

The Long Campaign

LUCIFER, LIES, LOVE, & LOGIC

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Blessings,
Dave

€The Setting

“And He said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.’”

—Luke 10:18

Stage One

“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

—Revelation 12:7-9

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Stage Two

“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”

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“Christ bowed His head and died, but He held fast His faith and His submission to God. ‘And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.’” Rev. 12:10.

—*Desire of Ages*, 761

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“God... looked upon the victim expiring on the cross, and said, ‘It is finished. The human race shall have another trial.’ The redemption price was paid, and Satan fell like lightning from heaven.”

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Stage Three

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Stage Three

- ◆ **The “accuser of the brethren” has been cast down**
- ◆ **A group of people have beaten the devil, placing their lives at risk in the process**
- ◆ **Because they overcame, everyone in “heaven” rejoices**
- ◆ **But everyone on “earth” or in the “sea” is in trouble because the devil is running out of time, and he’s really mad about it**

Stage Three

“The apostle John in vision heard a loud voice in heaven exclaiming: ‘Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.’ Revelation 12:12. Fearful are the scenes which call forth this exclamation from the heavenly voice. The wrath of Satan increases as his time grows short, and his work of deceit and destruction will reach its culmination in the time of trouble.”

—*Great Controversy*, 623

Stage Three

“Satan... is an accuser of the brethren, and his accusing power is employed against those who work righteousness. The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan’s charges by showing the results of obedience to right principles.”

—Christ's Object Lessons, 296

Stage Three

“The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within. It is the atmosphere of this love surrounding the soul of the believer that makes him a savor of life unto life.”

—Acts of the Apostles, 551

Stage Four

“Like the apostles, the seventy had received supernatural endowments as a seal of their mission. When their work was completed, they returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name.’ Jesus answered, ‘I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.’

Stage Four

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“The scenes of the past and the future were presented to the mind of Jesus. He beheld Lucifer as he was first cast out from the heavenly places. He looked forward to the scenes of His own agony, when before all the worlds the character of the deceiver should be unveiled. He heard the cry, ‘It is finished’ (John 19:30), announcing that the redemption of the lost race was forever made certain, that heaven was made eternally secure against the accusations, the deceptions, the pretensions, that Satan would instigate.

Stage Four

“Beyond the cross of Calvary, with its agony and shame, Jesus looked forward to the great final day, when the prince of the power of the air will meet his destruction in the earth so long marred by his rebellion. Jesus beheld the work of evil forever ended, and the peace of God filling heaven and earth.

Stage Four

“Henceforward Christ’s followers were to look upon Satan as a conquered foe. Upon the cross, Jesus was to gain the victory for them; that victory He desired them to accept as their own.”

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—*Desire of Ages*, 490

A Quick Re-cap

- 1. 6,000 years ago—The members of the Godhead understood Satan's plans and arguments, and rejected them.**
- 2. 2,000 years ago—Angels and unfallen worlds understood Satan's plans and arguments, and rejected them.**
- 3. Near future (hopefully)—The 144,000 will understand Satan's plans and arguments, and will reject them.**
- 4. 1,000 years later—The wicked will understand Satan's plans and arguments, and will reject them.**

Some Basic Points

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

—Matthew 24:14

Which gospel is “this gospel”?

If the pope could preach an evangelistic series that was broadcast to every person on earth, would the end come?

How about Benny Hin, or Jerry Falwell, or James Dobson, or Joel Osteen?

Jan Paulsen, or Dwight Nelson, or Doug Batchelor, or Mark Finley, or David Asscherick, or Dave Fiedler?

€The point is, “this gospel” has to be complete, mature, and powerful enough to bring on “the end.”

Holding Pattern

“After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying,

Holding Pattern

“Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’ And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed.”

—Revelation 7:1–4

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

—Ephesians 3:10



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What is the wisdom of God?

- ◆ **What plans are being held up?**
- ◆ **What “wisdom of God” could possibly require demonstration?**
- ◆ **What specifics need to be demonstrated?**
- ◆ **Can the sealing demonstrate what is needed?**

What plans are being held up?

Everything from the sealing on ...

- ◆ **Close of probation**
- ◆ **Time of Jacob's trouble**
- ◆ **Second coming**
- ◆ **Reward of the righteous**
- ◆ **Destruction of the wicked**

What “wisdom of God” could possibly require demonstration?

- ◆ **Reward of the righteous**
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What specifics need to be demonstrated?



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What specifics need to be demonstrated?

€ To justify His government's rulings on the reward of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked, God needs to do three things:

- ♦ Show that there is a good reason some are lost and some are saved**
- ♦ Show that the people He wants to take to heaven are safe to have there**
- ♦ Show that there is nothing more that even God could do to help the wicked**

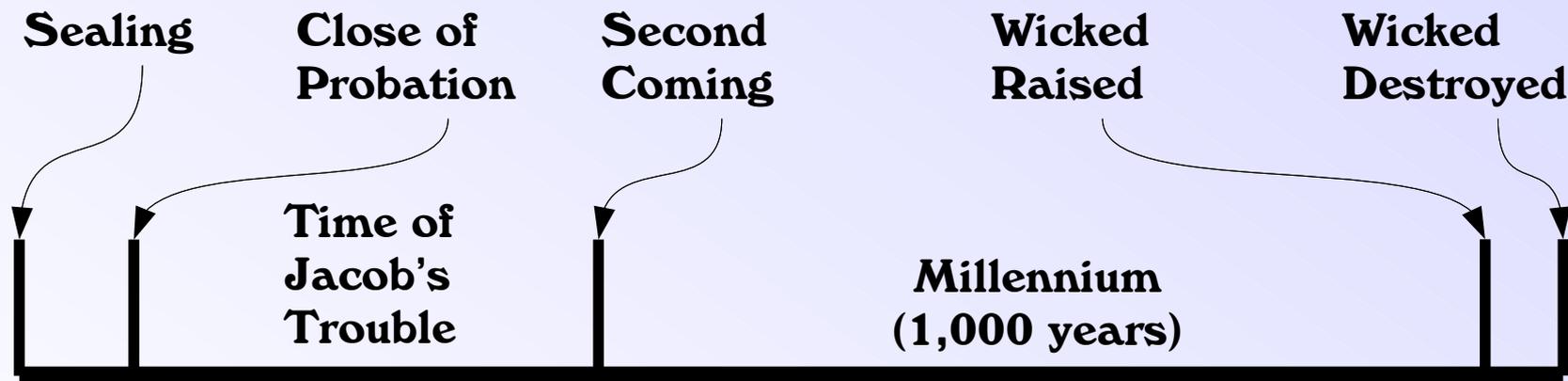
**Can the sealing demonstrate
what is needed?**

