultaneously begin occurring.

The seven last plagues begin at the end of the general close of probation (EW 36, 52, 280282; GC 629; 5T 212). But, in order to avoid confusion, in *Great Controversy*, discussion of the plagues is postponed until after the devastations and strife caused by Satan has been explained.

Here is the arrangement of material in the *Great Controversy* chapter, which takes us from the general close of probation to just before the Voice of God. ("The *Time of Trouble*," chapter 39):

The general close of probation (GC 613:1614:0). Satanic strife and desolations (GC 614:1-615:1). Persecution of righteous, bringing on Jacob's trouble (GC 615:2-620:1). Discussion of how we now need to prepare for the satanic delusions, miracles, and personation of Christ which will soon occur (GC 620:2626:0). The effect of the death decree (GC 615:2) on the righteous is discussed (GC 626:1-627:1). The outpouring of the seven last plagues is presented (GC 627:2-629:1). As He has done in the past, God will care for His faithful ones throughout that terrible time (GC 629:2-634:1).

In the book, *Great Controversy*, there are two mentions of Satan's personation of Christ. The first is found on pages 588-589, and refers to a time before the close of probation. The second is found in chapter 39 (pages 624-625)–but it occurs within a flashback section. That flashback occurs from page 620:2 to page 626:0. (More about this in the section in this chapter on 'Satan Personates Christ.')

The period from the setting up of the image by the threefold union to the close of probation is the little time of trouble, and the time span from the close of probation to the second advent is the great time of trouble.

These troublous times especially affect the wicked. The righteous are more shielded from both. Yet, during the great time of trouble, the wicked heavily persecute and seek to slay the righteous. This brings the faithful into that anguishing experience, known as the time of Jacob's trouble. It is also called their "final conflict" (with the beast and his image).

- 1 -

A TERRIBLE ORDEAL

1 - The terrible power of Satan is unleashed in destructions and combat.

"Four mighty angels are still holding the four winds of the earth. *Terrible destruction* is forbidden to come in full. The . . . winds will be the stirring up of the nations to one *deadly combat*, while the angels hold the four winds, forbidding the terrible power of Satan to be exercised in its fury until the servants of God are sealed in their *forehead*."- *Maranatha*, 175:1.

2 - Only the faithful will be protected at that time.

"*Those only who have clean hands and pure hearts will stand in that trying time*. . . Now is the time, while the four angels are holding the four winds, to make our calling and election sure," *Early Writings*, 58:0, 2.

3 - It is a terrible ordeal.

"The time of trouble such as never was is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess, and which many are too indolent to obtain, It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal. And now, while the precious Saviour is making an atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. God's providence is the school in which we are to learn the meekness and lowliness of Jesus. The Lord is ever setting before us, not the way we would choose, which is easier and pleasanter to us, but the true aims of life, None can neglect or defer this work but at the most fearful peril to their souls." -4 *Spirit of Prophecy, 440-441 (1884 Great Controversy).*

- 2 -

GOD REMOVES HIS PROTECTION FROM THE WICKED

1 - The angels do not prevent Satan's working.

"I was shown that the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way: They place them selves beyond His protection, He warns, corrects, reproves, and points out the only path of safety; then, if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course, independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them.

"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, "-Last Day Events, 242:1-2.

2 - Because God's Spirit is withdrawn.

"Already the Spirit of God, insulted, refused, abused, is being withdrawn from the earth, Just as fast as God's Spirit is taken away, Satan's cruel work will be done upon land and sea." Last Day Events, 242:4.

3 - The wicked are no longer sheltered by God.

"The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn, Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one." -Great Controversy, 614:1.

4 - God's enemies become instruments of destruction.

"God will use His enemies as Instruments to punish those who have followed their own pernicious ways whereby the truth of God has been misrepresented, misjudged, and dishonored." Last Day Events, 242:3.

5 - The destruction of Jerusalem anticipated.

"The Saviour's prophecy concerning the visitation of judgments upon Jerusalem is to have another fulfillment, of which that terrible desolation was but a faint shadow. In the fate of the chosen city we may behold the doom of a world that has rejected God's mercy and trampled upon His law," -Great Controversy, 36:2.

6 - Exercised by evil angels when He permits.

"The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits. There are forces now ready, and only

waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere." *Great Controversy*, 614:2.

- 3 -

THE FOUR WINDS ARE LOOSED AS SATAN IS PERMITTED TO CAUSE GREAT TROUBLES

1 - The armies of Satan are unleashed.

"Angels are belting the world, refusing Satan his claims of the vast multitudes of his adherents. We hear not the voices, we see not with the natural sight the work of these angels, but their hands are linked about the world, and with sleepless vigilance *they are keeping the armies of Satan at bay till the sealing of God's people shall be accomplished.*" -7 *Bible Commentary*, 967/2:2.

2 - The winds (of disaster, strife, and warfare) are loosed.

"John sees the elements of nature, earthquake, tempest, and political strife, represented as being held by four angels. These winds are under control until God gives the word to let them go. There is the safety of God's church. The angels of God do His bidding, *holding back the winds* of the earth, that the winds should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree, until the servants of God should be sealed in their foreheads." -*Testimonies to Ministers*, 444:9.

3 - The stupendous crisis, held back so long, breaks in all its fury.

"The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the strained, restless relations that exist among the nations. They observe *the intensity that is taking possession* of every earthly element, and they realize that *something great and decisive is about to take place –that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.*

"Angels are now restraining the winds of strife, until the world shall be warned of its coming doom; *but a storm is gathering, ready to burst upon the earth, and when God shall bid His angels loose the winds*, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture. .

"A moment of respite has been graciously given us of God. Every power lent us of heaven is to be used in doing the work assigned us by the Lord for those who are perishing in ignorance. The warning message is to be sounded in all parts of the world. . A great work is to be done, and this work has been entrusted to those who know the truth for this *time.*" -*Maranatha*, 266:9-5.

4 - Trouble beyond comparison.

"The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger –a faith that will not faint, though severely tried.

"*The 'time of trouble such as never was'*, is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess, and which many are too indolent to obtain. It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. *The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal.*" -*Great Controversy*, 621:2, 622:4.

5 - Terrible laws will be enacted.

"When Jesus leaves the most holy, His restraining Spirit is withdrawn from rulers and people. They are left to the control of evil angels. *Then such laws will be made by the counsel and direction of Satan that, unless time should be very short, no flesh could be saved.*" -1 Testimonies, 204:0.

Note: The above statements indicate that if time were to last after the close of probation, the wicked would destroy not only the righteous, but also all the wicked.

- 4 -

SATAN PLUNGES THE WORLD INTO CONFLICT AND DISASTERS

1 - The whole world becomes involved in terrible ruin.

"Unsheltered by divine grace, they [the wicked] have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old.

"A single angel destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians and filled the land with mourning. When David offended against God by numbering the people, one angel caused that terrible destruction by which his sin was punished. *The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits.* There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere." -Great Controversy, 614:1-2.

