

## **After the Close of Probation**

The warning of the third angel reads: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (Revelation 14:9, 10).

The wrath of God will be poured out on those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. This wrath is the outpouring of the seven last plagues.

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God" (Revelation 15:1).

"The great mass of professing Christians will meet with bitter disappointment in the day of God. They have not upon their foreheads the seal of the living God."

The people left without the seal of the living God are not sheltered in the time of the plagues. They will be destroyed during the slaughter because they have a counterfeit seal, the mark of the beast. The first plague will be poured out on them:

"And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image" (Revelation 16:2).

The seven plagues will last for a period of approximately one year (see Revelation 18:8; Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6). When the seventh plague is poured out God's voice declares: "It is done."

"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great" (Revelation 16:17, 18).

"In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying, 'It is done' (Revelation 16:17).

"That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake, 'such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.' " At the beginning of the seventh plague there is a mighty earthquake. Some of the people of God who were in prison are set free, as prison walls are rent asunder. By this earthquake graves are opened and the partial resurrection takes place.

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2).

Who are these raised from their graves then? This is what we read in the Spirit of Prophecy about the resurrection of Daniel 12:2:

"Graves are opened, and 'many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth . . . awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt' (Daniel 12:2). All

who have died in the faith of the third angel's message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God's covenant of peace with those who have kept His law."

"The graves were opened, and those who had died in faith under the third angel's message, keeping the Sabbath, came forth from their dusty beds, glorified, to hear the covenant of peace that God was to make with those who had kept His law."

All faithful Adventists who have been laid to rest, keeping the Sabbath, will be resurrected in the partial resurrection at the beginning of the seventh plague. They are raised glorified but still mortal, to "hear God's covenant of peace," or "everlasting covenant."

Elder James White understood that those who are raised at the partial resurrection are not raised immortal. He wrote:

"Those who die under the third angel's message are a part of the 144,000; there are not 144,000 in addition to these, but these help to make up that number. They are raised to mortal life shortly before Christ comes, and . . . are changed to immortality when Christ appears."

Those who are raised at this special, partial resurrection, and go to everlasting contempt are those who condemned and pierced Christ, and the most violent opposers of God's truth and people, as we see hereunder:

"Jesus saith unto [the high priest], Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64).

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" (Revelation 1:7).

" 'They also which pierced Him' (Revelation 1:7), those that mocked and derided Christ's dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient."

"There are those who mocked Christ in His humiliation. With thrilling power come to their minds the Sufferer's words, when, adjured by the high priest, He solemnly declared, 'Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven' (Matthew 26:64). Now they behold Him in His glory, and they are yet to see Him sitting on the right hand of power.' "

After this special or partial resurrection, the following events take place:

1. "Thick clouds still cover the sky; yet the sun now and then breaks through, appearing like the avenging eye of Jehovah. Fierce lightnings leap from the heavens, enveloping the earth in a sheet of flame. Above the terrific roar of thunder, voices, mysterious and awful, declare the doom of the wicked. . . .
2. "Through a rift in the clouds, there beams a star whose brilliancy is increased fourfold in contrast with the darkness. It speaks hope and joy to the faithful, but severity and wrath to the transgressors of God's law."
3. "Then there appears against the sky a hand holding two tables of stone folded together. Says the prophet, 'The heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is judge Himself' (Psalm 50:6). That holy law, God's righteousness, that amid thunder and flame was

proclaimed from Sinai as the guide of life, is now revealed to men as the rule of judgment. The hand opens the tables, and there are seen the precepts of the Decalogue, traced as with a pen of fire. The words are so plain that all can read them. Memory is aroused, the darkness of superstition and heresy is swept from every mind, and God's ten words, brief, comprehensive, and authoritative, are presented to the view of all the inhabitants of the earth.

"It is impossible to describe the horror and despair of those who have trampled upon God's holy requirements. The Lord gave them His law; they might have compared their characters with it and learned their defects while there was yet opportunity for repentance and reform; but in order to secure the favor of the world, they set aside its precepts and taught others to transgress. They have endeavored to compel God's people to profane His Sabbath. Now they are condemned by that law which they have despised. With awful distinctness they see that they are without excuse. They chose whom they would serve and worship. 'Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not' (Malachi 3:18).

"The enemies of God's law, from the ministers down to the least among them, have a new conception of truth and duty. Too late they see that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God."

All this takes place under the seventh plague, after the partial resurrection. Remember that by that time all faithful Adventists are already resurrected, therefore they are counted among the living. What happens then? We read:

"The voice of God is heard from heaven, declaring the day and hour of Jesus' coming, and delivering the everlasting covenant to His people."