Basic Information

- ◆ **The seal of God (Rev. 7 and 9) is contrasted with the mark of the beast (Rev. 13)**
- ◆ **A seal—an official sign of authority—gives the essential information (usually the name, title, and jurisdiction) of the individual, organization, or government it represents**
- ◆ **This information is found in the Sabbath commandment: Name—LORD; Title—Creator; Jurisdiction—Heaven and earth**
- ◆ **The mark of the beast is readily identified as the claim to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday**

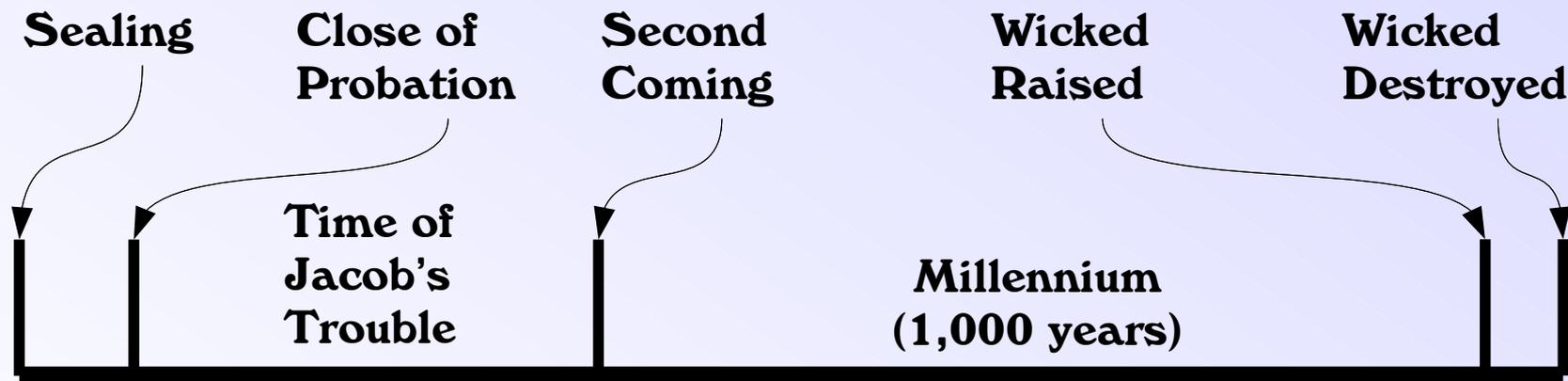
Basic Information

- ◆ The seal of God is placed in the foreheads of the 144,000 *before* the close of probation.
- ◆ The close of probation marks the end of Christ's work as High Priest in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.



Basic Information

- ◆ The conflict between the observance of Sabbath and the mark of the beast reaches it's peak during the "Time of Jacob's trouble," when those resisting the combined religious/political authority of the world are condemned to death.



How did “Jacob” get into this?

“For thus says the LORD: ‘We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.’”

—Jeremiah 30:5–7

How did “Jacob” get into this?

€Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob’s hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, ‘Let Me go, for the day breaks.’ But he said, ‘I will not let You go unless You bless me!’... And He said, ‘Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.’”

—Genesis 32:24–30

€

Job

“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.”

—Job 13:15

Jesus

“And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’”

—Mark 15:34

- ◆ **500 yoke of oxen; one plowman for every ten yokes; 50**
- ◆ **500 she asses; one herdsman for every 50; 10 minus one survivor—59**
- ◆ **7,000 sheep; one shepherd for every 1,000; 7 minus one survivor—6**
- ◆ **3,000 camels; one herder for every 100; 30 minus one survivor—29**
- ◆ **7 sons; 3 daughters; 3 servants (?); 13 minus one survivor—12**

€

$$59 + 6 + 29 + 12 = 106 \text{ casualties}$$

What makes this test special?

- ◆ **Millions have faced death for their faith—what's the difference here?**
- ◆ **This is not the normal test of martyrdom, because at this time—with no High Priest to intercede in the heavenly sanctuary—the 144,000 feel no sense of God's abiding presence.**
- ◆ **Every sensory input tells them that God is their enemy, that He wants to kill them.**

What makes this test special?

“Those who live in the last days must pass through an experience similar to that of Jacob. Foes will be all around them, ready to condemn and destroy. Alarm and despair will seize them, for it appears to them as to Jacob in his distress, that God himself has become an avenging enemy.”

—*Signs of the Times*, November 27, 1879

What makes this test special?

“Dangers thicken on every side, and it is difficult to fix the eye of faith upon the promises amidst the certain evidences of immediate destruction. But in the midst of revelry and violence, there falls upon the ear peal upon peal of the loudest thunder. The heavens have gathered blackness and are only illuminated with the blazing light and terrible glory from Heaven. God utters His voice from His holy habitation. The captivity of His people is turned. With sweet and subdued voices they say to one another, ‘God is our friend.’”

—*Signs of the Times*, November 27, 1879

What the Test Shows

- ◆ **By placing His seal on the 144,000 *before* this most difficult of all tests, God provides convincing evidence that He can correctly identify those who are safe to let into heaven.**

What the Test Shows

Because...

- ◆ everyone on earth at this time is familiar with “this gospel,” and...
- ◆ *only* those who have faith pass the test, and...
- ◆ *all* those who have faith pass the test...

€ This test shows that...

- ◆ “faith” is *necessary* for salvation, and...
- ◆ “faith” plus a knowledge of “this gospel” is *sufficient* for complete obedience.

What the Test Shows

Martin Luther—

- ◆ **didn't keep the Sabbath**
- ◆ **was all goofed up on infant baptism**
- ◆ **lived on roast beast, sauerkraut, and beer**
- ◆ **was not the most patient of individuals**

But he had faith.

What the Test Shows

Now Jesus says, “I can teach Martin Luther the details of ‘this gospel’ when I get him to heaven.

“But the investigative judgment has already found that he had true faith—is it OK with everyone if I take him home with Me?”

And there won't be a single voice raised in objection, because *righteousness really is by faith!*

Fast forward a thousand years...

After a thorough examination of the books of record to answer every question about why this one or that one is not among the redeemed, the time has come to finish sin and sinners for ever.