2 - Deadly warfare by the nations will occur.

"Four mighty angels hold back the powers of this earth till the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. *The nations of the world are eager for conflict*, but they are held in check by the angels. When this restraining power is removed, there will come a time of trouble and anguish. *Deadly Instruments of warfare* will be invented. Vessels with their living cargo will be entombed in the great deep. All who have not the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of satanic agencies, but they are to be kept under control till the time shall come for the great battle of Armageddon." -7 Bible Commentary, 967/2:1.

3 - Terrible tragedies will occur.

"I have seen *the most costly structures in buildings erected* and supposed to be fireproof. And just as Sodom perished in the flames of God's vengeance, so *will these proud structures become ashes*. I have seen vessels which cost immense sums of money wrestling with the mighty waters, seeking to breast the angry billows. But with all their treasures of *gold* and silver, and with their human freight *they sink into a watery grave*. Man's pride will be buried with the treasures he has accumulated by fraud. God will avenge the widows and orphans who in hunger and nakedness have cried to Him for help from oppression and abuse.

"The time is right upon us when *there will be sorrow in the world that no human balm can heal*. The *flattering* monuments of men's greatness will be crumbled in the dust, even before the last great destruction comes upon the world.

"Only by being clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness can we escape the judgments that are coming upon the earth." -9 Selected Messages, 418:9-419:1.

- 5 -

THE FAITHFUL ARE BLAMED FOR THE CONVULSIONS AND STRIFE

1 - The faithful are blamed for the time of trouble.

"Those who honor the law of God have been accused of bringing the judgments upon the world, and they will be regarded as the cause of the fearful convulsions of nature and the strife and bloodshed among men that are filling the earth with woe. The power attending the last warning has enraged the wicked; their anger is kindled against all who have received the message, and Satan will excite to still greater intensity the spirit of hatred and persecution." -Great Controversy, 614:9-615:0.

- 6 -

THE WICKED STILL CONSIDER THEMSELVES SERVANTS OF GOD

The counterfeit revival, which began just before the setting up of the image by the enactment of the National Sunday Law, will continue on beyond the general close of probation.

1 - The wicked are filled with satanic religious zeal.

"When God's presence was finally withdrawn from the Jewish nation, priests and people knew it not. Though under the control of Satan, and swayed by the most horrible and malignant passions, they still regarded themselves as the chosen of God. The ministrations in the temple continued; sacrifices were offered upon its polluted altars, and daily the divine blessing was invoked upon a people guilty of the blood of God's dear Son and seeking to slay His ministers and apostles. So when the irrevocable decision of the sanctuary has been pronounced and the destiny of the world has been forever fixed, the inhabitants of the **earth** will know it not. The forms of religion will be continued by a people from whom the Spirit of God has been finally withdrawn; and the satanic zeal with which the prince of evil will inspire them for the accomplishment of his malignant designs, will bear the semblance of zeal for God."-Great Controversy, 615:1.

-7 -

SATAN WILL WORK GREAT MIRACLES

1 - Miracle-working demons and men display satanic power.

"Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects will be alike deceived. Persons will arise pretending to be Christ Himself, and claiming the title and worship which belong to the world's Redeemer. They will perform wonderful miracles of healing and will profess to have revelations from heaven contradicting the testimony of the Scriptures." Great Controversy, 624:1.

- 8 -

SATAN PERSONATES CHRIST

In the book, Great Controversy, there are two mentions of Satan's personation of Christ. The first is found on pages 588-589, and refers to a time before the close of probation. The second is found in chapter 39 (pages 624-625) –but it occurs within a flashback section. That flashback occurs from page 620:2 to page 626:0.

Before and after that flashback, we are being told about Jacob's trouble, and the agonizing experience of God's people just before their deliverance by the Voice of God.

Thus it would appear that the second mention of Satan's personation of Christ in Great Controversy –actually refers to his appearance prior to the close of probation. Of course, Satan may also appear after the close of probation. The crucial point here is that Satan definitely will appear before the close of probation-while the faithful are giving the loud cry.

In order to understand this for yourself, carefully read GC 621:2-625:1. Here is the arrangement of this flashback:

Jacob's trouble (GC 615:2-620:1).

Flashback begins:

The preparation we should now be making (GC 620:2-623:3). Satan will soon begin presenting fearful sights of a supernatural nature to us, and will work miracles (GC 624:1). Satan will personate Christ (GC 624:2-625:2).

We must now prepare for what is soon to come –when Satan will appear as Christ and tell the people they should keep Sunday instead of the Sabbath (GC 625:3-626:0).

Flashback ends.

More on the Jacob's trouble crisis, brought on by the death decree (GC 626:1-627:1). The plagues are poured out (GC 627:2-etc.).

1 - Satan will personate Christ.

"As the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ draws near, satanic agencies are moved from beneath. Satan will not only appear as a human being, but *he will personate Jesus Christ*; and the world that has rejected the *truth* will receive him as the Lord of lords and King of kings." -5 *Bible Commentary*, 1105/2:4-1106/1:0.

2 - This dazzling being will appear in different parts of the world.

"As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, *Satan himself will personate Christ*. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now *the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come*. *In different parts of the earth*, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, *resembling the description* of the Son of God given by John in Revelation," (*Revelation 1:13-15*) -*Great Controversy*, 624:2.

"The *glory that surrounds him* is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: 'Christ has come! Christ has come!' The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he *lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing* upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. *His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody*. In gentle, compassionate tones he *presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths* which the Saviour uttered; he *heals the diseases* of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, *he claims to have changed the Sabbath* to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. *This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion*. Like the Samaritans who were deceived by Simon Magus, the multitudes, from the least to the

greatest, give heed to these sorceries, saying: This is 'the great power of God.' Acts 8:10.

"But the people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures. His blessing is pronounced upon the worshipers of the beast and his image, the very class upon whom the Bible declares that God's unmingled wrath shall be poured out." -*Great Controversy, 624:2-625:1.*

3 - He is not permitted to counterfeit Christ's coming in the skies with glory and thousands of angels.

"And, furthermore, Satan *is not permitted to counterfeit the manner of Christ's advent.* The Saviour has warned His people against deception upon this point, and has clearly foretold the manner of His second coming. 'There shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. . Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightening cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.' Matthew 24:24-27, 31; 25:31; Revelation 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. *This coming there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known –witnessed by the whole world.*

"Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive. By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in his disguise. To *all the testing time will come.* By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed. Are the people of God so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible and the Bible only? Satan will, if possible, prevent them from obtaining a preparation to stand in that day. He will so arrange affairs as to hedge up their way, entangle them with earthly treasures, cause them to carry a heavy, wearisome burden, that their hearts may be overcharged with the cares of this life and the day of trial may come upon them as a thief." *Great Controversy, 625:2-626:0.*

- 9 -

THE DEATH DECREE

We earlier saw clearly that the National Sunday law initiates the loud cry of the third angel and the placement of the seal and mark. But could the "decree" of 5 *Testimonies, 212* be the "death decree," instead of the "Sunday law decree"? Here is a brief comparison of the two decrees:

The *Sunday law decree* is made by the image beast (5T 451; Rev 13:11-17). It is the test before we are sealed (7BC 976). Every nation on earth enacts a similar one (6T 395). It contains the threat of death (5T81). It causes a great sifting in the church (5T 81). It will be the test before the Loud Cry (5T 81-82; 6T 401; 2SM 380).

