

By fire and by His sword, The Lord will plead with all flesh

King David, had ever issued a very popular statement in his book : “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*” — **Psalm 119 : 105.** That simple statement revealed that all the words of God, which were available up to his life time, had been fully comprehended by him. However, when later the prophet Isaiah came bringing with him some more words of God, in forms of prophecies, it is no more as easy as the afore-mentioned by David, to get them all to be as a lamp unto the feet and a light unto the path. Because the servant of the Lord, Mrs. White, said: “*Each of the ancient prophets spoke less for their own time than for ours, so that their prophesying is in force for us.*” — **3 Selected Messages, p. 358.**

The prophecies of Isaiah do not belong to the people in the time of Isaiah, because their fulfillment will never occur to take place in their life time. One of the prophecies of Isaiah, which is up to now still untouched by the church, to reveal our destiny in this time of the end, is found in **Isaiah 66 : 16 – 24.** Let us read them here below,

“For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.

For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tu-bal, and Ja-van, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory, and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD.

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.

And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched: and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” — Isaiah 66 : 16 – 24.

Several points from the prophecy to be taken into consideration are :

- A. That by fire and by His sword the Lord is to plead with His people.
- B. Then the slain of the Lord shall be many.
- C. The identities of those who are to be slain have been clearly specified.
- D. Those who have escaped shall be sent unto all nations, who have not yet heard of God's fame, and who have not seen His glory; and they shall declare the glory of the Lord among the Gentiles.
- E. The escaped ones shall bring back many of those, who have been converted to the holy mountain of the Lord in Jerusalem, Palestine.
- F. Then from one Sabbath to the other, shall all flesh come to worship before God.

By fire and by His sword the Lord is to plead with

Since those who have escaped from the slaying will be sent to all nations, who have not as yet heard of God's fame, and who have not yet seen His glory, then it is inescapable to conclude that the slaying should have taken place in the midst of His own people. Since this prophecy has not as yet been fulfilled up to this day, then it must be anticipated to occur in the future. The slaying will occur in only among the Laodiceans. It is to take place in among us, Seventh-Day Adventists, in the process of the purification of the church. Because the Lord will have a people pure and true, before sending them to all nations, prior to the close of probation. And this is why Mrs. Ellen G. White said :

“But the days of purification of the church are hastening on apace. God will have a people pure and true. In the mighty sifting soon to take place we shall be better able to measure the strength of Israel.” – **Testimonies for the church, vol. 5, p. 80.**

That is why we are now living in the time of sifting. With fire and with His sword the Lord is now pleading with us, that is, with His Spirit and with the Bible and the SPIRIT OF PROPHECY the Lord is now pleading with us, to call us to repentance. THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY is a combination of the third angel's message and the fourth angel's message of Rev. 18 : 1, which is now lightening the earth with its glory, beginning in our churches.

From the prophecy of Zechariah 4, THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY will be found in the golden bowl, which contains a combination of the two reform messages, namely, the Spirit of Prophecy by Mrs. Ellen G. White, and the Shepherd's Rod by Bro. Victor T. Houteff. The combination of the two messages, has met the fulfillment of Mrs. White's statement, when she said :

*“Then I saw another mighty angel commissioned to descend to the earth, to unite his voice with the third angel, and give power and force to his message. Great power and glory were imparted to the angel, and as he descended, the earth was lightened with his glory.This message seemed to be an addition to the third message, joining it as the midnight cry joined the second angel's message in 1844. “ ---- **Early Writings, p. 277.***

How is the Lord with fire and with His sword, pleading with us!

Here is again a prophecy, from Malachi, the prophet, which is now meeting its fulfillment in this time of the end. Malachi, the prophet of the Lord said :

“BEHOLD, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.” – Malachi 3 : 1 – 4.

“Behold, I will send you E-li-jah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”— Malachi 4 : 5, 6.

Mrs. White then added in the following words :

“Prophecy must be fulfilled. The Lord says: ‘Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.’ S o m e b o d y is to come in the spirit and power of Elijah, and when he appears, men may say: ‘You are too earnest; you do not interpret the Scriptures in the proper way. Let me tell you how to teach your message.’” – Testimonies to Ministers, p. 475.