€The Final Battle

€At last the order to advance is given, and the countless host moves on—an army such as was never summoned by earthly conquerors, such as the combined forces of all ages since war began on earth could never equal. Satan, the mightiest of warriors, leads the van, and his angels unite their forces for this final struggle. Kings and warriors are in his train, and the multitudes follow in vast companies, each under its appointed leader.

€The Final Battle

€“With military precision the serried ranks advance over the earth’s broken and uneven surface to the City of God. By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and the armies of Satan surround the city and make ready for the onset.”

—*The Great Controversy*, 664

The Final Battle

“With military precision the serried ranks advance over the earth’s broken and uneven surface to the **City of God**. **By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and the armies of Satan surround the city and make ready for the onset.**”

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€ The Final Demonstration

Would Jesus,

- ♦ **the One who is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8);**
- ♦ **the One who said “[whoever] comes to Me I will by no means cast out” (John 6:37);**
- ♦ **the One who has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezekiel 33:11)—**

would Jesus let a repentant and trusting sinner in?

€The Final Fall of Satan

“Notwithstanding that Satan has been constrained to acknowledge God’s justice and to bow to the supremacy of Christ, his character remains unchanged. The spirit of rebellion, like a mighty torrent, again bursts forth.... He rushes into the midst of his subjects and endeavors to inspire them with his own fury and arouse them to instant battle. But of all the countless millions whom he has allured into rebellion, there are none now to acknowledge his supremacy. His power is at an end.”

—Great Controversy, 671

€The Choice Is Ours

“Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath. He shall say, ‘Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength.’ To Him men shall come, and all shall be ashamed who are incensed against Him.”

—Isaiah 45:22-24

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**Blessings,
Dave**

The Setting

“And He said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.’”

—Luke 10:18

Jesus is talking to the seventy disciples who had just come back from their missionary tour.

READ text

When did this happen? When did Satan fall like lightning from heaven?

When he sinned and got kicked out of heaven!

Stage One

“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

—Revelation 12:7-9

Here's the passage we usually think of...

READ verse

But notice that when we make this connection, we are actually equating two different phrases. Jesus said that Satan “fell,” but here in Revelation 12 it says he was...

CLICK for highlighting

Stage One

“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was **cast out**, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

—Revelation 12:7-9

“cast out”

So... is that right? Are the two phrases equivalent?

Something to think about...

And before we move along, please notice the Bible reference.

Revelation chapter 12, verses 7–9.

Stage Two

“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”

—John 12:31

6

OK, now the plot thickens slightly as we move on to part two. Notice what Jesus said in this verse—

READ verse

This was just before the crucifixion, and we usually think of that event as the time when the “ruler of the world” was “cast out.”

So, is Satan’s being “cast out” in this verse the same as his being “cast out” in Revelation 12?

If so, does that mean Revelation 12 is really talking about the crucifixion?

If that’s true, what about his “fall from heaven” before the creation of earth?

Stage Two

“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”

—John 12:31

“Christ bowed His head and died, but He held fast His faith and His submission to God. ‘And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.’” Rev. 12:10.

—*Desire of Ages*, 761

READ bottom quotation

Revelation chapter 12, verse 10!

Why is Ellen White quoting *that* verse when she’s talking about the crucifixion?

Stage Two

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—John 12:31

“Christ bowed His head and died, but He held fast His faith and His submission to God. ‘And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is **cast down**, which accused them before our God day and night.’” Rev. 12:10.

—*Desire of Ages*, 761

And, for what it's worth, is there any difference between “cast out” and “cast down”?

OK, it's time to make some sense out of all this.

Maybe this will help...

CLICK

Stage Two

“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”

—John 12:31

“After the crucifixion, [Satan] saw that he had overreached himself....

“Satan saw that his disguise was torn away, that the character he had tried to fasten on Christ was fastened on himself. It was as if he had the second time fallen from heaven.”

—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, 411

READ bottom quotation

At the cross?

CLICK

Stage Two

“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”

—John 12:31

“After the crucifixion, [Satan] saw that he had overreached himself....

“Satan saw that his disguise was torn away, that the character he had tried to fasten on Christ was fastened on himself. It was as if he had the second time fallen from heaven.”

—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, 411

It's like there is something about these two events—the fall of Satan in heaven and the death of Christ on the cross—that is so similar, that inspired writers get them all mixed up together.

Fascinating!

Actually, Ellen White sometimes made the linkage even stronger.

CLICK

Stage Two

“God... looked upon the victim expiring on the cross, and said, ‘It is finished. The human race shall have another trial.’ The redemption price was paid, and Satan fell like lightning from heaven.”

—Youth’s Instructor, June 21, 1900

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So, there you have stages one and two.

Let’s move on to stage three.

Stage Three

“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.’”

—Revelation 12:10–12

Yes, this does look familiar, doesn't it?

And, yes, it really is stage three.

READ verses

Let's focus on a few particulars.

CLICK for highlighting

Stage Three

“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for **the accuser of our brethren**, who accused them before our God day and night, **has been cast down**. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.’”

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The accuser of the brethren has been cast down...

Stage Three

“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And **they overcame him** by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.’”

—Revelation 12:10–12

...there is a group of people who have beaten the devil...

Stage Three

“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and **they did not love their lives to the death.** Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.’”

—Revelation 12:10–12

...placing their lives at risk in the process.

Stage Three

“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. **Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them!** Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.’”

—Revelation 12:10–12

Because they overcame (that’s what “therefore” means), the “heavens” and everyone who lives there can rejoice..

Stage Three

“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.’”

—Revelation 12:10-12

But these events appear to be bad news for all those who live in the wrong places...

Stage Three

“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.’”

—Revelation 12:10–12

...because the devil is running out of time, and he's really mad about it.

Stage Three

- ♦ The “accuser of the brethren” has been cast down
- ♦ A group of people have beaten the devil, placing their lives at risk in the process
- ♦ Because they overcame, everyone in “heaven” rejoices
- ♦ But everyone on “earth” or in the “sea” is in trouble because the devil is running out of time, and he’s really mad about it

Just step back a little, look at this list, and tell me *when* this all comes together.

That’s right. The end of time.

Stage Three

“The apostle John in vision heard a loud voice in heaven exclaiming: ‘Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.’ Revelation 12:12. Fearful are the scenes which call forth this exclamation from the heavenly voice. The wrath of Satan increases as his time grows short, and his work of deceit and destruction will reach its culmination in the time of trouble.”

—*Great Controversy*, 623

20

READ quotation

So this passage in Revelation 12 is really talking about *three* different episodes!