The *universal death decree* is made after the close of probation (EW 282, 34, 37; GC 615). It is made by a world-wide legislature (EW 282; PK 512). After a certain period of time, people are given liberty to kill the saints (GC 615). It cannot be made before the close of probation (GC 610-611). It marks the commencement of the Time of Jacob's Trouble (EW 36-37).

So we see that the *Sunday law decree* will not be made after the close of probation, for it will be the great final probationary test. In contrast, the *universal death*

decree cannot be made before probation's close, and it directly precedes that climatic post-probation event –Jacob's trouble –which ends at the sounding of the Voice of God.

Two intriguing passages, quoted below, reveal the stipulations of the death decree (1 T 353-354), and who enacts it (5T 213):

1 - Evil laws are made, which would result in destroying everyone.

"When Jesus leaves the most holy, His restraining Spirit is withdrawn from rulers and people. They are left to the control of evil angels.

Then such laws will be made by the counsel and direction of Satan, that unless time should be very short, no flesh could be saved,"- 1 Testimonies, 204.

2 - A death decree is issued.

"As the Sabbath has become the special point of controversy throughout Christendom, and religious and secular authorities have combined to enforce the observance of the Sunday, the persistent refusal of a small minority to yield to the popular demand will make them objects of universal execration. *If will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an Institution of the church and a law of the state ought not to be tolerated;* that it is better for them to suffer than for whole nations to be thrown into confusion and lawlessness. The same argument eighteen hundred years ago was brought against Christ by the 'rulers of the people.' 'It is expedient for us,' said the Wily Caiaphas, 'that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.' John 11:50. This argument will appear conclusive; and a decree *will finally be issued against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death.* Romanism in the Old World and apostate Protestantism in the New will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts." *Great Controversy, 615:2-616:0.*

"A decree *went forth* to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance."- *Early Writings, 96:2-97:0.*

3 - It will be a universal decree.

"Especially will the wrath of man be aroused against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and at last a *universal* decree *will* denounce *them as deserving of death.*"-*Prophets and Kings, 512:1,*

Note: The death decree will apparently be a joint, simultaneous decree made by all nations.

4 - It comes after the close of probation.

"*When this time of trouble comes, every case is decided; there is no longer probation, no longer mercy for the impenitent.* The seal of the living God is upon His people, This small remnant, unable to defend themselves in the deadly conflict with the powers of earth that are marshaled by the dragon host, make God their defense. The decree has been passed by the highest earthly authority that they shall worship the beast and receive his mark under pain of persecution and death."-*5 Testimonies, 219:0.*

5 - It is to take effect at a certain time.

"Then I saw *the leading men of the earth* consulting together, and Satan and his angels busy around them. *I saw a writing, copies of which were scattered in different parts of the land,* giving orders that unless the saints should yield their peculiar faith, give

up the Sabbath, and observe the first day of the week, *the people were at liberty after a certain time to put them to death*. But in this hour of trial the saints were calm and composed, trusting in God and leaning upon His promise that a way of escape would be made for them. *In some places, before the time for the decree to be executed, the wicked rushed upon the saints to slay them; but angels in the form of men of war fought for them. Satan wished to have the privilege of destroying the saints of the Most High; but Jesus bade His angels watch over them. God would be honored by making a covenant with those who had kept His law, in the sight of the heathen round about them; and Jesus would be honored by translating, without their seeing death, the faithful, waiting ones who had so long expected Him.*" -*Early Writings, 282:2-283:0*.

6 - This decree will be similar to that issued by the Persian king in the time of Queen Esther (see PK 598-606).

"The decree that will finally go forth against the remnant people of God will be *very similar to that Issued by Ahasuerus against the Jews*. Today the enemies of the true church see in the little company keeping the Sabbath commandment, a Mordecai at the gate. The reverence of God's people for His law is a constant rebuke to those who have cast off the fear of the Lord and are trampling on His Sabbath." -*Prophets and Kings, 605:2*.

"If the people of God will put their trust in Him and by faith rely upon His power, *the devices of Satan will be defeated* in our time as signally as in the days of *Mordecai*." -*Last Day Events, 259:1*.

7 - The decree requires that (1) the faithful must violate God's Sabbath and not rest on it, and (2) they must worship on the Sunday, or else they will die.

"The decree will go forth that *they must disregard the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and honor the first day, or lose their lives*; but they will not yield, and trample under their feet the Sabbath of the Lord, and honor an institution of papacy. Satan's host and wicked men will surround them, and exult over them, because there will seem to be no way of escape for them." - *1 Testimonies, 353:4-354:0*.

- 10 -

SATAN'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IS TO DESTROY SABBATH KEEPERS

1 - He wants a law to exterminate.

"Says the great deceiver . . . *'Our principle concern is to silence this sect of Sabbathkeepers . . . We will finally have a law to exterminate all who will not submit to our authority.'*" - *Testimonies to Ministers, 472:2.473:1*.

2 - He will try to blot them from the earth.

"*It is the purpose of Satan to cause them to be blotted from the earth* in order that his supremacy of the world may not be disputed." - *Testimonies to Ministers, 37:0*.

3 - He will stir up the wicked to destroy them.

"The remnant church will be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts. Satan numbers the world as his subjects. He has gained control of the apostate churches; but here is a little company that are resisting his supremacy. *If he could blot them from the earth*, his triumph would be complete. As he influenced the heathen nations to destroy Israel, so in the near future *he will stir up the wicked powers of earth to destroy the people of God*." - *9 Testimonies, 231:1*.

4 - The faithful will be blamed for the judgments.

"I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the Sanctuary, and then will come the seven last plagues. These plagues enraged the wicked against the righteous; *they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us, the plagues would then be stayed.*" - *Early Writings*, 36:2.

5 - Sabbathkeeping will be declared to be the problem.

"When the angel of mercy folds her wings and departs, Satan will do the evil deeds he has long wished to do. Storm and tempest, war and bloodshed –in these things he delights, and thus he gathers in his harvest. And so completely will men be deceived by him that *they will declare that these calamities are the result of the desecration of the first day of the week.* From the pulpits of the popular churches will be heard the statement that the world is being punished because Sunday is not honored as it should be." *Last Day Events*, 256:3.

- 11 -

THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE

Both the righteous and the wicked suffered in the *small time of trouble*, during the loud cry. The close of probation initiates the *great time of trouble*, when Satan will plunge the world into even greater misery than before. But the enactment of the death decree will mark the beginning of the greatest emotional crisis for the faithful: *Jacob's trouble*.