An antitypical Elijah, the prophet, will be sent by the Lord to prepare the way, before the Lord suddenly comes to His temple here on earth. Since Bro. Victor T. Houteff is the only one in the history of the church , who has come to prepare the way before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, it is crystal clear that the great and dreadful day of the Lord, is the purification of the church. For those who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeared, that day would be great. But it is not so for them who cannot stand the purification process. Isaiah said, the slain of the Lord shall be many.

Bro. Victor T. Houteff as the antitypical Elijah, in his capacity as the last prophet of God, by the Lord’s fire and the sword’ is now pleading with us. Let us be wise and intelligent make use of the benefit of the’ fire and the sword’, because it is a message of the purification of the church, prior to the slaying to take place. The same message of this kind by Bro. Houteff, the antitypical Elijah, is also suggested in the prophetic words by the prophet Isaiah, when he said :

“Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.” – Isaiah 28 : 9 – 11.

Here again is Bro. Houteff identified. Since he is an American citizen of Bulgarian descendant, he is said to speak English with stammering lips to this people. Who are the people in this prophecy? They are inevitably to be the Laodiceans or the Seventh-Day Adventists, to whom the message belong in this time of the end.. The message is spoken to us with another tongue, namely English. Not by his own native tongue of Bulgarian, nor by the original tongue of the prophet Isaiah, the Hebrew.

Here again the “fire and the sword” of the Lord are identified with “*the knowledge and the doctrine*”. But whom shall he teach knowledge and shall make them understand doctrine? The answer is: them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

We are all born into the church by the mother through baptism. The mother here represents the ministers of Seventh - day Adventist churches. This is the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans in this time of the end. The leadership of the Church is symbolized by the angel of Laodicean Church. This angel of Laodicea represents not only the leadership in the General Conference of SDA in America, but all the ministers of the churches as well, who gave birth to us into the churches. Through the prophetic words, the Lord spoke to us, that only those that weaned from the milk of those ministers, and drawn from their breast, that could have enjoyed the knowledge and the doctrine of the message in THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY.

It is an undeniable fact, that all the sermons from the pulpits, and even from the Sabbath School Lessons, up to now, has no more power to awake the Seventh-day Adventists from their spiritual slumber. Most of our people have lost their awareness, that the same knowledge and the doctrine fed them since their baptism up to now, have no more power to keep them growing to reach the adolescence in the faith. Because it is the same rotten milk from the breast of mother that keeps them stay dwarf and weak spiritually. And that is why, when they come to face with the strong meat of THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY, most of them failed to digest the message correctly. Then they tend to oppose the message, because their ministers have denied it at the outset of its proclamation.

The Slain of the Lord shall be many

Since the coming slaughter of the people of God will be a very awful event in the history of mankind, it is unavoidable to conclude that the prophetic event would also be foretold in several other prophecies of the prophets. In the following prophecy of Malachi 3 and 4 the prophet of the Lord said :

“BEHOLD, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.” – Malachi 3 : 1 – 4.

That is, after the Lord's messenger, Bro. Victor T. Houteff, who came offering the "f i r e and the s w o r d "to the people to prepare the way before the Lord coming to His temple, be opposed; then the prophet asked : *who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap.* This means, that many could not stand the day, and very many of them will be slain. The prophet Ezekiel in his prophecy of the same event said :

"He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand.

"And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar.

And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which has the writer's inkhorn by his side;

And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.

And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.

And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! Wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem? Then said he unto me, the iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not.

And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head.

And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me." – Ezekiel 9 : 1 – 11.

In commenting the Ezekiel 9 prophecy, Mrs. White said :

"Study the 9th chapter of Ezekiel. These words will be literally fulfilled; yet the time is passing and the people are asleep. They refuse to humble their souls and to be converted. Not a great while longer will the Lord bear with the people who have such great and important truths revealed to them, but who refuse to bring these truths into their individual experience. The time is short. God is calling; will you hear? Will you receive His message? Will you be converted before it is too late? Soon, very soon, every case will be decided for eternity. Letter 106, 1909, pp. 2, 3, 5, 7." – Manuscript Releases, vol. 1, p. 260

Identities of those who are to be slain

The prophet Isaiah said :

".....and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.

For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. " – Isaiah 66 : 17 – 18.

In the previous explanations, we have been assured that in the process of purification of our Church, which is to take place in the near future, the slain of the Lord shall be very many. This is understandable clear, because God will have a people pure and true, who are to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom with full power of the Holy Spirit unto the entire world, and then comes the end of the Gospel proclamation at the close of the time of probation.