We’ve got—

- the fall of Satan, six thousand some odd years ago
- the crucifixion, not quite two thousand years ago
- and the time of trouble, sometime in the future

What’s going on? What do these three events have in common?

Here’s a clue... **CLICK**

Stage Three

“Satan... is an accuser of the brethren, and his accusing power is employed against those who work righteousness. The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan’s charges by showing the results of obedience to right principles.”

—Christ’s Object Lessons, 296

READ quotation

Make sense? Yes? No?

Well, hold that thought. After we add another couple pieces to the puzzle, the picture will be nice and clear.

Stage Three

“The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within. It is the atmosphere of this love surrounding the soul of the believer that makes him a savor of life unto life.”

—Acts of the Apostles, 551

READ quotation

This is another of those “floater” thoughts. Actually, it’s the link between this topic and my next one. For now, though, let’s just say that “answering Satan’s charges” involves more than “pure doctrine.” Far more important are the lives God’s people live.

But now, on to Stage Four.

Stage Four

‘Like the apostles, the seventy had received supernatural endowments as a seal of their mission. When their work was completed, they returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name.’ Jesus answered, ‘I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.’

OK, now it's time to confess that I'm not a really smart guy. I really didn't discover any of this myself. It's all sort of right here in this next quotation, on a silver platter, so to speak.

But don't you love how easy it is to at least *look* smart by just sticking with God's ideas?

There's a lesson in that, somewhere.

Anyway, here's where I found part four. Right back where we started.

CLICK and READ quotation.

Stage Four

“The scenes of the past and the future were presented to the mind of Jesus.

READ

Really!? Past *and* future.

Stage Four

“The scenes of the past and the future were presented to the mind of Jesus. He beheld Lucifer as he was first cast out from the heavenly places.”

READ

This one is definitely “past.” That’s our “Stage One.”

Stage Four

“The scenes of the past and the future were presented to the mind of Jesus. He beheld Lucifer as he was first cast out from the heavenly places. He looked forward to the scenes of His own agony, when before all the worlds the character of the deceiver should be unveiled. He heard the cry, ‘It is finished’ (John 19:30), announcing that the redemption of the lost race was forever made certain, that heaven was made eternally secure against the accusations, the deceptions, the pretensions, that Satan would instigate.

READ

And this was the near future, when Jesus spoke.
That’s our “Stage Two.”

Stage Four

“Beyond the cross of Calvary, with its agony and shame, Jesus looked forward to the great final day, when the prince of the power of the air will meet his destruction in the earth so long marred by his rebellion. Jesus beheld the work of evil forever ended, and the peace of God filling heaven and earth.

READ

And this is “Stage Four,” the final destruction of sin and Satan. This is his last “fall from heaven,” and it’s obviously still future.

And “Stage Three”? Here it comes.

Stage Four

“Henceforward Christ’s followers were to look upon Satan as a conquered foe. Upon the cross, Jesus was to gain the victory for them; that victory He desired them to accept as their own.”

That’s it. “Stage three” isn’t, perhaps, as detailed as the others, but they’re all there.

And where did I find this little gem?

Don’t you love what you can find with computers? With just a few keystrokes, I can search through hundreds of thousands of pages of the Spirit of Prophecy. Old periodical articles, rare manuscripts, out-of-print stuff.

And sources like this one...

CLICK for reference

Stage Four

“Henceforward Christ’s followers were to look upon Satan as a conquered foe. Upon the cross, Jesus was to gain the victory for them; that victory He desired them to accept as their own.”

—*Desire of Ages*, 490

Have you read DA recently? If you haven’t, today’s a great time to get started.

I remember a sermon—or at least one sentence of a sermon—I heard in 1977. The preacher said, and I quote, “There are *lots* of books we should have read recently.”

OK, let’s do...

CLICK

A Quick Re-cap

- 1. 6,000 years ago—The members of the Godhead understood Satan's plans and arguments, and rejected them.**
- 2. 2,000 years ago—Angels and unfallen worlds understood Satan's plans and arguments, and rejected them.**
- 3. Near future (hopefully)—The 144,000 will understand Satan's plans and arguments, and will reject them.**
- 4. 1,000 years later—The wicked will understand Satan's plans and arguments, and will reject them.**

Who is missing? The righteous dead. Just hold that thought—we'll come back to them in a bit.

So there's the fall of Satan. Naturally, it's easier to understand the first two parts, since they've already happened.

But it's Stage Three that should most interest us, since we actually have a chance to do something about that one. At the very least we should be working on it. Even if I don't live long enough to see it in my lifetime, when I die I want to know I did something to make it possible. I hope you feel the same.

So let's focus in on the last two parts now. We start with...

Some Basic Points

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

—Matthew 24:14

31

A familiar verse. Everyone knows the order of events given here. But today I'd like to ask if there is any **reason** for that order of events.

It's a common assumption that the gospel **must** go to all the world before the end can come. As we work our way through this topic, we'll find that this assumption is correct—but do you know **why**?

Here's a hint: It **isn't** so everyone has a chance to be saved. Billions of people have already died without hearing the gospel. And since Zechariah (13:6) and Paul (Romans 2:13–15) (also DA 638; SD 364; COL 385) talk about “unenlightened heathen” being saved, it looks like God already has a way of dealing with that problem.

So, why **does** “this gospel” need to go to all the world?

Which gospel is “this gospel”?

If the pope could preach an evangelistic series that was broadcast to every person on earth, would the end come?

How about Benny Hin, or Jerry Falwell, or James Dobson, or Joel Osteen?

Jan Paulsen, or Dwight Nelson, or Doug Batchelor, or Mark Finley, or David Asscherick, or Dave Fiedler?

The point is, “this gospel” has to be complete, mature, and powerful enough to bring on “the end.”

Before we answer that question, let's look at this one.

READ title, then CLICK and READ four items.

That's what “this gospel” needs to be. To whatever extent “my gospel” falls short of that, I will fall short of ever actually finishing God's work—no matter how much I do.

In the Lord's service, quality is always more significant than quantity. Our failure—my failure—to master the “science of salvation” is the greatest hold-up in the Great Controversy today.

And Scripture talks about that hold-up in the Lord's plans.

CLICK

Holding Pattern

“After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying,

READ, then CLICK

Holding Pattern

“Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’ And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed.”

—Revelation 7:1-4

READ

What’s the hold-up?

CLICK for highlighting

Holding Pattern

“Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’ And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed.”