We should be very careful not to confuse the voice of Jesus at the close of probation saying, "It is done" with the voice of God at the beginning of the seventh plague saying, "It is done" (GC 636). But especially we should be very careful not to make confusion between the voice of God at the partial resurrection saying, "It is done" and then the voice of God which announces the "day and hour" of Jesus' coming. These announcements made by the voice of God are different and distinct and are uttered on different occasions.

When the voice of God declares the day and hour of Jesus' coming, He makes a covenant with, or delivers the everlasting covenant to those who have kept His law - those who are sealed. It is for this purpose that the dead, who have died under the third angel's message, are raised at the partial resurrection.

This event is also written in Early Writings:

"Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming. The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake."

Let us meditate upon this statement: After the partial resurrection, when the voice of God announces the day and hour of Jesus' coming, the number of the living saints is 144,000. Many had been resurrected and now are alive, therefore they are called "living." It is important to notice that every human being, whether he or she had never died or died and was resurrected at the partial resurrection, will hear the voice of God. But only 144,000 will understand it. The Spirit of Prophecy calls those who do not understand God's voice "wicked." Therefore, after the partial resurrection which occurs at the beginning of the

seventh plague, there will be only two classes of people living on earth until the coming of Jesus - the 144,000 and the wicked. Where are the faithful Adventists who were resurrected at the partial resurrection? They are included in the number of the living saints, altogether 144,000.

“(Bear in mind that the time of these words of the voice of God is after the special resurrection. All this special company of Sabbathkeepers are now ‘living.’)”

The meaning of the expression “living saints” is explained by Elder Uriah Smith in his book *The Visions* as follows:

“Then having been raised, and standing alive with the saints who have never died, are they not in all propriety reckoned among the living saints? And it is this very declaration of the day and the hour of Jesus’ coming that the company then alive, 144,000 in number, hear and understand.”

Another testimony reads:

“A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob’s trouble. Then all the saints cried out with anguish of spirit, and were delivered by the voice of God. Then the 144,000 triumphed. Their faces were lighted up with the glory of God.”

After the partial resurrection the saints will pass through trouble, both spiritual anguish and the wrath of the wicked. Just a few statements on this point:

“His eyes were as a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through. Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness. Then we all cried out, ‘Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless?’”

“Before His presence ‘all faces are turned into paleness,’ upon the rejecters of God’s mercy falls the terror of eternal despair. ‘The heart melteth, and the knees smite together, . . . and the faces of them all gather blackness’ (Jeremiah 30:6; Nahum 2:10). The righteous cry with trembling: ‘Who shall be able to stand?’ The angels’ song is hushed, and there is a period of awful silence.”

“And even after the saints are sealed with the seal of the living God, His elect will have trials individually. Personal afflictions will come; but the furnace is closely watched by an eye that will not suffer the gold to be consumed. The indelible mark of God is upon them.”

“At our happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us into prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and they would fall helpless to the ground.”

The enemies will become enraged and rush against the saints after the announcement of the day and hour of Jesus’ coming. This is still a part of Jacob’s anguish. It will end only when Jesus declares: “My grace is sufficient for you.”

After the saints hear and understand the voice of God announcing the day and hour, they look up to heaven and see Jesus coming in the cloud:

“Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man’s hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. The bottom appeared like fire; a rainbow was

over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels, singing a most lovely song; and upon it sat the Son of man. His hair was white and curly and lay on His shoulders; and upon His head were many crowns. His feet had the appearance of fire; in His right hand was a sharp sickle; in His left, a silver trumpet. . . .

“Then Jesus’ silver trumpet sounded, as He descended on the cloud, wrapped in flames of fire. He gazed on the graves of the sleeping saints, then raised His eyes and hands to heaven, and cried, ‘Awake! awake! awake! ye that sleep in the dust, and arise.’ Then there was a mighty earthquake. The graves opened, and the dead came up clothed with immortality.”

Now, when Jesus appears in the clouds of heaven, the first general resurrection takes place. These sleeping saints are resurrected immortal. (Remember that the living saints are 144,000 in number. Part of them have never died and part of them have been raised at the partial resurrection.) The first general resurrection at Jesus’ coming, when the last trumpet sounds, is mentioned in the Bible:

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

We understand by these verses that when Jesus comes there will be “living saints” (144,000) who will be changed from mortality to immortality; the others, the “sleeping saints” (the great multitude) come out from the tomb clothed with immortality. Paul explains how this takes place:

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:51-54).

And the Spirit of Prophecy explains further:

“The living righteous are changed ‘in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.’ At the voice of God they were glorified; now they are made immortal and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air.”

It is very clear that the “living righteous” or “living saints” (144,000) were glorified at the voice of God (at the partial resurrection), and now (at the first general resurrection) they are made immortal. The two companies unite and ascend up to heaven.

“We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns, and with His own right hand placed them on our heads. He gave us harps of gold and palms of victory. Here on the sea of glass the 144,000 stood in a perfect square.”