This topic is so important that it is discussed in a lengthy passage in *Great Controversy*. You will want to carefully read it: GC 618:2-623:2 (PP 195-203 is similar). We will only quote part of the passage here.

1 - The issuance of the death decree begins Jacob's trouble for God's people.

"I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary, and then will come the seven last plagues. These plagues enraged the wicked against the righteous; they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us, the plagues would then be stayed. *A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob's trouble.*" -*Early Writings*, 36:2-37:0.

2 - The final crisis for God's people. "Friday [Jan. 18, 1884] night several heard my voice exclaiming, 'Look, Look!' Whether I was dreaming or in vision I cannot tell. I slept alone.

"The time of trouble was upon us. I saw our people in great distress, weeping and praying, pleading the sure promises of God, while the wicked were all around us mocking us and threatening to destroy us. They ridiculed our feebleness, they mocked at the smallness of our numbers, and taunted us with words calculated to cut deep. They charged us with taking an independent position from all the rest of the world. They had cut off our resources so that we could not buy or sell, and they referred to our abject poverty and stricken condition. They could not see how we could live without the world. We were dependent on the world, and we must concede to the customs, practices, and laws of the world, or go out of it. If we were the only people in the world whom the Lord favored, the appearances were awfully against us.

"They *declared* that they had the truth, that miracles were among them; that angels from heaven talked with them and walked with them, that great power and signs

and wonders were performed among them, and that this was the temporal millennium they had been expecting so long. *The whole world was converted and in harmony with the Sunday law, and this little feeble people stood out defiance of the laws of the land and the law of God, and claimed to be the only ones right on the earth.*" -3 *Selected Messages*, 427:4,-428:1.

3 - It is a time of affliction and distress.

"The people of God will then [when the death decree is enacted] be *plunged Into those scenes of affliction and distress* described by the prophet as the time of Jacob's trouble. 'Thus saith the Lord: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. . All faces are turned into paleness. Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it. It is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.' Jeremiah 30:5-7.

"Jacob's night of anguish, *when he wrestled in prayer for deliverance from the hand of Esau* (Genesis 32:24-30), represents the experience of God's people in the time of trouble. "-*Great Controversy*, 616:1-2 (*5T* 451:2).

4 - It is a time of wrestling in prayer.

"As Satan influenced Esau to march against Jacob, so *he will stir up the wicked to destroy God's people In the time of trouble*. And as he accused Jacob, he will urge his accusations against the people of God. He numbers the world as his subjects; but *the little company who keep the commandments of God are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete.*" -*Great Controversy*, 618:2.

5 - Only God can help them.

" 'And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book' [Daniel 12:1]. When this time of trouble comes, every case is decided; there is no longer probation, no longer mercy for the impenitent. The seal of the living God is upon His people.

"*This small remnant, unable to defend themselves in the deadly conflict with the powers of earth that are marshaled by the dragon host, make God their defense*. The decree has been passed by the highest earthly authority that they shall worship the beast and receive his mark under pain of persecution and death. *May God help His people now, for what can they then do in such a fearful conflict without His assistance!*" - *5 Testimonies*, 212:5-218:0.

6 - Satan accuses God's people.

"As Satan accuses the people of God on account of their sins, the Lord permits him to try them to the uttermost. Their confidence in God, their faith and firmness, will be severely tested. As they review the past, their hopes sink; for in their whole lives they can see little good. They are fully conscious of their weakness and unworthiness. *Satan endeavors to terrify them* with the thought that their cases are hopeless, that the stain of their defilement will never be washed away. He *hopes so to destroy their faith* that they will yield to his temptations and turn from their allegiance to God."-*Great Controversy*, 618:8-619:0.

7 - Their deepest concern is for God's glory, not for their own lives or salvation.

"Though God's people will be surrounded by enemies who are bent upon their

destruction, yet the anguish which they suffer is not a dread of persecution for the truth's sake; *they fear that every sin has not been repented of*, and that through some fault in themselves they will fail to realize the fulfillment of the Saviour's promise: 'I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world.' Revelation 3:10. If they could have the assurance of pardon they would not shrink from torture or death; *but should they prove unworthy*, and lose their lives because of their own defects of character, *then God's holy name would be reproached.*" *Great Controversy*, 619:1.

8 - Scattered in groups, God's people will be tried singly.

"The people of God are not at this time all in one place. *They are in different companies and in all parts of the earth; and they will be tried singly*, not in groups. Every one must stand the test for himself." -4 *Bible Commentary*, 1149/2:2.

"The faith of individual members of the church will be tested as *though there were not another person in the world.*"-7 *Bible Commentary*, 989/1:1.

- 12 -

A FINAL SPECIAL TEST

The time of Jacob's trouble will be a final special test for a final, special degree of character perfection. In order to properly understand this, we need to compare it with the test given Christ in Gethsemane. It was there that Christ took the cup and baptism of suffering. By it He was perfected (Hebrews 5:8-9). Yet, before entering upon that final test, Christ was already without sin. So the final test will be, not a removal of sin, but a special experience in trusting the Father in the midst of very crucial trials.

1 - Trusting in God, crying to God submitting to His will, pleading for deliverance—they drink the cup and are baptized with the baptism.

"I saw measures taken against the company who had the light and power of God. Darkness thickened around them; *yet they stood firm, approved of God, and trusting In Him. I saw them perplexed; next I heard them crying unto God earnestly*. Day and night their cry ceased not: 'Thy will, O God, be done! If it can glorify Thy name, make a way of escape for Thy people! Deliver us from the heathen around about us. They have appointed us unto death; but Thine arm can bring salvation.' These are all the words which I can bring to mind. *All seemed to have a deep sense of their unworthiness and manifested entire submission to the will of God; yet, like Jacob, every one, without an exception, was earnestly pleading and wrestling for deliverance.*

"Soon after they had commenced their earnest cry, the angels, in sympathy, desired to go to their deliverance. But a tall, commanding angel suffered them not. He said, 'The will of God is not yet fulfilled. They must drink of the cup. They must be baptized with the baptism.' "-*Early Writings*, 272:1.

2 - The delay is the best answer to their prayers.

"Could men see with heavenly vision, they would behold companies of angels that excel in strength stationed about those who have kept the word of Christ's patience. With sympathizing tenderness, angels have witnessed their distress and have heard their prayers. They are waiting the word of their Commander to snatch them from their peril. But they must wait yet a little longer. *The people of God must drink of the cup and be baptized with the baptism*. The very delay, so painful to them, is the best answer to their *petitions.*"-*Great Controversy*, 690:2-691:0.

3 - It is a crucible to refine their characters.

"The time of trouble is the crucible *that is to bring out Christlike characters*. It is designed to *lead the people of God to renounce Satan and his temptations*." -Maranatha, 279:4.

4 - All sins have previously been repented of and forsaken.