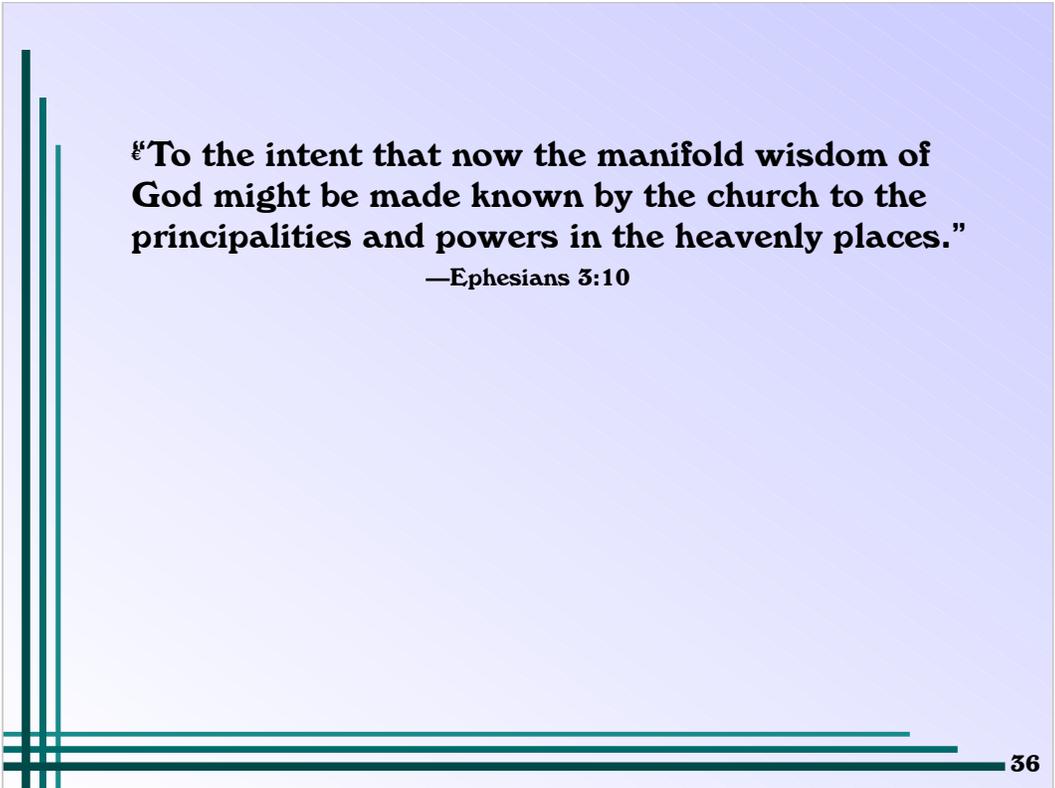
—Revelation 7:1–4

The sealing is holding up God’s plans. It’s also holding up Satan, by the way. He started falling a long time ago, and should have hit the rocks by now. It’s only because we aren’t ready—I’m not ready—for the sealing, that he’s still sort of floating around in mid air.

But why can’t God’s plans go forward without the sealing?

What makes it necessary?

What does it *accomplish*?



**“To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of
God might be made known by the church to the
principalities and powers in the heavenly places.”**

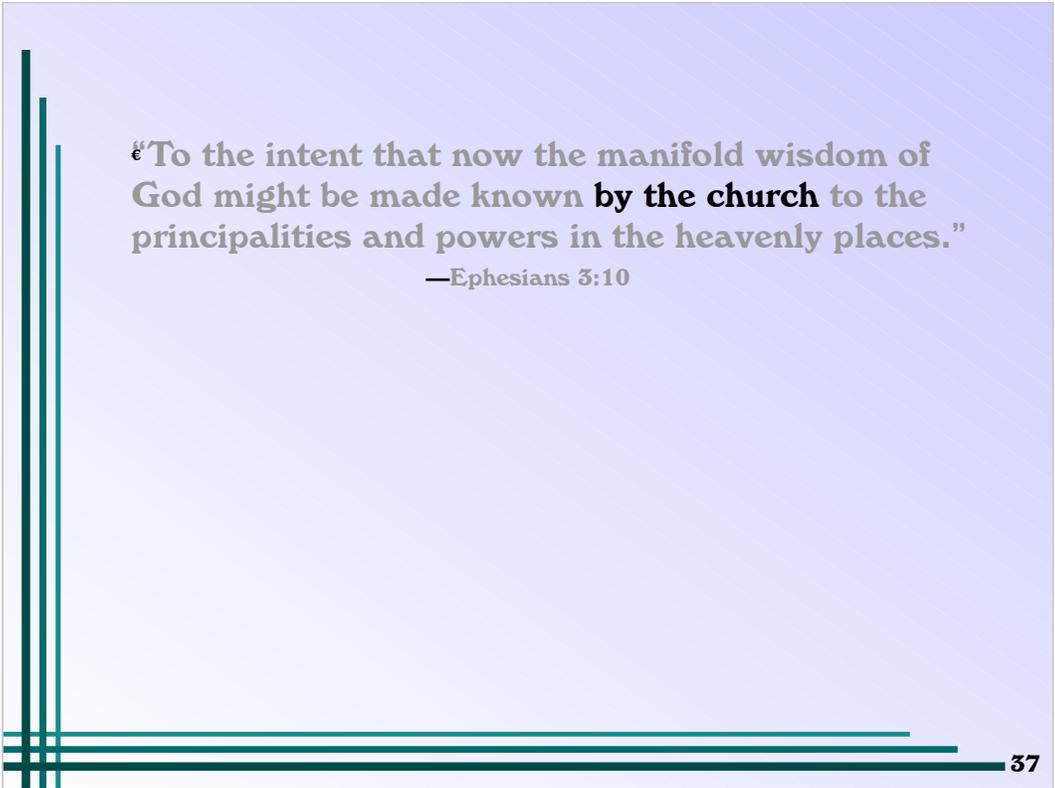
—Ephesians 3:10

Let me toss another verse into the mix.

READ verse

Notice it says...

CLICK



“To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of
God might be made known **by the church** to the
principalities and powers in the heavenly places.”

—Ephesians 3:10

37

“**by** the church.”

Somehow, the church—people like you and I—will provide a demonstration of the “manifold wisdom of God” that is so different from anything else that has ever been seen, that the “principalities and powers in the heavenly places” will learn something new.

That’s quite a thought. And that demonstration is to be made through the sealing.

