

Conflicts in the Last Days

Note: The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, brought shock and horror to the citizens of the United States of America and to many others. The sympathies and prayers of Seventh-day Adventists are with all who have been affected by the tragic happenings of that day. In view of those events, we are reminded of what Ellen White wrote concerning the need to share the good news of the Gospel and Christ's soon return to the millions who live and work in our world's large cities--many of whom are spiritually unprepared for the troubles and destruction coming on the world in the last days.

Contrary to unsubstantiated reports, Ellen White made no prediction concerning the destruction of a twin-towered building in New York or any other place in the world. She did foresee great disasters of various kinds resulting in the loss of magnificent buildings and many lives in the large cities before Jesus' return. She spoke of demonic forces exercising their power in earthquakes, fires, and other calamities. She also warned that the time will come when defiant rejection of God's Spirit will result in the complete removal of His restraining power over such destructive elements in the earth.

Due to the many inquiries received by the Ellen G. White Estate since the devastating events of September 11, we have gathered some of Ellen White's statements on the general topic of conflicts in the last days, mostly as found in the compilation *Last Day Events* and the devotional book *Maranatha*. **This collection has been prepared with no attempt to make any specific application to recent events, places, or individuals.** But it should remind us of our own need to be ready continually for Christ's soon return and of our responsibility to help others also to be prepared. At the end of this document is a link to a chapter from *Last Day Events* which focuses on how to prepare spiritually for the end times.

Warning and Assurance from Jesus

Christ upon the Mount of Olives rehearsed the fearful judgments that were to precede His second coming: "Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: . . . Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places. All these are the beginning of sorrows" [Matt. 24:6-8]. While these prophecies received a partial fulfilment at the destruction of Jerusalem, they have a more direct application in the last days.--*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 753 (1899).

The terrible reports we hear of murders and robberies, of railway accidents and deeds of violence, tell the story that the end of all things is at hand. Now, just now, we need to be preparing for the Lord's second coming.--Letter 308, 1907 (*Last Day Events*, p. 23).

The nations are in unrest. Times of perplexity are upon us. Men's hearts are failing them for fear of the things that are coming upon the earth. But those who believe in God will hear His voice amid the storm, saying, "It is I; be not afraid."--*Signs of the Times*, Oct. 9, 1901.

Wars and Disasters

The tempest is coming and we must get ready for its fury by having repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord will arise to shake terribly the earth. We shall see troubles on all sides. Thousands of ships will be hurled into the depths of the sea. Navies will go down, and human lives will be sacrificed by millions. Fires will break out unexpectedly and no human effort will be able to quench them. The palaces of earth

will be swept away in the fury of the flames. Disasters by rail will become more and more frequent. Confusion, collision, and death without a moment's warning will occur on the great lines of travel. The end is near, probation is closing. Oh, let us seek God while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near!--*Messages to Young People*, pp. 89, 90 (1890).

In the last scenes of this earth's history war will rage. There will be pestilence, plague and famine. The waters of the deep will overflow their boundaries. Property and life will be destroyed by fire and flood. We should be preparing for the mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for them that love Him.--*Maranatha*, p. 174 (1897).

Calamities Serve as Warnings

We are not now able to describe with accuracy the scenes to be enacted in our world in the future, but this we do know, that this is a time when we must watch unto prayer, for the great day of the Lord is at hand. --*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 35 (1901).

What mean the awful calamities by sea--vessels hurled into eternity without a moment's warning? What mean the accidents by land--fire consuming the riches that men have hoarded, much of which has been accumulated by oppression of the poor? The Lord will not interfere to protect the property of those who transgress His law, break His covenant, and trample upon His Sabbath, accepting in its place a spurious rest day.

The plagues of God are already falling upon the earth, sweeping away the most costly structures as if by a breath of fire from heaven. Will not these judgments bring professing Christians to their senses? God permits them to come that the world may take heed, that sinners may be afraid and tremble before Him.--*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, p. 311 (1902).