"Had not Jacob *previously repented of his sin* in obtaining the birthright by fraud, God would not have heard his prayer and mercifully preserved his life. So, in the time of trouble, *if the people of God had unconfessed sins* to appear before them while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed; despair would cut off their faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God for deliverance. But while they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, *they have no concealed wrongs* to reveal. *Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment and have been blotted out*, and they cannot bring them to remembrance." -Great Controversy, 620:1. [For more on the accusations of Satan against God's people at this time, read these important passages: 5T 467-476; PK 582-592; GC 482-485.]

5 - They will be aware of short comings.

"God's people. . . *will have a deep sense of their shortcomings*, and as they review their lives their hopes will sink. But remembering the greatness of God's mercy, and *their own sincere repentance*, they will plead His promises made through Christ to helpless, repenting sinners. Their faith will not fail because their prayers are not immediately answered. They will lay hold of the strength of God, as Jacob laid hold of the Angel, and the language of their souls will be, 'I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.' "- Patriarchs and Prophets, 202:1.

6 - The objective: a perfect reflection of Christ.

"Jacob's history is also an assurance that God will not cast off those who have been deceived and tempted and betrayed into sin, but who have returned unto Him with true repentance. While Satan seeks to destroy this class, *God will send His angels to comfort and protect them in the time of peril*. The assaults of Satan are fierce and determined, his delusions are terrible; but the *Lord's eye is upon His people*, and His ear listens to their cries. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but *the Refiner will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire*. God's love for His children during the period of their severest trial is as strong and tender as in the days of their sunniest prosperity; but it is needful for them to be placed in the furnace of fire; *their earthliness must be consumed, that the Image of Christ may be perfectly reflected*."-Great Controversy, 621:1.

7 - We, today, may and should seek such a deeper experience.

"The season of distress and anguish before us will require a *faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger* –a faith that will not faint though severely tested. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time. Jacob prevailed because *he was persevering and determined*. His victory is an evidence of *the power of importunate prayer*. All who will lay hold of God's promises, as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. *Those who are unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for His blessing*, will not obtain it. Wrestling with God –how few know what it is! How few have ever had their souls drawn out after God with intensity of desire until every power is on the stretch. When waves of despair which no language can express sweep over the suppliant, how few *cling with unyielding faith to the promises of God*.

"Those who exercise but little faith now, are in the greatest danger of falling under the power of satanic delusions and the decree to compel the conscience. And even if they endure the test they will be plunged into deeper distress and anguish in the time of trouble, because they have never made it a *habit to trust in God*. The lessons of faith which they have neglected they will be forced to learn under a terrible pressure of discouragement.

"We should now acquaint ourselves with God by proving His promises. Angels record every prayer that is earnest and sincere. We should rather dispense with selfish gratifications than neglect communion with God. The deepest poverty, the greatest self-denial, with His approval, is better than riches, honors, ease, and friendship without it. We must take time to pray. If we allow our minds to be absorbed by worldly interests, the Lord may give us time by removing from us our idols of gold, of houses, or of fertile lands." -Great Controversy, 621:2-622:2.

8 - It is now –not later–that we are to separate sin from our lives, and become perfect in Christ.

"Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself: 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.' John 14:30. Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.

"It is in this life that we are to separate sin from us, through faith in the atoning blood of Christ. Our Precious Saviour invites us to join ourselves to Him, to unite our weakness to His strength, our ignorance to His wisdom, our unworthiness to His merits. God's providence is the school in which we are to learn the meekness and lowliness of Jesus. The Lord is ever setting before us, not the way we would choose, which seems easier and pleasanter to us, but the true aims of life. It rests with us to co-operate with the agencies which Heaven employs in the work of conforming our characters to the divine model. None can neglect or defer this work but at the most fearful peril to their souls." -Great Controversy, 623:1-2.

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THE RIGHTEOUS FLEE TO SECLUDED LOCATIONS ESPECIALLY IN THE MOUNTAINS

1 - God will lead His people to safe refuges, if they will but obey His marching orders (and those orders include getting out of the cities!).

"During the night a very impressive scene passed before me. There seemed to be great confusion and the conflict of armies. A messenger from the Lord stood before me, and said, 'Call your household. I will lead you; follow me. ' He led me down a dark passage, through a forest, then through the clefts of mountains, and said, 'Here you are safe. ' There were others who had been led to this retreat. The heavenly messenger said, 'The time of trouble has come as a thief in the night, as the Lord warned you it would come.'" -Maranatha, 270:3.

2 - In the (great) time of trouble, the last of the faithful leave the cities and

villages.

"In the time of trouble *we all fled from the cities and villages*, but were pursued by the wicked, who entered the houses of the saints with a sword. They raised the sword to kill us, but it broke, and fell as powerless as a straw. Then we all cried day and night for deliverance, and the cry came up before God. "*-Early Writings, 34:1.*

3 - They go to solitary places.

"I saw the saints *leaving the cities and villages, and associating together in companies, and living in the most solitary places*. Angels provided them food and water, while the wicked were suffering from hunger and thirst." *-Early Writings, 282:2.*

4 - While some left the cities earlier, others (waiting too long) are imprisoned.

"As the decree issued by the various rulers of Christendom against commandment keepers shall withdraw the protection of government and abandon them to those who desire their destruction, *the people of God will flee from the cities and villages and associate together in companies, dwelling in the most desolate and solitary places. Many will find refuge in the strongholds of the mountains*. Like the Christians of the Piedmont valleys, they will make the high places of the earth their sanctuaries and will thank God for 'the munitions of rocks.' Isaiah 33:16. But many of all nations and of all classes, high and low, rich and poor, black and white, will be cast into the most unjust and cruel bondage. The beloved of God *pass weary days, bound in chains, shut in by prison bars, sentenced to be slain, some apparently left to die of starvation* in dark and loathsome dungeons. No human ear is open to hear their moans; no human hand is ready to lend them help.

"Will the Lord forget His people in this trying hour? Did He forget faithful Noah. . Joseph. Elijah. . Jeremiah. . the three worthies. *.Daniel?*"-*Great Controversy, 626:1.*

5 - Houses and lands will then be useless.

"*Houses and lands will be of no use to the saints in the time of trouble*, for they will then have to flee before infuriated mobs, and at that time their possessions cannot be disposed of to advance the cause of present truth.

"I saw that if any held on to their property, and did not inquire of the Lord as to their duty,' He would not make duty known, and they would be permitted to keep their property, and in the time of trouble it would come up before them like a mountain to crush them, and they would try to dispose of it, but would not be able. . *But if they desired to be taught, He would teach them, in a time of need, when to sell and how much to sell.*"-*Early Writings, 56:9, 57:1.*

6 - God will provide for His people's needs in the great time of trouble.

"The Lord has shown me repeatedly that *it is contrary to the Bible to make any provision for our temporal wants in the time of trouble*. I saw that if the saints had food laid up by them or in the field in the time of trouble, when sword, famine, and pestilence are in the land, it would be taken from them by violent hands, and strangers would reap their fields.