So now we can say that it is the need for the demonstration of the wisdom of God that comes through the sealing of the 144,000 that is holding things up.

CLICK

What is the wisdom of God?

- ◆ **What plans are being held up?**
- ◆ **What “wisdom of God” could possibly require demonstration?**
- ◆ **What specifics need to be demonstrated?**
- ◆ **Can the sealing demonstrate what is needed?**

38

That looks like a pretty loaded question, doesn't it? Almost presumptuous. After all, who am I to be talking as though I understand the wisdom of God?

Well, bear with me a moment, and let's consider what we can learn by asking four questions about this specific part of God's wisdom that is to be demonstrated to the principalities and powers of heavenly places by the church:

CLICK and read four items

We're going to just walk our way through these in order, so our first question is...

What plans are being held up?

Everything from the sealing on ...

- ♦ **Close of probation**
- ♦ **Time of Jacob's trouble**
- ♦ **Second coming**
- ♦ **Reward of the righteous**
- ♦ **Destruction of the wicked**

Well the plans we started out talking about—the “end” that is to come after the gospel goes to all the world.

In other words...

CLICK

Everything from the sealing on.

Well, that includes too many details to list here, but five big items stand out—

CLICK and read five items

OK hold that thought, and we’ll go to our second question, which is...

What “wisdom of God” could possibly require demonstration?

- ◆ Reward of the righteous
- ◆ Destruction of the wicked

40

Remember, this is for the benefit of the “principalities and powers in the heavenly places.”
That’s a loyal audience! Don’t they trust Him?

CLICK

Not co-incidentally, the last two items on the list we just looked at come to mind again. And for good reason: Satan has been complaining about God’s plans on these two issues for several thousand years. And the unfallen inhabitants of those “heavenly places” have a stake here as well. Remember, sin began in heaven; Lucifer was once their friend...

Angels have good reasons to make sure that God’s plans

1. Don’t endanger heaven.
2. Don’t execute the wicked needlessly.

Our third question is...

What specifics need to be demonstrated?



41

Suppose a teacher gave a math test—and everyone flunked! But suppose the teacher announced later that seven students would get passing grades anyway. You'd want to know what made those seven different, wouldn't you. And if the teacher said,

CLICK

"It's because they have blue eyes," you wouldn't think it was fair—especially if you didn't have blue eyes!

The problem is that blue eyes have nothing to do with math tests. That's just not a good reason.

What would be a good reason? Well, maybe if the class studied the lesson again, and then took another test. If the seven students showed they had learned how to do the math—that would make more sense.

CLICK for next page, but NO CHANGE ON SCREEN

What specifics need to be demonstrated?



42

But does that second test *guarantee* that they'll never again mess up another math question?

So, does it sound like a good idea to take *people* to heaven?

Even people who have passed a second test? What a risk!

And what about those who failed twice? What if the teacher gave them *another* chance? Wouldn't they learn sometime? How many chances should someone get before the teacher says, "I give up! This student is hopeless"?

And how can you say that when the consequence isn't just a failing grade—it's eternal death.

So... back to our question—

CLICK

What specifics need to be demonstrated?

To justify His government's rulings on the reward of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked, God needs to do three things:

- ♦ **Show that there is a good reason some are lost and some are saved**
- ♦ **Show that the people He wants to take to heaven are safe to have there**
- ♦ **Show that there is nothing more that even God could do to help the wicked**

43

READ slide and then

CLICK and READ first item

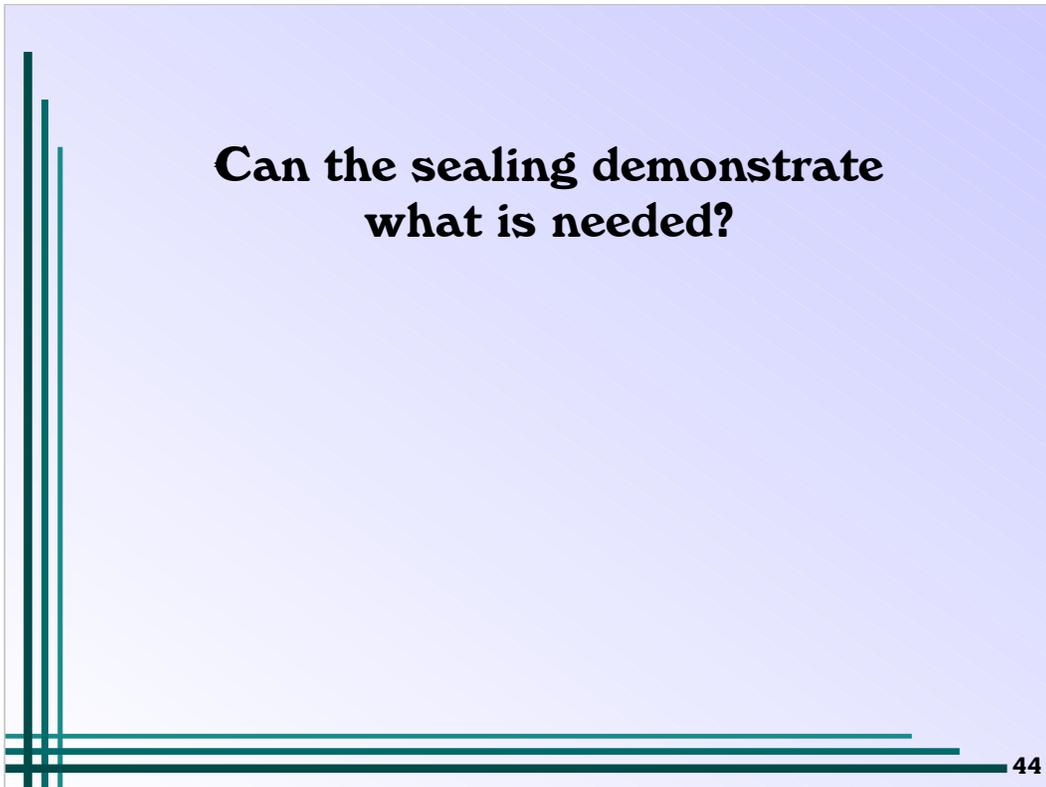
This is necessary to counter Satan's claim that because God's people have sinned, they are no more entitled to salvation than he is. Or, better yet, he deserves salvation just as much as they do!

CLICK and READ second item

This allays the concern of the unfallen inhabitants of the universe about taking people like you and me to heaven. The righteous need to be "*saved enough*."