Those to be slain will be those who are not willing to be weaned from the milk of their ministers, and be drawn from their breast. The one tree in the midst of the gardens, where the people sanctify and purify themselves behind it, in the gardens, symbolized the ministers of the gospel. So it is inevitably to conclude that the gardens must symbolize the churches. That the tree symbolizes the leadership or minister of the gospel will soon be seen from the following statement:

*"That the 'green grass' and the 'trees' are symbolical of two classes of living beings, is quickly seen from Nebuchadnezzar's dream, in which he saw himself likened to a tree, and the common people of his kingdom, to the tender grass of the field." Dan. 4 : 10, 14, 15, 20, 22; Isaiah 40 : 6, 7. And Jesus, speaking of men in responsible positions, said that 'every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.' Matthew 3 : 10." – **The Seven Trumpets, p. 42.***

Eating Swine's flesh, and the abominations, and the mouse

One of the identities of those who are to be slain is the eater of swine's flesh, and the other abominations, and even the mouse. Although this is not the identity of God's people in the time of Isaiah the prophet, and not even the identity of the Seventh-Day Adventists either, in this time of the end, the prophet had been so inspired to identify those who are not yet willing to discard their habit of meat eating, to the eater of the abominations of swine's flesh and the mouse. With the law of Health, which is popularly known as the Health Reform coming into effect since 1863, the old law of Health stipulated in the book of Leviticus 11 will no more be valid. Ever since the issuance of the new law, there would be no more difference between the clean animals and the abominable, such as the swine flesh and the mouse. That is why; Seventh-day Adventists should seriously take into consideration the following inspired statements:

"Again and again I have been shown that God is trying to lead us back, step by step, to His original design, -- that man should subsist upon the natural products of the earth."

Vegetables, fruits, and grains should compose our diet. Not an ounce of flesh meat should enter our stomachs. The eating of flesh is unnatural. We are to return to God's original purpose in the creation of man." – **Counsels on Diets and Foods, p. 380.**

"The Lord presented a general plan before me. I was shown that God would give to His commandment-keeping people a reform diet, and that as they received this, their disease and suffering would be greatly lessened. I was shown that this work would progress." – **Counsels on Health, p. 531.**

To those Seventh-Day Adventists who are not as yet willing to acknowledge the validity of the law of Health Reform, which has been codified since 1863, will fall in sin against the Holy Spirit. This is an unpardonable sin, because the actor would never more be willing to acknowledge his transgression of the law of Health, which is also a part of the Law of the Ten Commandment. For this reason, the servant of the Lord said:

"Knowledge must be gained in regard to how to eat and drink and dress so as to preserve health. Sickness is the result of violating nature's law. Our first duty, one which we owe to God, to ourselves, and to our fellow men, is to obey the laws of God. These include the laws of health." --- **Counsels on Health, pp. 24, 25.**

I know all their work, and all their minds, thus said the Lord (Isaiah 66 : 18)

Action is the fruit of thinking. Anything contained in the mind, will be seen in our practical doing of those things, which are thought of in the mind. Is someone truly a Christian or not, is to be identified by his faith. That is the reason why, that *f a i t h* in the sense of the Bible has a more broad meaning than the common faith found in the dictionary. In the Bible doctrinal points of view, the meaning of *f a i t h* is the *b e l i e f* that is found in the mind, plus the practical doing of those believed in the mind. That is why the Christian faith of every one of us could not be concealed from the observance of other people.

The above statement of the Lord in Isaiah 66 : 18 is actually the same as to the other one issued later to the angel of the Laodicean Church in Revelation 3 : 14 – 16, which said:

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: 'these things, saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy work, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." – **Revelation 3 : 14 – 16.**

The Lord God wants us to be truly cold, or truly hot. The lukewarm of our spiritual condition does not show our positive stand, whether on the side of the Lord, according to the prophecies now revealed in our midst, or on the side of the Devil according to the opposition against the message by the angel of the Laodicean Church and her ministers. That is why when brought into the present situation of religious crises in our midst; most of us will show their true color. In such a crises where we are now in, the servant of the Lord warned us:

"Indifference and neutrality in a religious crises is regarded of God as a grievous crime and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God." – **3 Testimonies for the Church, p. 281.**

“Shall not the counsel of Christ have an effect on the churches? Why halt, ye who know the truth, between two opinions? ‘If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.’ Christ’s followers have no right to stand on the ground of neutrality. There is more hope of an open enemy than of one who is neutral.” – **Review and Herald, February 25, 1902**

Setting a Sign, Commissioning those escaped ones to all nations, and bringing back the repented ones to Jerusalem, in Palestine.