"Then will be the time for us to trust wholly in God, and He will sustain us. I saw that *our bread and water will be sure* at that time, and that *we shall not lack or suffer hunger*, for God is able to spread a table for us in the wilderness. If necessary He would send ravens to feed us, as He did to feed Elijah, or rain manna from heaven, as He did for the Israelites." *-Early Writings, 56:2.*

"The time of trouble is just before us, and then stern necessity will require the people of God to deny self and to eat merely enough to sustain life, but God will prepare us for that time. *In that fearful hour our necessity will be God's opportunity* to impart His strengthening power and to sustain His people."- 1 *Testimonies*, 206:1.

"*Bread and water* is all that is promised to the remnant in the time of trouble." - *Story of Redemption*, 129:2.

7 - None will then need to work to support themselves.

"I saw that a time of trouble was before us, when stern necessity will compel the people of God to live on bread and water. . *In the time of trouble none will labor with their hands*. Their sufferings will be mental, and God will provide food for *them*."-*Last Day Events*, 265:1.

8 - Angels will care for them.

"In the time of trouble, just before the coming of Christ, the righteous will be preserved through the ministration of heavenly angels." -*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 256:1.

"In the midst of the time of trouble that is coming –a time of trouble such as has not been since there was a nation –God's chosen *people will stand unmoved*. Satan and his host cannot destroy them, for *angels that excel in strength will protect them*." -9 *Testimonies*, 17:1.

- 14 -

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

We are listing this event in the sequence given in chapter 39 of *Great Controversy*. But we are told that it actually begins as soon as Jesus leaves the sanctuary (GC 627:2), and the wicked begin to oppress God's people (GC 627:1). In that important book, the plagues (627:2-629:0) are purposely not described immediately following Christ's departure from the sanctuary. If they had, the description of the plagues would have been intermingled with the description of the desolations caused by Satan, thus confusing the two. To avoid this, chapter 39 was arranged so that the two would be clearly separated.

Jesus wears priestly garments in the heavenly sanctuary. When probation ends, he leaves that structure and, at the entrance, removes those robes and, in their place, puts on the garments of vengeance (EW 281 :1). The time has come for Him to command His angels to begin pouring out the plagues upon the wicked in retribution for what they have done and are doing to the righteous. He gives that command.

It is quite clear that two different desolating series of events begin as soon as worldwide probation ends: (1) The four winds are loosed, and Satan is permitted to bring disasters and plunge the world into strife (GC 614:1). (2) Christ commands His own angels to begin pouring out the seven last plagues upon the wicked (GC 627:1, 2; 628:0). In each case, the wording is definite: Christ permits the "four wind" desolations which Satan produces, while Satan has no part in bringing the plagues which God sends.

The plagues, discussed in some detail in *Great Controversy*, 627:2-630:0, actually begin as soon as probation closes, and Jesus puts on His garments of vengeance.

Although the crisis was reached when all nations passed the Sunday law, yet

mercy continued until everyone had been clearly shown the issues involved. Then probation closes and the wrath is poured out.

For a far more extensive comparative analysis of this subject, see our ten-part tract set, *The Terrible Storm*, now in section two of our tractbook, *Offshoots*.

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THE JUDGMENTS SENT DIRECTLY FROM GOD

God not only permits Satan to bring strife and conflict (by letting His angels unloose the four winds), but He also, at times, directly sends judgments (as in the seven last plagues) but these are only given to the incorrigibly wicked. (See our tractbook, *The Terrible Storm*.) He never directly sends judgments upon the undecided; only the totally reprobate receive God's outpoured wrath.

1 - Justice is shown in punishing the sinner.

"It is the glory of God to be merciful, full of forbearance, kindness, goodness, and truth. But *the justice shown in punishing the sinner* is as verily the glory of the Lord as is the manifestation of His mercy." -*Last Day Events*, 240:1.

"*The Lord God of Israel is to execute judgment upon the gods of this world as upon the gods of Egypt. With fire and flood, plagues and earthquakes, He will spoil the whole land. Then His redeemed people will exalt His name and make it glorious in the earth. Shall not those who are living in the last remnant of this earth's history become intelligent in regard to God's lessons?*" -*10 Manuscript Releases*, 240:2-241:0 (1899).

"In all the Bible, God is presented not only as a Being of mercy and benevolence, but as a *God of strict and impartial justice*." -*Last Day Events*, 240:4.

2 - When probation ends, justice takes its place.

"The One who has stood as our Intercessor; who hears all penitential prayers and confessions; who is represented with a rainbow, the symbol of grace and love, encircling His head, is soon to cease His work in the heavenly sanctuary. Grace and mercy will then descend from the throne, *and Justice will take their place*. He for whom His people have looked will assume His right –the office of Supreme Judge." -*Last Day Events*, 240:3.

3 - The One who made the law will punish for its transgression.

"God's love is represented in our day as being of such a character as would forbid His destroying the sinner. Men *reason from their own low standard of right and Justice*. 'Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself' (Psalm 50:21). They measure God by themselves. They reason as to how they would act under the circumstances and decide God would do as they imagine they would do.

"In no kingdom or government is it left to the lawbreakers to say what punishment is to be executed against those who have broken the law. All we have, all the bounties of His grace which we possess, we owe to God. The aggravating character of sin against such a God cannot be estimated any more than the heavens can be measured with a span. *God is a moral governor* as well as a Father. He is the Lawgiver. *He makes and executes His laws. Law that has no penalty is of no force*.

"The plea may be made that a loving Father would not see His children suffering the punishment of God by fire while He had the power to relieve them. But God *would, for the good of His subjects and for their safety, punish the transgressor*. God does not

work on the plan of man. He can do infinite justice that man has no right to do before his fellow man. Noah would have displeased God to have drowned one of the scoffers and mockers that harassed him, *but God drowned the vast world*. Lot would have had no right to inflict punishment on his sons-in-law, but God would do it in strict justice.

"Who will say God will not do what He says He will do?"-12 *Manuscript Releases*, 207-209; 10 *Manuscript Releases*, 265 (1876).

4 - At times, angels of God exercise destructive power.

"God's judgments were awakened against Jericho. It was a stronghold. But the Captain of the Lord's host Himself came from heaven to lead the armies of heaven in an attack upon the city. *Angels of God* laid hold of the massive walls and brought them to the ground." -3 *Testimonies*, 264:1.

"*Under God the angels are all-powerful*. On one occasion, *in obedience to the command of Christ, they slew of the Assyrian army in one night one hundred and eighty-five thousand men*."-*Desire of Ages*, 700:5.

"The same angel who had come from the royal courts to rescue Peter had been *the messenger of wrath and judgment to Herod*. The angel smote Peter to arouse him from slumber. It was with a different stroke that he smote the wicked king, laying low his pride and bringing upon him the punishment of the Almighty. *Herod died in great agony of mind and body, under the retributive judgment of God*." -*Acts of the Apostles*, 152:1,

"*The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits*. There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere." *Great Controversy*, 614:2.