Coming Events Are in the Hands of the Lord

The world is not without a ruler. The program of coming events is in the hands of the Lord. The Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations as well as the concerns of His church in His own charge.--*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 753 (1889).

These symbolical representations [the fiery serpents in the wilderness] serve a double purpose. From them God's people learn not only that the physical forces of the earth are under the control of the Creator, but also that under His control are the religious movements of the nations. Especially is this true with reference to the enforcement of Sunday observance.--*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 281 (1902).

In the great closing work we shall meet with perplexities that we know not how to deal with, but let us not forget that the three great Powers of heaven are working, that a divine hand is on the wheel, and that God will bring His purposes to pass.--*Evangelism*, p. 65 (1902).

In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the Word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will.--*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 499, 500 (c. 1914).

Judgments Coming on the Cities

Terrible shocks will come upon the earth, and the lordly palaces erected at great expense will certainly become heaps of ruins.--*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, p. 312 (1891).

When God's restraining hand is removed, the destroyer begins his work. Then in our cities the greatest calamities will come.--*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, p. 314 (1897).

The end is near and every city is to be turned upside down every way. There will be confusion in every city. Everything that can be shaken is to be shaken and we do not know what will come next. The judgments will be according to the wickedness of the people and the light of truth that they have had.--*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 248 (1902).

O that God's people had a sense of the impending destruction of thousands of cities, now almost given to idolatry.--*Evangelism*, p. 29 (1903).

The time is near when large cities will be swept away, and all should be warned of these coming judgments.--*Evangelism*, p. 29 (1910).

Catastrophe-proof Buildings Will Become Ashes

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. . . . The flattering monuments of men's greatness will be crumbled in the dust even before the last great destruction comes upon the world.--*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 418 (1901).

Men will continue to erect expensive buildings, costing millions of money. Special attention will be called to their architectural beauty and the firmness and solidity with which they are constructed, but the Lord has instructed me that despite the unusual firmness and expensive display, these buildings will share the fate of the temple in Jerusalem.--Ellen G. White Comments, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1098 (1906).

On one occasion, when in New York City, I was in the night season called upon to behold buildings rising story after story toward heaven. These buildings were warranted to be fireproof, and they were erected to glorify their owners and builders. . . .

The scene that next passed before me was an alarm of fire. Men looked at the lofty and supposedly fireproof buildings and said: "They are perfectly safe." But these buildings were consumed as if made of pitch. The fire engines could do nothing to stay the destruction. The firemen were unable to operate the engines.

I am instructed that when the Lord's time comes, should no change have taken place in the hearts of proud, ambitious human beings, men will find that the hand that had been strong to save will be strong to destroy. No earthly power can stay the hand of God. No material can be used in the erection of buildings that will preserve them from destruction when God's appointed time comes to send retribution on men for their disregard of His law and for their selfish ambition.--*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 12, 13 (1909).

Specific Warnings Regarding New York City at the End of Time

I have no light in particular in regard to what is coming on New York, only that I know that one day the great buildings there will be thrown down by the turning and overturning of God's power. . . . Death will come in all places. This is why I am so anxious for our cities to be warned.--*Review and Herald*, July 5, 1906.

[God's] hand is stretched out [in mercy] still. His message must be given in Greater New York. The people must be shown how it is possible for God, by a touch of His hand, to destroy the property they have gathered together against the last great day.--*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, pp. 310, 311 (1902).

Angels are Holding the Winds

The prophet saw "four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." Another angel, ascending from the east, cried to them, saying, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." This points out the work we now have to do, which is to cry to God for the angels to hold the four winds until missionaries shall be sent to all parts of the world, and shall have proclaimed the warning against disobeying the law of Jehovah.--*Review and Herald Extra*, Dec. 11, 1888.