CLICK and READ third item

This establishes God's love and justice as being entirely compatible. The wicked need to be "*lost enough*."



Here's our fourth question: "Can the sealing demonstrate what is needed?"

It's probably no surprise to find that I believe it can, so let's get started by looking at some...

CLICK

Basic Information

- ♦ **The seal of God (Rev. 7 and 9) is contrasted with the mark of the beast (Rev. 13)**
- ♦ **A seal—an official sign of authority—gives the essential information (usually the name, title, and jurisdiction) of the individual, organization, or government it represents**
- ♦ **This information is found in the Sabbath commandment: Name—LORD; Title—Creator; Jurisdiction—Heaven and earth**
- ♦ **The mark of the beast is readily identified as the claim to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday**

CLICK and read four items

So far, so good.

The Sabbath is the seal of God's government.

Knowledgeable and determined opposition to God's authority in the form of Sunday exaltation is the mark of the beast.

Basic Information

- ◆ The seal of God is placed in the foreheads of the 144,000 *before* the close of probation.
- ◆ The close of probation marks the end of Christ's work as High Priest in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.

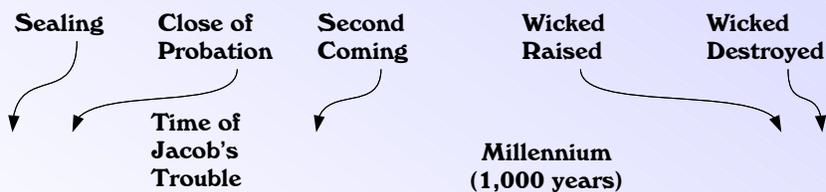


Chart not complete in every detail, not to scale

CLICK... READ item one
CLICK... READ item two

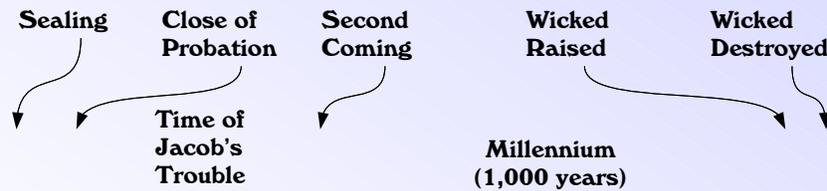
I used to think of the seal of God as a diploma, or some sort of heavenly Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval.

But it finally dawned on me that the seal is given **before** the final test. Teachers don't do that! You just don't hand out diplomas before you know whether or not the student has passed finals.

So... what's going on here?

Basic Information

- ◆ The conflict between the observance of Sabbath and the mark of the beast reaches it's peak during the "Time of Jacob's trouble," when those resisting the combined religious/political authority of the world are condemned to death.



Read item

CLICK

How did “Jacob” get into this?

“For thus says the LORD: ‘We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.’”

—Jeremiah 30:5-7

48

CLICK and Read item

(Passing Note: When “labor” and “travail” are spoken of in prophecy, they always have some application to this time)

Jeremiah is the one who put Jacob’s name on this occasion, but he is clearly referring to the story of Jacob’s night of wrestling by the Jabok, which comes from Genesis 32... (on next slide, keep going)

Jacob is returning home after his twenty-year absence when he gets word that his brother Esau is coming with 400 armed men.

This is not a good sign!

Realizing his only hope is God, he spends the night praying. At midnight, someone “attacks” him....

CLICK and read

How did “Jacob” get into this?

“Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob’s hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, ‘Let Me go, for the day breaks.’ But he said, ‘I will not let You go unless You bless me!’... And He said, ‘Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.’”

—Genesis 32:24–30

€

49

READ verses

The One he has been praying to is the same One he has been fighting! What does he believe? That God loves him and wishes him well, or that God hates him and wants him dead?

It’s faith versus sight—*and* feeling *and* hearing *and* smelling *and* the taste of blood. Which is stronger?

This is the basic test of the time of Jacob’s trouble.

Jacob is not the only illustration of this. Other stories add other insights, but we only have time to briefly mention two of them.

Job

“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.”

—Job 13:15

Jesus

“And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’”

—Mark 15:34

50

Under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, when to Job it seemed that God was out to kill him, still he maintained his trust and loyalty.

CLICK and read

An interesting side note is that this whole test was Satan’s idea! And God went along with it! And lest anyone think this was an insignificant event, just remember that it cost the lives of about 100 people to set up this test for Job. (Hidden slide after this one gives the math)

But the ultimate example is Jesus

CLICK

- ♦ **500 yoke of oxen; one plowman for every ten yokes; 50**
- ♦ **500 she asses; one herdsman for every 50; 10 minus one survivor—59**
- ♦ **7,000 sheep; one shepherd for every 1,000; 7 minus one survivor—6**
- ♦ **3,000 camels; one herder for every 100; 30 minus one survivor—29**
- ♦ **7 sons; 3 daughters; 3 servants (?); 13 minus one survivor—12**

€

$$59 + 6 + 29 + 12 = 106 \text{ casualties}$$

What makes this test special?

- ♦ **Millions have faced death for their faith—what's the difference here?**
- ♦ **This is not the normal test of martyrdom, because at this time—with no High Priest to intercede in the heavenly sanctuary—the 144,000 feel no sense of God's abiding presence.**
- ♦ **Every sensory input tells them that God is their enemy, that He wants to kill them.**

CLICK and read three items, then

CLICK for “avenging enemy” quote

What makes this test special?

“Those who live in the last days must pass through an experience similar to that of Jacob. Foes will be all around them, ready to condemn and destroy. Alarm and despair will seize them, for it appears to them as to Jacob in his distress, that God himself has become an avenging enemy.”

—Signs of the Times, November 27, 1879

After making every sacrifice imaginable to remain true to God's government;
facing imminent death because they refuse to disobey His commandment;
with no possible hope in anything but God;

That's when God makes His appearance—not as a helper, but as an enemy.

Do they still trust Him?

Why such a test? Because it has to be the absolute most difficult test of faith possible, ever, under any circumstances. Nothing less can show that they trust God so much that they will do His will even when it doesn't make sense to them. Nothing less can show that they are “saved enough” to be safe in heaven.

What makes this test special?

“Dangers thicken on every side, and it is difficult to fix the eye of faith upon the promises amidst the certain evidences of immediate destruction. But in the midst of revelry and violence, there falls upon the ear peal upon peal of the loudest thunder. The heavens have gathered blackness and are only illuminated with the blazing light and terrible glory from Heaven. God utters His voice from His holy habitation. The captivity of His people is turned. With sweet and subdued voices they say to one another, ‘God is our friend.’”