"God destroys no-one. The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence." -5 *Testimonies*, 120:1.

- 16 -

THE POURING OF THE PLAGUES

1 - When wickedness reaches a certain amount.

"God keeps a reckoning with the nations. Through every century of this world's history evil workers have been *treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath*; and when the time fully comes that iniquity *shall have reached the stated boundary* of God's mercy, His forbearance will cease. *When the accumulated figures in heaven's record books shall mark the sum of transgression complete, wrath will come*, unmixed with mercy, and then it will be seen what a tremendous thing it is to have worn out the divine patience. This crisis will be reached when the nations shall unite in making void God's law." 5 *Testimonies*, 524:0.

2 - Jesus steps out from between God and man, and the plagues are poured out.

"*As His [Christ's] work there is finished, and His Intercession closes, there is nothing to stay the wrath of God, and it breaks with fury upon the shelterless head of the guilty sinner*, who has slighted salvation and hated reproof. In that fearful time, after the close of Jesus' mediation, the saints were living in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. Every case was decided, every jewel numbered." -*Early Writings*, 280:2.

"Solemn events before us are yet to transpire. Trumpet after trumpet is to be sounded; *vial after vial poured out one after another* upon the inhabitants of the earth." -

9 *Selected Messages*, 426:1.

"The world is soon to be left by the angel of mercy, and *the seven last plagues are to be poured out*. . The bolts of God's wrath are soon to fall, and when *He shall begin to punish the transgressors*, there will be no period of respite until the end." -*Testimonies to Ministers* 182:2.

3 - The plagues begin when probation closes.

"God's judgments will be visited upon those who are seeking to oppress and destroy His people. His long forbearance with the wicked emboldens men in transgressions, but their punishment is nonetheless certain and terrible because it is long delayed. 'The Lard shall rise up as in Mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act' . .

"*When Christ ceases His Intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who warship the beast and his image and receive his mark (Revelation 14:9-10), will be poured out*. The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to *fall upon the world, just before the final deliverance of God's people*." -*Great Controversy*, 627:2, 3-628:0 (TM 182).

4 - They are unmixed with mercy, but not worldwide. .

"*These plagues are not universal*, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off, yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals. All the judgments upon men, prior to the close of probation, have been mingled with mercy. The pleading blood of Christ has shielded the sinner from receiving the full measure of his guilt; but in the final judgment, *wrath is poured out unmixed with mercy*." *Great Controversy*, 628:2-629:0.

Note: It is interesting to compare the ten plagues on Egypt and the seven last plagues on the wicked.

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THE DEATH DECREE

1 - Sequence: (1) Jesus ends His mediation. (2) He stands up and puts on the garments of vengeance. (3) The seven last plagues begin to be poured out. (4) This enrages the wicked, and they think that if they could eliminate the righteous, the plagues would stop. (4) So they issue the death decree.

"I saw that. . Michael had not stood up, and that the time of trouble, such as never was, had not yet commenced. The nations are now getting angry, but *when our High Priest has finished His work in the sanctuary, He will stand up, put on the garments of vengeance, and then the seven last plagues will be poured out*.

"I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary, and then will come the seven last plagues. *These plagues enraged the wicked against the righteous*; they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us, the plagues would then be stayed. A decree went forth to slay the *saints*,"-*Early Writings*, 36:1-97:0.

- 18 -

SOME OF THE WICKED PLEAD WITH THE RIGHTEOUS FOR HELP

1 - Multitudes will desire mercy.

"In that day, *multitudes* will desire the shelter of God's mercy which "they have so long despised. "-*Great Controversy*, 629:1.

2 - Men will wish that mercy and salvation was still extended.

"The Lord in judgment will at the close of time walk through the earth, the fearful plagues will begin to fall. *Then those who have despised God's word, those who have lightly esteemed it*, shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east: they shall run to and fro to seek the word of Lord and shall not find it . . . The ministers of God will have done their last work, offered their last prayers, shed their last bitter tear for a rebellious church and an ungodly people," *Maranatha*, 264:3.

3 - Sequence: (1) Probation closes. (2) Fear and horror seize many of the wicked. (3) They seek mercy and salvation, but cannot find it.

"The plagues were falling upon the inhabitants of the earth. Some were denouncing God and cursing Him, *Others rushed to the people of God and begged to be taught how they might escape His judgments. But the saints had nothing for them.* The last tear for sinners had been shed, the last agonizing prayer offered, the last burden borne, the last warning given. *The sweet voice of mercy was no more to invite them.*

When the saints, and all heaven, were interested for their salvation, they had no interest for themselves. Life and death had been set before them. Many desired life, but made no effort to obtain it. They did not choose life, and now there was no atoning blood to cleanse the guilty, no compassionate Saviour to plead for them, and cry, 'Spare, spare the sinner a little longer.' All heaven had united with Jesus, as they heard the fearful words, 'It is done. It is finished.' The plan of salvation had been accomplished, but few had chosen to accept it. And as *mercy's sweet voice died away, fear and horror seized the wicked.* With terrible distinctness they heard the words, 'Too late! too late!'

"Those who had not prized God's Word were hurrying to and fro, wandering from sea to sea, and from the north to the east, to *seek the Word of the Lord. Said the angel, 'They shall not find it.* There is a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of the Lord. What would they not give for one word of approval from God, but no, they must hunger and thirst on. Day after day have they slighted salvation, prizing earthly riches and earthly pleasure higher than any heavenly treasure or inducement. They have rejected Jesus and despised His saints. The filthy must remain filthy forever.' "-*Early Writings*, 281:1-282:0.

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JACOB'S TROUBLE REACHES ITS CLIMAX AND ANGELS PROTECT THEM

During Jacob's trouble, the angels provide a wall of protection around the faithful and even give them food.

1 -Angels shield and nourish them.

"The people of God will not be free from suffering; but *while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation and suffer for want of food they will not be left to perish.* That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who numbers the hairs of their head will care for them, and in time of famine they shall be satisfied. While the wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence, *angels will shield the righteous and supply their wants.* " *Great Controversy*, 629:2.

2 -The pleadings of the faithful continue to ascend to God, while the wicked exult

that soon they can slay them.

"Yet to human sight it will appear that the people of God must soon seal their testimony with their blood as did the martyrs before them. They themselves begin to fear that the Lord has left them to fall by the hand of their enemies. It is a time of fearful agony. *Day and night they cry unto God for deliverance. The wicked exult.*" *Great Controversy, 630:1.*

3 - Companies of angels are about them.

"*Like Jacob, all are wrestling with God.* Their countenances express their internal struggle. Paleness sits upon every face. Yet they cease not their earnest intercession.

