

## **The Papacy Attacks the Church**

He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. (Dan. 11:41)

When Protestant America opposes God's law by legislating Sunday, the papal "abomination of desolation" will then "stand in the holy place" (Matt. 24:15). Yielding to papal Rome, the Protestants will have usurped God's place as lawgiver and try to destroy God's church. Sunday enactment signals that the saints' persecution has begun and time has come for them to flee:

As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains.

Ellen White reveals that God's people are to "flee" twice during the final crisis. When Sunday is enforced, we are told to flee "the large cities" and go to "the smaller ones." This first move is a "preparatory" step. The large cities will be filled with confusion and violence, and the Lord tells us to leave them before the judgments against them begin. Jesus's words also indicate that His people will then honour the Sabbath and that their flight may be difficult:

But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. (Matt. 24:20–21)

As Sunday legislation approaches, the Spirit of God is gradually withdrawing from those who reject the binding claims of the Divine law. Some ministers will declare that loss of God's favour and trouble in America are because of Sunday violation. These ministers will reason that the churches' distinctive doctrines are the cause of the disunity among them and will urge them to reject their special teachings:

There has been for years, in churches of the Protestant faith, a strong and growing sentiment in favour of a union based upon common points of doctrine. To secure such a union, the discussion of subjects upon which all were not agreed—however important they might be from a Bible standpoint—must necessarily be waived.

As these churches unite against His law, the Lord will remove His protection from them. The disasters now filling our land will increase in number and intensity (see Matt. 24:6–8). Swift destruction by hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, fires, and earthquakes signal greater calamities to come. Using natural forces as he did in Job's day (see Job 1:12–19), Satan and his follower are killing the unprepared and destroying the Earth, and people are confused and afraid. He will then insinuate through his followers that Bible believing Christians who conscientiously reject the Sunday movement are the cause of the problem:

It will be declared that men are offending God by the violation of the Sunday sabbath; that this sin has brought calamities which will not cease until Sunday observance shall be strictly enforced; and that those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus

destroying reverence for Sunday, are troublers of the people, preventing their restoration to divine favor and temporal prosperity.

Satan is preparing people to oppose and persecute the remnant. When Sunday is first enacted, it will bring minimal difficulty to God's people; they will have a short time to do missionary labor and to move as needed. However, stricter laws will quickly be made and Sabbath-keepers will be singled out. Backed by false christs and false prophets, religious leaders will blame the world's problems on God's commandment-keeping people, which will bring the remnant into crisis (see Matt. 24:9–12; Mark 13:9–13; Luke 21:12–19; John 14:15; Rev. 12:17).

Daniel 11 next reveals this attack on God's church: "He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown" (Dan. 11:41). The "glorious land" in verse 16 is a reference to ancient, national Israel, but in verse 41 it refers to spiritual Israel. The passage says that many professed Christians "will be overthrown" and shaken from God's church in the coming crisis. This happens during the war mentioned in Daniel 11:40–42.

The prophecy's focus is not the battle between mystical Babylon and spiritual Egypt; the focus is Babylon's attack on spiritual Israel, God's church. The angel revealed this purpose to Daniel at the prophecy's beginning: "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days" (Dan. 10:14). The remnant will experience a terrible crisis; "the testing time" will have arrived:

The Lord has shown me clearly that the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes; for it is to be the great test for the people of God, by which their eternal destiny will be decided. . . .

This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed. All who proved their loyalty to God by observing His law, and refusing to accept a spurious sabbath, will rank under the banner of the Lord God Jehovah, and will receive the seal of the living God.

And again,

The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not.

The United States will exercise "all the power of the first beast" by persecuting God's people (see Rev. 13:7, 12, 15–17). The Sunday law will require obedience from everyone and will necessarily punish dissent. It will unleash Satan's wrath, and many will leave God's church.

Not only does Daniel 11 reveal the persecution and shaking of God's church, it identifies other righteous people who reject Sunday worship: "But these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon" (Dan. 11:41). Edom was Esau, the brother of Jacob, and Moab and Ammon were the two sons of Lot who were conceived after he fled Sodom (see Gen. 12:5; 19:30–38; 25:24–34; 36:1, 19). Although they were antagonistic to Israel, the nations of Edom, Moab, and Ammon were Jewish relatives. They must, therefore, be spiritually related to God's remnant people today. Like Daniel, Isaiah speaks of these people groups at the end:

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left. . . . And he shall set up an

ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. . . . They shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them. (Isa. 11:11–12, 14)

Edom, Moab, and Ammon represent Bible-believing Christians from the various Sabbath- and Sunday-keeping churches who have heard the three angel's messages but have not fully united with God's remnant people. They may even be opposed to the remnant.

However, when the crisis begins, they will hear Jesus's voice, recognize the law's binding claims, and unite with the remnant. Thus, they will "escape" the northern apostasy and its Babylonian churches; "And there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). Free of the careless and strengthened with new believers, the persecuted remnant will appear "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners" (Song 6:10).