—Signs of the Times, November 27, 1879

Before we go on with our line of thought, I can't resist taking just a moment to show how Ellen White describes the outcome of this test.

CLICK and read quote

Isn't it great that the hardest test of all time can be passed by any child who's learned "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know"?

What the Test Shows

- ♦ **By placing His seal on the 144,000 *before* this most difficult of all tests, God provides convincing evidence that He can correctly identify those who are safe to let into heaven.**

OK, back on our main track again.

What does this test show?

CLICK and READ item

The seal is not a diploma!

It's a demonstration of God's wisdom, that helps His loyal subjects feel more comfortable with people like you and me.

But it does more...

What the Test Shows

Because...

- ♦ everyone on earth at this time is familiar with “this gospel,” and...
- ♦ *only* those who have faith pass the test, and...
- ♦ *all* those who have faith pass the test...

This test shows that...

- ♦ “faith” is *necessary* for salvation, and...
- ♦ “faith” plus a knowledge of “this gospel” is *sufficient* for complete obedience.

CLICK and read through items

Sorry about the “formal logic” lingo. Don’t worry about technical definitions for “necessary” and “sufficient”; it pretty much means what it says, even in normal English.

This is why the gospel has to go to the whole world. This test can’t be carried out properly without simplifying the situation down to a single variable. Only when the question of knowledge is “standardized” can the role of “faith” be clearly seen.

It’s a bit like working on a car: you don’t do a major engine overhaul and switch gasoline brands at the same time. Your car’s performance might change, but you wouldn’t know why. Stick with one variable.

What the Test Shows

Martin Luther—

- ♦ **didn't keep the Sabbath**
- ♦ **was all goofed up on infant baptism**
- ♦ **lived on roast beast, sauerkraut, and beer**
- ♦ **was not the most patient of individuals**

But he had faith.

And why is all this important?

Aside from proving that the 144,000 are safe to let into heaven, this demonstration just happens to be exactly what is needed to take care of that one group of God's creatures who got left out of the four stages of Satan's fall.

Remember them? The righteous dead.

Let's use one of my heroes to illustrate this.

CLICK and READ items

What the Test Shows

Now Jesus says, “I can teach Martin Luther the details of ‘this gospel’ when I get him to heaven.

“But the investigative judgment has already found that he had true faith—is it OK with everyone if I take him home with Me?”

And there won’t be a single voice raised in objection, because *righteousness really is by faith!*

READ, then

CLICK for final item

Righteousness really is by faith—always has been, always will be.

You may not be like me, but I’m a logical/philosophical kind of guy. I really, really like it when things make sense. The downside of that is that “faith” in something I don’t understand is just not naturally appealing.

That’s bad news when “righteousness is by faith.”

But God is merciful, and for people like me He came up with a system that makes even “faith” logical.

But we’re not done...

Fast forward a thousand years...

After a thorough examination of the books of record to answer every question about why this one or that one is not among the redeemed, the time has come to finish sin and sinners for ever.

READ slide, then

You know the story—

Jesus descends on the Mount of Olives. The earth splits to create a great plain, and the New Jerusalem comes to rest. Soon the wicked are raised to life.

After a period of unknown duration during which they prepare their weapons and organize their forces, they are ready to attack the city.

€The Final Battle

€At last the order to advance is given, and the countless host moves on—an army such as was never summoned by earthly conquerors, such as the combined forces of all ages since war began on earth could never equal. Satan, the mightiest of warriors, leads the van, and his angels unite their forces for this final struggle. Kings and warriors are in his train, and the multitudes follow in vast companies, each under its appointed leader.

READ and then

CLICK to continue

€The Final Battle

“With military precision the serried ranks advance over the earth’s broken and uneven surface to the City of God. By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and the armies of Satan surround the city and make ready for the onset.”

—The Great Controversy, 664

READ and then

Did you catch it? Something amazing just happened.

CLICK for highlighting

The Final Battle

“With military precision the serried ranks advance over the earth’s broken and uneven surface to the City of God. By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and the armies of Satan surround the city and make ready for the onset.”

—*The Great Controversy*, 664

62

They had to shut the gates! Those great big, made-out-of-a-single-pearl gates have been open the whole time!

Maybe I’m reading too much into this. But up to this point, I don’t know of any means by which God has shown the universe that it is absolutely impossible to reclaim those who have rejected faith.

Like the little old lady down the street who grew pretty roses, and gave cookies to the neighborhood children... but never accepted Christ.

Yes, the Book of Record shows a lot, but isn’t there some way to reach her? Just one more chance?

Wouldn’t you ask? Wouldn’t you care?

€The Final Demonstration

Would Jesus,

- ♦ **the One who is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8);**
- ♦ **the One who said “[whoever] comes to Me I will by no means cast out” (John 6:37);**
- ♦ **the One who has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezekiel 33:11)—**

would Jesus let a repentant and trusting sinner in?

READ “Would Jesus,” then

CLICK for three items and the question

I believe He would—but in all that multitude outside the city, not one can be found who has faith in God’s love.

As the faithful 144,000 pass the hardest of all tests and show the power of faith, so the faithless wicked fail the easiest of all tests and show their total depravity.

Now the entire unfallen universe knows there is nothing more that even God Himself can do to save them. More time will not help. Miracles will not help. Additional demonstrations of love and patience will not help.

€The Final Fall of Satan

“Notwithstanding that Satan has been constrained to acknowledge God’s justice and to bow to the supremacy of Christ, his character remains unchanged. The spirit of rebellion, like a mighty torrent, again bursts forth.... He rushes into the midst of his subjects and endeavors to inspire them with his own fury and arouse them to instant battle. But of all the countless millions whom he has allured into rebellion, there are none now to acknowledge his supremacy. His power is at an end.”

—Great Controversy, 671

64

Next comes the final judgment, with its panoramic presentation of the entire conflict between good and evil.

With this evidence before them, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess the justice and righteousness of God. But...

CLICK and read

Now, finally, all that must be demonstrated has been shown. It’s time to end the conflict.

€The Choice Is Ours

“Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath. He shall say, ‘Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength.’ To Him men shall come, and all shall be ashamed who are incensed against Him.”

—Isaiah 45:22–24

God has told us what to expect. It shouldn't be a mystery for anyone who reads the Bible.

The only real question is, “Do **we** have faith enough to obey?”