"Could men see with heavenly vision, they would behold *companies of angels that excel in strength stationed about those who have kept the word of Christ's patience.* With sympathizing tenderness, angels have witnessed their distress and have heard their prayers. They are waiting the word of their Commander to snatch them from their peril. But they must wait yet a little longer. *The people of God must drink of the cup and be baptized with the baptism.* The very delay, so painful to them, is the best answer to their *petitions.*"-*Great Controversy, 690:1-691:0.*

4 - They are pursued by the wicked.

"As the saints left the cities and villages, they *were pursued by the wicked, who sought to slay them.* But the swords that were raised to kill God's people broke and fell as powerless as a straw. Angels of God shielded the saints. As they cried day and night for deliverance, their cry came up before the *Lord.*"-*Early Writings, 284:2-285:0.*

5 - Angels defend them.

"The heavenly sentinels, faithful to their trust, continue their watch. *Though a general decree has fixed the time when commandment keepers may be put to death, their enemies will in some cases anticipate the decree, and before the time specified, will endeavor to take their lives. But none can pass the mighty guardians* stationed about every faithful soul. Some are assailed in their flight from the cities and villages; but the swords raised against them break and fall powerless as a straw. Others are defended by angels in the form of men of war." -*Great Controversy, 691:1 (EW 289:1),*

6 - Satan wants them slain.

"In some places, before the time for the decree to be executed, the wicked rushed upon the saints to slay them; but angels in the form of men of war fought for them. Satan *wished to have the privilege of destroying the saints of the Most High; but Jesus bade His angels watch over them.* God would be honored by making a covenant with those who had kept His law, in the sight of the heathen round about them; and Jesus would be honored by translating, without their seeing death, the faithful, waiting ones who had so long expected *Him.*"-*Early Writings, 283:0.*

7 - Three circles about each company of saints.

"Soon I saw the saints suffering great mental anguish. *They seemed to be surrounded by the wicked Inhabitants of the earth.* Every appearance was against them. Some began to fear that God had at last left them to perish by the hand of the wicked. But if their eyes could have been opened, they would have seen themselves surrounded by *angels of God.* Next came the *multitude of the angry wicked,* and next a mass of *evil angels,* hurrying on the wicked to slay the saints. But before they could approach God's people, the wicked must first pass this company of mighty, holy angels. This was

impossible. The angels of God were causing them to recede and also causing the evil angels who were pressing around them to fall *back*."-*Early Writings*, 289:1.

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THERE ARE NO MARTYRS AFTER THE CLOSE OF PROBATION

1 - Martyrdom now would accomplish nothing of value.

"If the blood of Christ's faithful witnesses were shed at this time, *it would* not, like the blood of the martyrs, be as seed *sown* to *yield a harvest* for God. Their fidelity would not be a testimony to convince others of the truth; for the obdurate heart has beaten back the waves of mercy until they return no more. If the righteous were now left to fall a prey to their enemies, it would be a triumph for the prince of darkness. . Glorious will be the deliverance of those who have patiently waited for His coming and whose names are written in the book of life." -*Great Controversy*, 634:1.

2 - It would only bring triumph to Satan.

"God *would* not *suffer the wicked* to *destroy those who were expecting translation*, and who would not bow to the decree of the beast or receive his mark. I saw that if the wicked were permitted to slay the saints, Satan and all his evil host, and all who hate God, would be gratified. And oh, *what a triumph it would be for his satanic majesty*, to have power, in the last closing struggle, over those who had so long waited to behold Him whom they loved! Those who have mocked at the idea of the saints' going up, will witness the care of God for His people and behold their glorious deliverance." - *Early Writings*, 284:1.

3 - They will not be left to perish.

"The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation and suffer for want of food *they will not be left to perish*." -*Great Controversy*, 629:2.

4 - Scattered in companies throughout the world, the faithful are protected by Christ and His angels.

"In the day of fierce trial He [Christ] will say, 'Come, *my people, enter thou into thy chambers*, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.' What are the chambers in which they are to hide? *They are the protection of Christ and holy angels*. The people of God are not at this time all in one place. *They are in different companies, and in all parts of the earth*." - *Maranatha*, 270:1.

5 - There will be no safety for commandment-breakers.

"In the time of trouble, just before the coming of Christ, the righteous will be preserved through the ministration of heavenly angels; *but there will be no security for the transgressor of God's law*. Angels cannot then protect those who are disregarding one of the divine precepts." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 256:1.

6 - Satan cannot destroy them.

"In the closing period of earth's history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand steadfastly for the right. . In the midst of the time of trouble –trouble such as has not been since there was a nation –His chosen ones will stand unmoved. *Satan with all the hosts of evil can not destroy the weakest of God's saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them*, and in their behalf Jehovah will reveal Himself as a

'God of gods,' able to save to the uttermost those have put their trust in Him." -*Prophet and Kings*, 519:1.

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THE NIGHT APPOINTED TO SLAUGHTER

1 - Deliverance comes at midnight.

"*It is at midnight* that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people." -*Great Controversy*, 696:2.

"*It was at midnight* that God chose to deliver His people." -*Early Writings*, 285:1.

2 - The plan is to slay all the faithful in one night.

"When the protection of human laws shall be withdrawn from those who honor the law of God, there will be, in different lands, a simultaneous movement for their destruction. *As the time appointed in the decree draws near*, the people will conspire to root out the hated sect. *It will be determined to strike In one night* a decisive blow, which shall utterly silence the voice of dissent and *reproof*." -*Great Controversy*, 695:1.

3 - In that hour God interposes.

"The people of God –some in prison cells, some hidden in solitary retreats in the forests and the mountains –still plead for divine protection, while in every quarter *companies of armed men, urged on by hosts of evil angels, are preparing for the work of death. It is now, in the hour of utmost extremity, that the God of Israel will interpose* for the deliverance of His chosen. Saith the Lord: 'Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth . . . to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the Mighty One of Israel. And the Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of His arm, with the indignation of His anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.' Isaiah 30:29-30." *Great Controversy*, 695:2.

4 - Deliverance begins by means of sudden darkness and encircling rainbows.

"With shouts of triumph, jeering, and imprecation, throngs of evil men are about to rush upon their prey, when, lo, a dense *blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night, falls upon the earth. Then a rainbow*, shining with the glory from the throne of God, spans the heavens and seems to *encircle each praying company*. The angry multitudes are suddenly arrested. Their mocking cries die away. The objects of their murderous rage are forgotten. With fearful forebodings they gaze upon the symbol of God's covenant and long to be shielded from its overpowering brightness." -*Great Controversy*, 635:93- 636:0.

LAST DAYS APPENDIX

The following material was gleaned from our book of unpublished manuscripts, entitled *The Last Days*, and is some of the best material from that volume on topics given in this section.

SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

God Will Punish the World for Its Iniquity When Sabbath-keeping Is Made a Crime. "The Lord declares, 'When it is made a crime for My people to keep holy the Sabbath, then I will arise out of My place and punish the world for its iniquity. The earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.' " -*Manuscript 33, 1900. pp. 5,*

6, 8-10, 18. ("*Unfaithful Shepherds*," June 25, 1900). {See also: CG 513.}