I asked my accompanying angel the meaning of what I heard, and what the four angels were about to do. He said to me that it was God that restrained the powers, and that He gave His angels charge over things on the earth; that the four angels had power from God to hold the four winds, and that they were about to let them go; but while their hands were loosening, and the four winds were about to blow, the merciful eye of Jesus gazed on the remnant that were not sealed, and He raised His hands to the Father and pleaded with Him that He had spilled His blood for them. Then another angel was commissioned to fly swiftly to the four angels and bid them hold, until the servants of God were sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads.--*Early Writings*, p. 38.

My dear brethren and sisters, let the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ be in your minds continually and let them crowd out worldly thoughts and cares. When you lie down and when you rise up, let them be your meditation. Live and act wholly in reference to the coming of the Son of man. The sealing time is very short, and will soon be over. Now is the time, while the four angels are holding the four winds, to make our calling and election sure.--*Early Writings*, p. 58.

God's Judgments are Coming

The signs of the times give evidence that the judgments of heaven are being poured out, that the day of the Lord is at hand. The daily papers are full of indications of an intense conflict in the future. Bold robberies are of frequent occurrence. Strikes are common. Thefts and murders are committed on every hand. Men possessed by demons are taking the lives of men, women, and little children. All these things testify that the Lord's coming is near.

The restraining Spirit of God is even now being withdrawn from the world. Hurricanes, storms, tempests, disasters by sea and by land, follow one another in quick succession. The signs thickening around us, telling of the near approach of the Son of God, are attributed to any other than the true cause. . . .

The time is right upon us when there will be sorrow in the world that no human balm can heal. Even before the last great destruction comes upon the world, the flattering monuments of man's greatness will be crumbled in the dust. God's retributive judgments will fall on those who in the face of great light have continued in sin. Costly buildings, supposed to be fireproof, are erected. But 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 ocean, seeking to breast the angry billows. But with all their treasures of gold and silver, and with all their human freight, they

sank into a watery grave.... But amid the tumult of excitement, with confusion in every place, there is a work to be done for God in the world.--*Maranatha*, p. 175.

We Must Improve the Time

As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle. How carefully we should improve the little remaining period of our probation!

Minds that have been given up to loose thought need to change. . . . The thoughts must be centered upon God. Now is the time to put forth earnest effort to overcome the natural tendencies of the carnal heart.--*Maranatha*, p. 243.

We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Prophecies are fulfilling. Strange and eventful history is being recorded in the books of heaven--events which it was declared should shortly precede the great day of God. Everything in the world is in an unsettled state. The nations are angry, and great preparations for war are being made. Nation is plotting against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. The great day of God is hastening greatly. But although the nations are mustering their forces for war and bloodshed, the command to the angels is still in force, that they hold the four winds until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads--*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 221, 222.

This is the work that the Lord would have every soul prepared to do at this time, when the four angels are holding the four winds that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. There is no time now for self-pleasing. The lamps of the soul must be trimmed. They must be supplied with the oil of grace. Every precaution must be taken to prevent spiritual declension, lest the great day of the Lord overtake us as a thief in the night. Every witness for God is now to work intelligently in the lines which God has appointed. We should daily obtain a deep and living experience in the work of perfecting Christian character. We should daily receive the holy oil that we may impart to others. All may be light bearers to the world if they will. We are to sink self out of sight in Jesus. We are to receive the word of the Lord in counsel and instruction, and gladly communicate it. There is now need of much prayer. Christ commands, "Pray without ceasing;" that is, keep the mind uplifted to God, the source of all power and efficiency.--*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 510, 511.

Summer is Near!

This life at best is but the Christian's winter; and the bleak winds of winter--disappointments, losses, pain, and anguish--are our lot here; but our hopes are reaching forward to the Christian's summer, when we shall change climate, leave all the wintry blasts and fierce tempests behind, and be taken to those mansions Jesus has gone to prepare for those that love Him.--*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, pp. 239, 240.

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

All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar--worlds that thrilled with sorrow at

the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God's handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation--suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator's name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed.

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

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Revelation 5:13.

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.-- *The Great Controversy*, pp. 677, 678.