In his prophetic words, prophet Isaiah said:

“And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tu-bal, and Ja-van, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory, and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.” – **Isaiah 66 : 19, 20**

The Lord will set a sign among them, which is the seal, or the mark of deliverance among them. And then He will send those, the 144.000, which escape of them unto all nations. Only to these escaped ones, will the Lord authorize a great power to proclaim the message unto all nations to speed up the accomplishment of the work of salvation in a very short possible period. That is why the servant of the Lord made us to know that,

“The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was ‘the former rain,’ and glorious was the result. But the latter rain will be more abundant. What is the promise to those living in these last days?” – **Testimony Treasures, vol. 3, p. 211.**

That is, if by the power of the Holy Spirit during the first Pentecost, with only 120 workers to proclaim the word of salvation, in the Palestine, up to three thousand souls could have been won for the Lord, in only one day, let alone in the second Pentecost, with the first fruits workers of the 144.000 to work the proclamation of the message unto all nations throughout the world with zeal and power of the Holy Spirit. Do we still doubt the word of the Lord? That is why the servant of the Lord said:

“We need a thorough reformation in all our churches. The converting power of God must come into the church. Seek the Lord most earnestly, put away your sins, and t a r r y i n J e r u s a l e m till ye be endowed with power from on high. Let God set you apart to the work. Purify your souls by obeying the truth. Faith without works is dead. Put not off the day of preparation. Slumber not in a state of unpreparedness, having no oil in your vessels with your lamps.” – **Testimonies to Ministers, p. 443.**

“Tarry in Jerusalem” is a result of spiritual interpretation by Mrs. White. This means, the sentence could no more be re-interpreted for the second time. We are to strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the 144.000, who are to stand with the Lamb on the Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, Palestine. And only there will the SPIRIT OF LATTER RAIN be poured out

to them from the presence of the Lord. The fulfillment of the Revelation 14 : 1, when the 144.000 is to stand with the Lamb on the mount Sion, is to occur before the second coming of Christ. This is understandable because it is just Christ Himself in the form of a Lamb, signifies His position before the time of probation closes.

The New Worship in the Holy Mountain of God in Jerusalem, Palestine

Prophet Isaiah in his prophetic words said:

“And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD. For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched: and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” – Isaiah 66 : 16 – 24.

Soon after the close of probation in the heavenly sanctuary, the whole period of probation from the fall of Adam and Eve up to the last minute, available for men and women to repent of their sins, shall terminate. All the remnant of God has been called out of Babylon, and even those from the whole world, have been now gathered together in the Palestine. Palestine will be the new territory of the kingdom. And this is the kingdom which was touched by Jesus Himself in His well-known prayer thought: *“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven*” – **Matthew 6 : 10**. So is the kingdom established in Palestine, prior to the second coming of Jesus in the air? And this is the kingdom, an everlasting kingdom in the world, with its everlasting king David, the antitypical, and as prophesied by Ezekiel the prophet here below:

“And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all : and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms at all. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever : and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: ye, I will be their God and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.” – Ezekiel 37 : 22, 24 - 28.

The heathen outside the kingdom shall be the living witnesses of the whole process, from the establishment of the kingdom, up to the establishment of God’s tabernacle in the midst of His people in the kingdom. That is why, they shall know that the Lord do sanctify Israel for evermore. All these will they witness before the seven last plagues be poured out to wipe them out one by one from the face of the earth, and before the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the air, without His feet touching the ground.

The Lord is now pleading with us

Dear Reader of this prophecy, may the Lord help us open our heart to understand His will as presented in the prophetic words of His servants, the prophets. The Lord is now pleading with us. *“Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it? Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealed his secret unto his servants the prophets.”* – **Amos 3 : 6, 7.**

“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater : So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth : it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the things whereto I sent it.” – **Isaiah 55 : 10 – 11.**

“Let ministers and people remember that gospel truth r u i n s if it does not s a v e.” — **Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 134.**

* * *